



JUCO ATHLETICS

Physical Therapy Pipeline

Chesapeake students on to Salisbury undergrad, UMES doctoral programs

By RICHARD MIDCAP

Special to The Star Democrat

WYE MILLS — Chesapeake College doesn't offer a physical therapy program, but that doesn't mean the college isn't preparing tomorrow's physical therapists.

Take the examples of Cordia Reilly, Ashley Landskroener and Will Hedgepeth. All were local high school students who started at Chesapeake and moved on to Salisbury University's bachelor's degree program in exercise science. Reilly and Landskroener are now doctoral students in the University of Maryland Eastern Shore physical therapy program, and Hedgepeth may join them after graduating from Salisbury in May.

Reilly, who graduated from North Caroline High, and Landskroener, who is a Queen Anne's County grad, said their own experiences with the benefits of physical therapy led them to pursue that profession.

"My mom had to receive physical therapy after breaking her back falling off a horse. She went from bed ridden to back to doing what she did before her fall without having surgery," recalled Reilly. "That was kind of interesting to me. I volunteered in a (physical therapy) clinic at Chestertown and that's where I really became interested in it."

"I actually broke my leg my freshman year of high school," said Landskroener. "After I went through rehab myself, I realized I wanted to get into physical therapy."

While Reilly and Landskroener came to Chesapeake knowing they wanted to pursue physical therapy degrees, Hedgepeth said his career interests changed after he began college.

"When I first started at Chesapeake, I was interested in the computer program," he recalled. "After my initial biology course, I began to think about a science major. Mr. (Greg) Farley was a wonderful teacher. He really cared about biology and he drew me in."

Reilly said positive experiences in both science and wellness courses at Chesapeake confirmed she was headed in the right direction.

"Dr. (Ed) Baker's (Fitness and Wellness) class was one of the classes I took in my second semester at Chesapeake while I was still in high school, but taking college courses full time," recalled Reilly. "I just really liked his class. He made it fun and it definitely spearheaded my interest in exercise. Just seeing him



PHOTO BY TOM MILLER

University of Maryland Eastern Shore physical therapy doctoral student Cordia Reilly, a North Carolina High School graduate, and Salisbury University exercise science student Will Hedgepeth, an Easton High graduate, are both interning at The Orthopedic Center in Easton. Both began their college coursework at Chesapeake College.

definitely played a role in my decision to choose the exercise science program at Salisbury.

"When I was going through my first official college year, Dr. (Florence) Lednum, Dr. (David) Maase and Mr. (Marvin) Rickman really helped me a lot," Reilly said of her science instructors. "Their classes were really tough and I learned a lot. They also helped me

being there any time I had a question."

Hedgepeth, who wrestled at Easton High, also said Dr. Baker played a key role in steering him in the right direction.

"Dr. Baker initially turned me on to Salisbury," recalled Hedgepeth. "A lot of PTs who go on to graduate school start out at Salisbury"

college ahead of her, Landskroener said economics played a factor in her decision to start at Chesapeake.

"It was cheaper and ... it would be easier to work and save money for when I got down to Salisbury," recalled Landskroener.

All three said knowing the

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General Education courses — first- and second-year courses required in most baccalaureate degrees — would easily transfer played a role in their respective decisions to start college at Chesapeake.

"I knew that with any major I would need to meet certain general education requirements," said Reilly, who finished with a 3.94 grade-point average at Chesapeake. "That's where I started, and I kind of went from there."

"Chesapeake did a nice job preparing me to go into a university program," said Hedgepeth. "I think going straight to a university might have been a little overwhelming for me. Chesapeake kind of smoothed out that transition."

Landskroener said that Salisbury's exercise science program provided a good foundation for the doctoral program at UMES.

"Salisbury offered a lot of different areas in the exercise science field," said Landskroener. "Anatomy, kinesiology, and all the exercise science physiologies from Salisbury have been helpful as well."

Reilly said she carefully scruti-

nized undergraduate programs before selecting Salisbury.

"I looked at the curriculum for physical therapy schools and looked at the classes involving exercise, and a lot of the classes you'd be taking at PT school were included in Salisbury's undergraduate curriculum," said Reilly. "That helped prepare me for the UMES program."

"We have numerous science prerequisites for our program and we know Salisbury students are well prepared in the sciences," said Janet Mutschler, director of clinical education for the UMES Physical Therapy Program. "And Chesapeake students are obviously well prepared to go to Salisbury based on the success they are enjoying."

Mutschler also praised Chesapeake's Physical Therapist Assistant Program, which runs through the Chesapeake Area Consortium for Higher Education and includes partner institutions Anne Arundel Community College and College of Southern Maryland.

"That's an excellent program," said Mutschler. "We work closely with those instructors and students. Some students use that program as a pathway to a physical therapy

degree — they work in the field (as PTAs) while they finish their bachelor's degree and then go on to a PT program. Chesapeake's program provides a really good foundation for students who want to work as PTAs or take that path to PT school."

While Salisbury's Exercise Science Program and UMES's Physical Therapy Program aren't officially articulated, SU Exercise Science Program Director John LaManca said the two institutions work closely together.

"They (UMES Physical Therapy faculty) know our program and they know us," said Dr. LaManca, who indicated the reputation of the UMES doctoral program attracts SU students. "Our science faculty does a great job with prerequisite courses — biology, anatomy and physiology, physics. When we recommend someone I think they consider that."

Mutschler said potential physical therapists are attracted to UMES for several reasons, including small class sizes, an experienced faculty and outstanding facilities.

"We have a good faculty-to-student ratio — around 30 students in each class — along with modern labs and technology," said Mutschler. "When students see our facilities, they are

very interested."

Dr. LaManca said SU's Exercise Science program appeals to potential physical therapists in part because of its flexibility.

"We don't have physical therapy per se, but we do have what we call an Allied Health track," he said. "Students can complete internships with physical therapists and the program allows a lot of electives to meet requirements of physical therapy (doctoral) programs."

Both Reilly and Hedgepeth are completing local internships at the Orthopedic Center on Idlewild Avenue in Easton — Reilly for her doctoral program and Hedgepeth for his undergraduate degree.

"This internship has made me a lot more passionate about the career as an option. I enjoy getting to help people achieve their personal goals," said Hedgepeth.

"I really like the orthopedic setting I'm in right now," said Reilly, who indicated she still hasn't decided what type of setting she will seek for employment. She does, however, know where she wants to work.

"I know I'd like to come back to the (upper) Eastern Shore," said Reilly, "and find a job here and use all the schooling as kind of my give-back to the community."