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TRC To Offer Physical Therapy Assistant Program

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A SMT News Report

POPLAR BLUFF, Mo. – A long-awaited and much-needed Physical Therapist Assistant program will soon be offered at Three Rivers College.

The pilot semester of the new program, which has been created in conjunction with Linn State Technical College, will begin this fall. Through this partnership, students take general education courses from Three Rivers for the first year, and then take the PTA coursework delivered by Linn Tech in Poplar Bluff the second year.

“We have several students who have been preparing to enter this program for over a year,” said Kim Shackelford, division chair for Health and Human Services at Three Rivers. “Students have to have all of their general education classes finished, including the necessary health and medical pre-requisites.”

Those required general education courses include anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, psychology and more. Admission requirements also include satisfactory ACT scores and/or proven success in college coursework, an essay, recommendations, and 40 hours of physical therapy observation in two different locations.

Current students interested in entering the PTA program this fall should contact the offices of Nursing and Allied Health (573-840-9680) as soon as possible to make sure

they meet all deadlines and requirements.

According to Marlene Medin, department chair for the PTA program at Linn State, the program will accept between eight and 10 Three Rivers students for the fall 2011 semester.

“Once we get up to speed, we hope to be able to accept 12 to 14 students,” said Medin. “This model allows students to finish all general education courses at Three Rivers, and then apply to Linn State to begin the PTA coursework at Poplar Bluff in the fall.”

“Indicators point to continued growth in the field of physical therapy for the foreseeable future,” said Medin. “I think the baby boomers will continue to age and need more and more physical therapy to stay active.”

Medin also added that the number of physical therapist assistants in Missouri is not enough to meet the demand, and the biggest need is in Southeast Missouri.

“Gov. Nixon encouraged higher education institutions to collaborate to meet this need,” said Medin. “Basically, he told us to do it, and here we are.”

This collaboration between Three Rivers and Linn State is made possible through the Missouri Health Professions Consortium, which includes four other community colleges and the Missouri University School of Health Professions.

Representatives from Three Rivers College and Linn State met recently to finalize the plans for the PTA program collaboration. Participating were (from left) Three Rivers Vice President for Learning Dr. Wes Payne; Kim Shackleford, division chair for Health and Human Services; Marlene Medin, Linn State; KD Berrey Linn State]; and Three Rivers Vice President for Student Success Jason Hoseney.(TRC Photo)

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