

# **Massage Therapy Program Assessment Report**

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## **Project**

This project aimed at assessing student learning within the Massage Therapy Program of Continuing Education to determine how Lane Community College's Massage Therapy Program is preparing students to become Licensed Massage Therapists. This consisted of developing an assessment survey, administering it to students who completed the Massage Therapy program within the last academic year, analyzing the data and reporting the findings to staff and faculty.

The Massage Therapy program is the largest professional/technical program within the Continuing Education Department. It is guided by a State regulatory agency, The Oregon Board of Massage Therapists (OBMT). In order to gain a massage license in the state of Oregon at this time, a student must first complete at least 500 hours of classroom time. Then the student must pass a National Board written exam and a State Board practical exam. The pass/fail status of the Boards has been the barometer to assessing student learning (over 99% passing in 2004-2005).

## **Key People**

From Continuing Education: Kathy Calise, Instructional Coordinator, Lori Steger, Program Coordinator, Jeff Davis, Director and Jenn Hodges, Massage Therapist and Instructor

From Institute for Research Assessment and Planning: Mary Brau, Assessment Specialist and Craig Taylor, Director of Research

## **Roadblocks and Solutions**

The roadblock of research methodology was bulldozed by discussions with Mary Brau. The roadblock of survey design was flattened by Craig Taylor's offer (and follow through) for me to edit a previously designed survey. Lori Steger's data analysis assistance has been (and still is) clearing a path to interpretation. The roadblock of organizing and delegating all the details for printing, distributing and recording returned surveys was beautifully paved by Kathy Calise.

## **Data Collection**

The survey was sent out on 17 May. Within 2 weeks, only 7 surveys had been returned. We developed a follow-up / thank you postcard which we mailed on 26 May. As of 7 June, we have received 15 responses, of which 1 had an incorrect address. We will follow-up with one more postcard and verbal encouragement to recent graduates who are assisting in classes to fill out their surveys and enter the raffle for a prize.

### **Data analysis/ Interpretation**

All respondents, except two, agreed with the importance of learning the selected 16 program content areas on the survey. The areas that had disagreement were pathology and the limits of massage therapy.

The two areas of largest disagreement that respondents received a strong foundation were in the areas of business practices relating to 1) operating their own business and 2) securing employment in other organizations (6 respondents). Two respondents felt LCC did not provide a strong foundation for safe practices for Massage Therapists, with one clarifying that was related to body mechanics

One surprising demographic was that the largest group of respondents was between 30 and 40; with 4 female respondents to each male (which seems a little low).

The qualitative data identified that although students felt supported in the program and they were learning mostly what they needed, an advisor or a class that would guide students through the board exam procedures was missing. Two also mentioned of a "lack of cohesion within both the student population and the instructors. Ten respondents requested more hands-on classes or time in class to practice, with a balance of Western and Eastern modalities.

Integrity was the personal characteristic cited the most (5), followed by intent ("being present"), caring, and being knowledgeable (3 each). Self-esteem and confidence were mentioned by many as well (4). Each person was asked to write three characteristics important to them.

### **Next Steps**

Create program objectives, map course to objectives, create a capstone course, and gather feedback from faculty on how these results might be incorporated into their particular courses to serve the students more effectively.

### **Conclusion**

Since the mission of the Massage Therapy Program at Lane is to "educate and prepare students to become competent, licensed massage therapists who will conduct themselves in an ethical manner while providing a quality massage experience to the community," we feel our students have received more than adequate training. However, this survey identifies some needs from practicing LMT's that we could address as Continuing Education Units (25 are required every 2 years), as well as incorporate into our current curriculum.

Of the 81 surveys in class surveys collected....

Under 20 = 6

21-25 = 16

26-30 = 9

31-35 = 11

36-40 = 6

41-50 = 16

51-60 = 7

Over 61 = 0

No Answer = 10