

## Raising the Bar at Sherman College

AS OF 2008, THE COLLEGE IS RAISING THE MINIMUM GPA REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT; BY 2012, PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS WILL NEED A 3.0 OR HIGHER.

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Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic is raising its academic standards for incoming students. While students currently must have a grade-point average (GPA) of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, as of spring quarter 2008, the college will raise the minimum required GPA by one-tenth of a point each year until 2012, at which time prospective enrollees must have a minimum GPA of 3.0.

The decision by Sherman's Board of Trustees to implement the GPA increase was announced in March 2007, following multiple discussions with faculty, student representatives, academic deans and the college's Enrollment Services office. By raising the academic standard, the college is taking one step toward implementing its strategic plan to "increase student quality in the recruitment process by using indicators of student success to evaluate candidates."

According to Jon Schwartzbauer, DC, vice president for academic affairs, "Our goal in adopting this policy is to attract students who are adequately prepared for the rigor of the academic program at Sherman College. It is only appropriate that the requirements associated with admission to Sherman College be aligned with the expectations students will encounter when they enter the doctor of chiropractic program."

The new academic standard is designed in part to facilitate students' success in the chiropractic program. At Sherman, student success means fulfilling two criteria: completing the doctor of chiropractic degree program in 14 quarters and passing all four parts of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners' tests before graduation. A study of students enrolling at Sherman between 2004 and 2006, comparing entrance GPAs with quarterly GPAs, cumulative GPAs and national board scores, showed a strong correlation between increasing the entrance requirement and improving overall student performance. Thus, the college anticipates that the higher GPA requirement will ensure students are adequately prepared for the rigorous program at Sherman.

By raising the academic standards, the college also expects to increase retention and graduation rates. Since most Sherman students already exceed the current required GPA, Robert Irwin, DC, vice president for enrollment services, doesn't expect any changes in enrollment trends at the college. Moreover, the change shouldn't present a hardship for potential students, as they have one year of advance notice before the change takes effect. "We want to ensure the best possible fit between Sherman College and its students," Irwin says. "Aligning admission requirements with the high academic standards already in place at Sherman just makes sense."

A minimum entrance GPA of 2.5 is required for all students enrolling in chiropractic colleges, based on standards set by the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE). However, the upcoming change at Sherman may signal the start of a widespread adjustment of educational standards at chiropractic institutions. According to Executive Vice President/Provost Myron Brown, DC, who also serves on the task committee of the CCE, the council is considering significant revisions to its educational standards. Dr. Brown hopes the new standards will let each institution determine its

own entering GPA and the appropriate methods to achieve its mission. For Sherman College, more rigorous academic standards will facilitate its mission to train future leaders of the profession.

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