



EDUCATION & SEMINARS

National to Offer Its Chiropractic Degree in Florida

PARTNERSHIP WITH ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE TAKES THE PROFESSION ONE STEP CLOSER TO INCLUSION AT A MAJOR PUBLIC UNIVERSITY.

Peter W. Crownfield

The National University of Health Sciences (NUHS) in Lombard, Ill., has signed a partnership agreement with St. Petersburg College (SPC) of Pinellas County, Fla., to offer National's first professional doctorate degree in chiropractic at one or more SPC campuses. NUHS President James Winterstein, DC, and SPC President Dr. Carl Kuttler signed the agreement on June 19, 2008.

SPC was founded in 1927 as a two-year junior college - the first private, nonprofit institution of its kind in St. Petersburg. The college received full accreditation in 1931 and became a public college in 1948. In June 2001, Gov. Jeb Bush signed legislation allowing state community colleges to offer four-year degrees. SPC, the first to do so, now offers bachelor's degrees in such fields as paralegal studies, public safety administration and nursing. It also recently became the first Florida college to offer a four-year degree in dental hygiene.

SPC also offers postgraduate degrees in affiliation with 16 educational institutions, providing more than 61,000 SPC students the opportunity to pursue advanced degrees including a master's in nursing education from the University of South Florida, a master's in exercise science from Barry University, a doctorate in nursing practice from Case Western Reserve University, a master's in nursing forensics from Cleveland State University and a doctorate in pharmacy from the University of Florida (which also offers a dental residency program at SPC).



NUHS hopes to begin offering classes on an SPC campus by the fall of next year. SPC maintains campuses/education centers in Tarpon Springs, Clearwater (two sites), Largo, Seminole, Pinellas Park and St. Petersburg (three sites). As with other affiliated institutions, NUHS will partner with SPC for classroom space and support services, enabling students to complete the doctor of chiropractic program without leaving Pinellas County.

Upon learning of this partnership agreement, *Dynamic Chiropractic* contacted NUHS President Dr. Winterstein for details:

Does this partnership mean SPC students can enroll in any of the NUHS degree/certificate programs (chiropractic, naturopathic medicine, massage, AOM)?

No, at this time, we expect to only offer the DC degree on the SPC campus, hopefully beginning in September of '09. We have had discussions about offering other programs in the future - but that is for the future.

Are the prerequisites the same as if the student were entering NUHS (i.e., bachelor's degree required for entrance to the DC program)? Are there any other NUHS-specific requirements?

Entry requirements for the NUHS DC program offered on the SPC campus will be the same as they are here. A baccalaureate is required with a minimum of 2.5 GPA. We expect, however, that our students in Florida will match those (at National), whose GPAs average between 3.1 and 3.2 consistently.

By all accounts, this appears to suggest NUHS is essentially offering its chiropractic degree program in Florida. Please clarify.

NUHS will be offering a DC degree program in Florida using the facilities of the St. Petersburg College, which offers a baccalaureate and, through its university and college partners, many other advanced degrees as well. NUHS will probably offer additional degree and/or certificate programs there in the future, but that has not yet been determined.

How does accreditation come into play? Do NUHS instructors/faculty need to spend time at SPC to

teach students? How is the coursework conducted?

National is currently providing its documents to the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. It will do the same for the CCE. We will employ an appropriately credentialed program administrator who will be an Associate Dean of our College of Professional Studies and will be stationed at SPC. We will employ faculty through appropriate faculty searches to teach the NUHS curriculum in Florida. It is likely that there will be some interactive video conference-based education from NUHS Lombard to the NUHS/SPC students. Our Lombard faculty will remain at its current numerical and quality levels. This is a complete DC program offered by NUHS in partnership with SPC in Florida.

Overall, what does this mean for NUHS and for the chiropractic profession?

I think it means that we are bringing another high-quality chiropractic degree program to a different part of the country where it is needed. National is known for its broad-scope, high-quality educational process. We are expanding but keeping a close eye on the total number of graduates. Our purpose is not to "overpopulate" the profession. It means also that for the first time in this country, a DC program will be offered on the campus of a publicly supported educational institution. I think this is a major step toward the goal of having chiropractic education offered by a major public university.

As Dr. Winterstein mentioned, National's partnership with SPC is limited to the chiropractic degree program for now. However, SPC is in the process of evaluating whether it should offer additional programs in complementary and alternative health fields in the near future. In addition to the chiropractic doctorate, NUHS also offers master's programs in acupuncture and Oriental medicine, a certificate program in massage therapy and a doctorate program in naturopathic medicine on its Lombard campus. (As of press time, the naturopathic medicine program has candidate status and is awaiting accreditation from the Council on Naturopathic Medical Accreditation.)

Editor's note: As you may recall, recent attempts to develop a chiropractic degree program at a major public university (in Florida, coincidentally) met with staunch opposition, to say the least. On March 11, 2004, Gov. Jeb Bush signed Senate Bill 2002, which allocated \$9 million for the formation of a school of chiropractic medicine at Florida State University (FSU). By year's end, however, a petition was circulating on the FSU campus, questioning the need for the chiropractic program.

Dr. Raymond Bellamy, an orthopedic surgeon and FSU alumnus, led opposition to the program, stating it "would irreparably harm the scientific effectiveness and reputations of all the other great programs at the university." Within a month, more than 500 FSU faculty members had signed the petition and at least nine assistant professors had threatened to resign if the chiropractic school opened.

On Jan. 4, 2005, the board of directors of the Capital Medical Society, representing 500-plus physicians in the Tallahassee, Fla., area, voted unanimously to oppose the chiropractic program. "The affiliation will serve to legitimize the unscientific and even anti-scientific philosophies associated with chiropractic," said Karen Wendland, society director at the time. "They have their place, but not in science-based medicine."

Then came the crushing blows: On Jan. 14, 2005, the Florida State University trustees deferred to the Board of Governors, the state agency that oversees the Florida university system, for a decision. Two weeks later, the board voted 10-3 to deny the formation of a chiropractic school on the campus of FSU.

