

National Raises Bar, Ups Entrance GPA

Editorial Staff

National University of Health Sciences has announced that beginning with the fall 2012 incoming class, all students seeking to enroll in the university's doctor of chiropractic degree program will be required to have a minimum 2.75 grade-point average to qualify for entry to the program, rather than the 2.5 GPA currently required by the Council on Chiropractic Education for students entering accredited doctor of chiropractic programs. According to NUHS, the new standard will also apply to the university's [naturopathic medicine doctorate](#) degree program.

"The impetus for raising our GPA requirement started back in 1991," said Dr. James Winterstein, NUHS president. "At that time, the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research (FCER) published a report by the Corporate Health Policies Group analyzing why chiropractic institutions were not receiving federal funding from various government programs. Their findings pointed to a relative lack of academic achievement markers by most professionals in chiropractic medicine when compared to professionals from other medical specialties."

Three years ago, NUHS conducted a feasibility study that tracked the performance of students in its DC and ND degree programs for two years. According to the university, that study showed a clear relationship between entrance GPA and academic performance. For example, 15 percent to 20 percent of the incoming class as a whole experienced "academic difficulty" (defined as a GPA of 2.0 or lower at the university, requiring that the student be placed on academic probation). Incoming students were more likely to experience academic difficulty if they came in with an undergraduate GPA of 2.50-2.74. By comparison, only 20 percent of students entering with a GPA of 2.75-2.99 experienced academic difficulty, and only 6 percent to 8 percent of incoming students with a 3.0 GPA or higher experienced academic difficulty.

"As tuitions have gone up, it is vitally important for me that students be able to complete a program before sustaining a huge financial burden," added Dr. Winterstein. "If students come to National unprepared for the rigor of our curriculum, they might drop out or be expelled in the third, fourth or fifth trimester. They [would] then find themselves with a \$60,000-\$70,000 debt that they can't get rid of, and no career. It's not fair to them!"

In announcing the change, NUHS emphasized the university's [perennial leadership role](#) relative to chiropractic educational standards, including being "the first school in the profession to push for and receive regional accreditation, and the first school to require a 2.50 GPA, which eventually became the standard for CCE-accredited schools. Now National, the only educational institution offering the DC degree to require a baccalaureate degree, will be the first to require both a baccalaureate degree and a 2.75 GPA."

MARCH 2011