

Program Improvement Plan – Massage Therapy

The objective of the Anthem College Massage Therapy Program is to provide students with a comprehensive education and prepare students for an entry-level position in the field of massage therapy. This includes a thorough understanding of the structure and function of the human body, the effects of massage therapy, and the skills and techniques necessary to be effective as a massage therapist. Students will gain a practical working knowledge and an understanding of the state curriculum, as provided by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Upon successful completion of the training program, the student is eligible to take the massage therapy state and national examination. State licensure is required to work as a massage therapist in the state of Texas. The program consists of 500 hours as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services to become a licensed massage therapist with the state. The program is comprised of 10 courses, which consist of 291 lecture hours, 159 laboratory hours, and 50 internship hours.

This plan will address the low licensure pass rate for the Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLE_x) taken by students in this program. This plan will provide relevant data on the program, analyze the current status of the program, and provide an action plan for improvement.

Graduate Satisfaction

A student's satisfaction and sense of accomplishment upon earning their diploma is the product of all of the program's efforts. Graduates complete the Graduate Satisfaction Survey after finishing their program of study. These surveys are used as a means of identifying the graduate's satisfaction. The content of the survey covers whether the student is satisfied with their education, as well as their satisfaction level with various departments in the school.

- I was satisfied with the quality of education from this college.
- I would recommend this college to my friends and family.
- The college has helped me to prepare for my future career.
- The college has met my expectations.

The second portion of the survey rates the front/reception area, admissions, financial aid, business office, educational administration, faculty/teachers, career services, library, facilities/classrooms, and equipment.

The program had four graduates participate in the survey during the first quarter. Overall, the program's graduates are satisfied with their program. The majority of graduates found their educational experience to be excellent. In addition, most graduates rated the school departments overall as either excellent or very good. The MT students who completed the survey did not provide any specific comments about their educational experience. Essentially, these graduates feel that the Program fulfilled its objective to prepare them to obtain an entry-level position in their field of study.

Employer Satisfaction

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Employer satisfaction is a key component in measuring placement percentages. An Employer Survey is sent to all employers after a graduate has been on site for a period of a few weeks. The purpose of this survey is to discover how the facility feels the graduate has been prepared for the workforce. The goal for effectively training and positively empowering students toward successful career placement is one of the foundational benchmarks targeted by Anthem College. Each month an employer who has employed a graduate during that month will receive a follow-up phone call to ensure the graduate's skill and knowledge level is appropriate for the workplace.

The employer rates the graduate in the following areas:

- Level of skill demonstrated in areas related to academic preparation
- Ability to address customer/patient needs appropriately
- Confidence in job-related skills
- Overall initiative
- Preparation for an entry-level position in the field

Employer satisfaction is important in order to offer our students opportunities within the community on a continuous basis. Ongoing surveys and evaluation of employer can address issues.

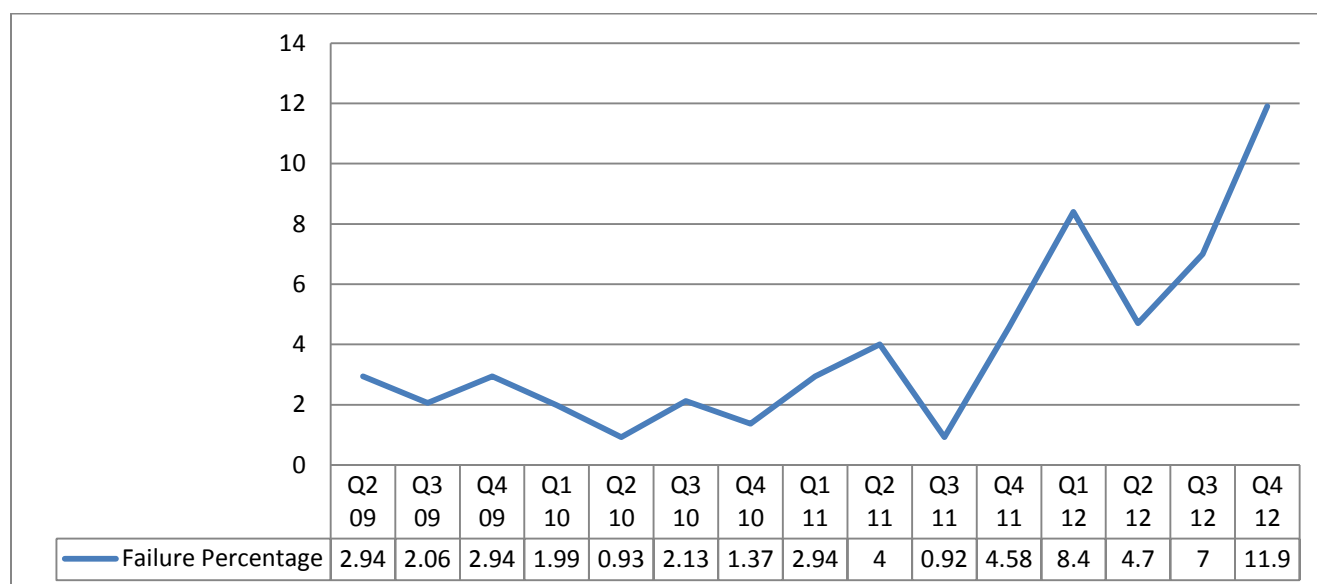
The program had six employers participate during the first quarter. Overall, the Program's employers are satisfied with their graduates. The majority of employers found that their graduates had suitable skill levels; however, there were more responses of "fair" students.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Failure Rates

One indication of the success of the curriculum in a program is the percentage of students who successfully complete the course, as evidenced by a passing grade. Through reviewing failure percentages as a campus, the school can determine which programs students have the most difficulty with, and implement appropriate strategies to increase student learning outcomes. If students continue to struggle in their coursework, they are less likely to be successful when attempting licensure exam.

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During FY 2012, the program saw an increase in failure rate percentages. During this time, the program had regular staff meetings to address program needs, including academic concerns of students. The team discussed different ways to present material, including strategies for integrating critical thinking and MBLEx concepts into the current curriculum to encourage student success when taking the examination. For the first quarter of FY 2013, 7 students failed massage therapy courses. This was evenly divided between the two terms that ended during this quarter.

Program Assessment/Comprehensive Exams

Each “hands-on” course involves a check-off procedure in which the student must demonstrate competency in the information and/or techniques taught in the course. This ensures that students gain the necessary skills to be successful in the field and that they continue to improve in their skill set throughout their time in the Program. In addition, when students are near the end of their program, they are put through a sign-off process. This consists of a clinical check-off, in which the student must perform a full Swedish massage. The student must also complete pre- and post-interviews and SOAP notes.

Based on the results above, the students continue to have a mastery of their field of study at the time of graduation. These results also show that the instructors are effective in the classroom. Students continue to struggle with appropriate client interviews, including the depth of the interview and the types of questions to ask during a client interview. The instructors will continue to address this area to improve these skills. In order to continue the positive trend, the Program Head and instructors will continue to follow their current processes to prepare students. The instructors will continue to put student through check-offs with accuracy to ensure understanding of the material.

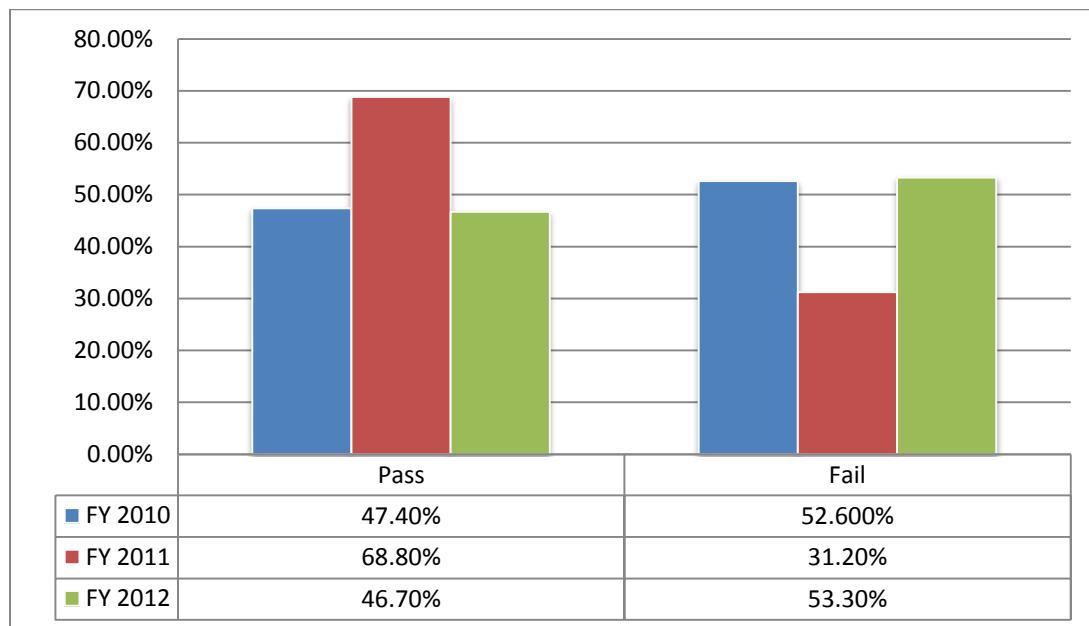
Intern Evaluations

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Intern evaluations are conducted during a student's internship period. During this time, the MT instructor conducts a review of the student's performance. Interns are also evaluated by clients on their skills. The evaluations are utilized not only to determine the student's progress, but, when analyzed as a whole, the areas of strength and weakness in the Program itself. These evaluations keep us in touch with our clients by providing open communication on how our interns are doing. We will continue to utilize these evaluations, as well as observing interns with clients.

Credentialing Examination Rates

The Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx) is a national certification test used to license massage therapists. The results of the exam are provided to the Program Head, who monitors this information. We provide the students with study materials and resources in the library for assistance in preparing for and passing this exam. In addition, each student receives a massage therapy review book as part of their course textbooks.



Last year's overall pass rate for first-time takers of the MBLEx exam was 46.7%, which is below accreditation standards. Upon analyzing the pass rates for the last year, the Program began to develop new actions to improve results. These actions will help to increase the pass rate of the MBLEx exam in the next year.

Program Analysis

The certification pass rate declined significantly between FY 2011 and FY 2012. One consideration in the lower pass rate for FY 2012 is in the increased number of students who attempted the exam. The program had 45 students attempt the exam during FY 2012, as opposed with only 17 students in the previous year. An additional consideration is that many students who do not pass their certification on the first attempt will retake their test and successfully

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complete when given an additional opportunity. While this is not true for all students, it does indicate that students are willing to address areas of weakness based on their first test and take correct action either independently or in conjunction with their instructors to correct these deficiencies.

Overall, the low certification pass rate may be attributed in part to the students' struggles with certain aspects of the curriculum. In general, the students struggle with those sections of the licensure examination relating to kinesiology and ethics. While kinesiology represents a smaller section of the test, the concepts and fundamentals taught in this course are critical to understanding other massage concepts. However, the state curriculum provides less time to address this subject. The program continues to work on adapting the kinesiology curriculum and teaching methods to increase instructional effectiveness in this course and improve student success. Students also struggle with ethical questions during the exam because this area is more subjective. The instructors continue to work with students to develop a client-based mentality for great success on the exam. A final consideration in the low pass rates is poor study skills from the students. Many students fail to revisit their initial courses when preparing for the examination and are thus less prepared for those areas when taking the test. In addition, students have relied heavily on one review resource rather than considering the variety of review resources available to them to prepare for the test.

Planned Activities

In order to address the current licensure examination pass rate, the program will implement the following initiatives:

- Look into providing online exam preparation resources to students to simulate the test environment that will be present when taking the MBLEx. The school has identified two potential vendors for an online testing resource: Massage Prep and Massage Exam. Both allow for practice exams in content, as well as simulation MBLEx exams. In addition, the Massage Prep program offers study guides and animated tutorials on the content. The school will investigate which option is most appropriate for the students.
- Offer MBLEx boot camps and other resources for students to review, including make-up hours devoted specifically to MBLEx preparation. The instructors will make more tutoring opportunities available to the students focusing specifically on the content of the MBLEx, study skills, and critical thinking skills.
- Devote time during each class for MBLEx information and/or critical thinking skills that students will need to succeed on the exam. Provide more examples in curriculum of the critical thinking skills that students must develop. The instructors will devote at least 15 minutes of each class the MBLEx preparedness based on the content of that course. This preparation will include content information, as well as critical thinking questions and analysis to help students break down the test questions.
- Stress the importance of certification from the beginning of the program to encourage students to prepare for and pass the MBLEx. Instructors will explain the importance of licensure in the profession and for placement opportunities.
- Utilize a variety of teaching techniques to provide new instructional methods for MBLEx material that supplement the lecture and hands-on instruction provided in day-to-day

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coursework. The team discussed different strategies for making content “interesting” to students, including games based on the content, contests, and additional perspectives to supplement what is already provided in lecture and lab.

- Invite successful graduates to speak to current students. These graduates can provide information about the importance of certification, as well as provide tips for success for the students who are currently enrolled. Offering study techniques, resources, and success stories can help motivate current students to succeed in their program.
- Pair successful students and/or graduates with current students and/or graduates who are struggling with the MBLEx or other content to serve as mentors. Matching up students with other students provides a new perspective and experience in preparing for coursework and/or the exam, and may provide the needed motivation from a source outside of the instructor.