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FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

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Status of the PT Clinic at Queen's

The Queen's Physical Therapy Clinic opened in 1997 to provide accessible, evidence-based services to students, staff, faculty, and the surrounding community. In March 2020, the clinic, like other services, was forced to temporarily close due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although public health restrictions were lessened in June 2020, access to and operations on the University campus remained limited. The leadership of the School of Rehabilitation Therapy decided to suspend Clinic operations on June 26, 2020 as a result. We also decided to reallocate the clinic space for teaching in order to meet physical distancing requirements and keep our physical therapy and occupational therapy students progressing towards graduation. In September 2021, the campus returned to in-person teaching, but our needs for increased teaching space remained. We decided to continue to use the clinic space for teaching and to refocus our efforts on initiatives that are in line with the School of Rehabilitation Therapy's strategic priorities:

- Lead innovating, integrated approaches to research, education and practice
- Capitalize on our community connections
- Conduct targeted, collaborative research to optimize transition experiences

Our faculty have a strong commitment to building stronger connections between our educational programs and our community, to creating interprofessional learning opportunities, and to better serving the members of the Kingston community who have limited access to rehabilitation and health promotion services. Therefore, from March to December 2020, the School of Rehabilitation Therapy consulted with healthcare professionals across our community about unmet rehabilitation needs and how the School might best respond. These discussions resulted in new partnerships and successful initiatives that are offering significantly more student placements relative to what was previously provided by the Queen's PT Clinic while also providing services to members of our community who cannot access rehabilitation services elsewhere.

Through our efforts over the past year, we came to realize that our strategic priorities and commitments could not be met by reopening the Queen's PT Clinic. Therefore, we have decided to close the PT clinic permanently and to open a new unit, the Office of Partnerships and Practice Innovation. This Office will focus on expanding existing community partnerships and building new ones in order to: (1) support group-based, interdisciplinary placement experiences for our students, (2) contribute to reducing unmet rehabilitation needs in our community, and (3) facilitating community-based research that generates innovations in rehabilitation practice.

We want to extend our thanks to all of the people who supported the Queen's PT Clinic over all these years and hope they will support our new Office of Partnerships and Practice Innovations.

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