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## Education

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# UCA Physical Therapy Department receives top ranking

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The University of Central Arkansas was named in the top three best schools in the nation that offer graduate programs in physical therapy.

UCA received a student rating in 2016 of 4.59 and was on a list among Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Texas Woman's University and Mayo School of Health Sciences.

The list is compiled of the top 40 graduate programs in physical therapy.

UCA Physical Therapy (PT) Department Chair Nancy Reese said the website they received the acknowledgement from is based on student feedback.

Knowing that the students are pleased with the education they are receiving and the faculty over them is gratifying, Reese said.

"One of the things we want to do is make sure we're giving the very best we can give them," she said.

Reese said the mention from the website is great for the department, but also really good for the university as well because most potential students explore on social media for information about programs in which they plan to train.

“They certainly care what their peers are saying as well,” she said.

Reese said she has seen several changes since she became a part of the program in 1998 and chair in 2004.

Originally started as a bachelor’s program in the 70s, Reese said, it had relatively small class sizes with only six faculty members, growing to a masters program in 1989 and eventually expanding to a doctoral program in 2000. UCA was the 16th in the nation to do so.

“Our facilities are excellent,” she said. “UCA has always supported the PT program. We have excellent faculty and great support from the administration.”

Reese said the program has 15 faculty members currently, on average take 56 to 60 students per year for the doctor of physical therapy three-year fall, spring and summer program and has a graduate rate of around 98.5 percent.

She said they also have a doctor of philosophy program for individuals who are already physical therapists, but want to continue to do research or teach in the field.

Reese said it is very competitive in terms of admission, adding that students who apply must first have a bachelor’s degree, have done well in their areas of study and have a 3.7 GPA.

“We get very bright students, very competent,” she said.

Along with the great education the students receive, Reese said she thinks the faculty also has something to do with the success rate. She said students commonly tell her that a teacher was the best they’ve ever had or that the staff’s doors are always open for guidance and advice.

“I think they have a lot of respect for the faculty members,” she said. “They are very dedicated to the students. There is a lot of engagement in the success of the students.”

Reese said the students are constantly encouraged by the faculty to branch out of the classroom and get involved, many joining research projects, community service events and fundraisers, overall following the leadership of their teachers who contribute to their profession by getting out in the community.

“That’s the culture that we have,” Reese said. “Students see that and follow their lead. Students are young and want to make a difference and serve a purpose. They find that in this program.”

Reese said she is honored to be the chair of the department greatly because of the great faculty and administration she works with.

Traveling to other schools, Reese gets to visit several PT programs, but always feels extremely grateful for what UCA offers and the great fantastic program she gets to be a part of.

“We are able to give our students the kind of education it takes to be top notch in the profession,” she said.

*(Staff writer Hilary Andrews can be reached by email at [hilary.andrews@thecabin.net](mailto:hilary.andrews@thecabin.net) or by phone at 505-1215. To comment on this and other stories in the Log Cabin, log on to [www.thecabin.net](http://www.thecabin.net). Send us your news at [www.thecabin.net/submit](http://www.thecabin.net/submit))*



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