

Every person has a background, an identity, interests, or talents which they feel their application would be incomplete without having mentioned. Describe the traits or experiences that make you unique and explain how they will help you be a successful physical therapist. (4210/4500 character count)

Every single instrument melded in perfect harmony as the band's final note filled the room. At that moment, I was so overwhelmed with my surroundings that I could not focus. I had organized this event—I brought our community together for this. Each and every person, auction item, musician waiting to perform, even the venue and the very decorations had all come together because of me.

Seconds later the room erupted with applause, jolting me back to reality. Alyce had suffered a brain aneurysm, and every day I wondered if that day would be her last. Alyce is my bonus mom. She's not just my bonus mom, however—she holds that title in the hearts of many in our hometown. She is known for showing up to every event, a comforting presence when you're down, and making the best chili cheese dip you'll ever taste. When I found out she was in the ICU after suffering a brain aneurysm, I desperately wanted to help any way I could. At 16 years old, I had no clue what to do. But I was bold enough to ask.

I embarked on a journey, going door to door, from local businesses to school events, asking for whatever they could provide. In just a few weeks I had organized a charity benefit for Alyce, complete with entertainment, food and auction items. Her family needed the community to show up for her, just as she had for so many of us on countless occasions. That night, we raised thousands of dollars for Alyce's medical care and other expenses. The moment the band stopped and the applause started, I realized that boldness can impact someone's life profoundly. I knew my strength as an advocate would only grow from there.

The trait of boldness has served me well in my life. If you are bold enough to ask for help, information, and access, you can overcome many obstacles. My willingness to be bold will undoubtedly be a cornerstone of my success as a physical therapist. I will not only treat patients, but also advocate for their best outcomes. In the rehabilitation process, the patient's voice is of the utmost importance. When a patient is in pain, frustrated by their injury or limitations, and overwhelmed by the healing process, they may struggle to communicate their needs. I am bold enough to ask my patients for their help, to invite them to join me as a teammate in their recovery journey.

The field of physical therapy excites me because each patient presents a new puzzle to solve. Being a Doctor of Physical Therapy requires not only the boldness to ask questions, but the ability to put aside my own expectations and genuinely listen to each patient's struggles and goals. We must decipher the physical and mental challenges they face to improve their quality of life, performance, and outcomes. Unlike many other healthcare fields, DPTs have the opportunity to see patients on a regular basis, forging deeper relationships and guiding them through challenges, plateaus and improvements. Physical therapy can be a complicated

journey, and boldness is required to adjust treatment plans when goals are not being achieved. I enjoy the challenge of tailoring treatments to help each patient attain their optimal outcome.

My assertiveness and eagerness to learn will extend beyond my interactions with patients to collaborations with other providers and patient support systems. Through these collaborations with fellow DPTs, I will acquire new skills, techniques, and exercise cues. Moreover, I plan to foster open communication with patient support systems, whether that be the friend that drives them to appointments or the family member who helps them with their home exercise program. To provide my patients the best possible care, I will utilize every available resource. By synthesizing the knowledge and support of physicians, surgeons, rehabilitation staff and the patient's friends and family I will create a comprehensive treatment plan that centers the patient. As a physical therapist, I will be my patient's advocate. Just as I was bold enough to organize the charity event for Alyce, I will be bold enough to lead my patients through their struggles. I will be bold enough to ask them their motivations, passions, and most importantly their goals. And together, we will achieve them.

If you feel as though your pathway to a physical therapist education program was educationally, personally, or professionally impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, please describe for your programs the impact you experienced. Some impacts you may want to consider when responding include: (2499/2500 characters)

- Educational: Did your institution move to requiring online or distance coursework? Were you able to effectively interact with your program faculty and professional staff and receive the support needed to succeed? Were you required to move to a Pass/Fail grading system? Did your GRE testing date get canceled or delayed?***
- Personal: Did you unexpectedly have to change your living situation? Did you need to care for yourself or a loved one who was directly impacted? Did you seek out new volunteer opportunities that arose from the crisis?***
- Professional: Did you have a change in employment status, a change in available shadowing experiences, or other professional or financial changes?***

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly influenced my path to a physical therapist education program. The pandemic struck the semester I transferred to UW La Crosse. While navigating this massive transition, campus abruptly closed, forcing courses online and halting in-person interactions. Academically, disruptions included the cancellation of my cadaver lab and limited research opportunities. Nevertheless, I adapted to online learning, engaging with peers and staff through Zoom, ultimately achieving academic excellence and earning the Transfer Student of the Year award.

Financially, my employment at a gym, bartending and coaching came to a halt. Abruptly left with no income, I applied to work at a local grocery store. While many businesses closed or laid off employees, the grocery store remained open to provide necessities to the community. This job

came with many difficulties such as product shortages, constantly changing regulations, and frustrated customers. Despite hardships, working at the grocery store gave me a sense of purpose during uncertain times.

Personally, I faced isolation from my family. My dad is vulnerable to this virus due to his cancer treatment. My family was on strict lockdown, and my fear of bringing COVID home to my dad weighed heavily on me. This led me to make the difficult decision to move out. The distance taught me the significance of sacrifice and familial bonds, even while physically separated.

Professionally, physical therapy shadowing was severely limited by the pandemic. However, I fortunately found an in-home caregiving job that provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by those with long-term physical ailments. I assisted clients with daily activities, bathing, dressing, and mobility exercises. This experience taught me about the role of physical therapy in home healthcare.

As I look ahead to graduate programs, I carry with me the lessons of adaptability, resilience, and the importance of family bonds that the pandemic has instilled in me. With limitations on academic experiences, job shadowing and career changes, I postponed applying to graduate programs. As regulations changed, I have been able to shadow DPTs and gain valuable experience. Currently, my job in orthopedic healthcare allows me to interact with patients daily, improve communication skills, medical knowledge, and confidence in myself as an aspiring physical therapist. I am now eager to pursue my career in physical therapy through graduate school.

University of Colorado

The University of Colorado (CU) PT Program is committed to justice, diversity, equity and inclusion. Please describe your understanding of these concepts and specific/personal examples that demonstrate your commitment to these principles [justice, diversity, equity and inclusion]. (2998/3000 Characters)

The screeching of the lifeguard's whistle blended into the sound of Octavia's screams. She was 6 years old, nonverbal, and had never taken a bath due to her fear of water. Octavia was clutching her mom's hand, standing on the pool deck. I understood her fear—the humid air, smell of chlorine and splashing sound was once overwhelming to me as well. As her adaptive aquatic instructor, it was my responsibility to help Octavia overcome her fear.

During the first lesson, I knelt to her level and assured her she was safe. We slowly went to the edge of the pool, dipping our toes in the water. Octavia flinched when swimmers splashed but remained focused on something across the pool. I followed her gaze and saw the red slide hidden behind kickboards and lane lines.

The next lesson, I brought the slide out to the edge of the pool. She approached it with both curiosity and fear, but climbed the slide nonetheless. As she slid down and hit the water with a

splash, she let out a scream that turned into a giggle. She landed in my arms, climbed out of the pool, and slid down again and again. Each lesson she challenged me, achieving new goals as her mom cheered her on with teary eyes. Octavia did it all without a single word. And as her confidence grew, so did her smile, and I could not help but smile too.

As an adaptive aquatic instructor, I coached swimmers by recognizing their unique abilities and challenges. I created individualized goals and lessons, promoting inclusivity for those excluded from traditional programs. Each day I worked to expand access and promote diversity in the water. Whether swimmers were nonverbal, had physical limitations or language barriers, I worked for the success and growth of each person.

Being committed to justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion has helped me to recognize need and instilled my willingness to devote time and resources to helping others. My hometown, Columbia Heights, is an ethnically and economically diverse city located next to Minneapolis. The murder of George Floyd sent shockwaves through our city. Protests, riots, and curfews became a daily occurrence as people demanded justice and an end to systemic racism. Amidst the chaos another crisis emerged - the lack of access to necessities such as food and hygiene products. I shared this need on social media, hoping friends and family would donate. Our story reached strangers across state lines, creating a larger impact than I could have ever imagined.

With over a thousand dollars in donations, I purchased nonperishable foods, diapers, and hygiene items. I reached out to corporate contacts from nearby grocery stores and collected fresh fruits and bakery products that were unable to be sold due to store closures.

With trucks packed full of donations, I made multiple trips to the nonprofit organization Urban Roots. In a time of grief and confusion, we partnered to deliver products directly to my community, supporting each other through acts of kindness and generosity.

University of Colorado

If your ONLY choice is the residential track with ongoing educational experiences located on the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, please respond to the questions below: How would the residential track be most beneficial to you and your physical therapy education? How will this type of educational program lead to your success as a student and as a future physical therapist? (2986/3000 characters)

The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges for students advancing their education. Forced to attend multiple semesters online, I have a deep personal understanding of the value of in-person education. The experiences and opportunities I missed with fellow students, professors, and my college community cannot be replicated. With this in mind, I am choosing to apply for the residential track at CU. My presence on campus will allow for spontaneous interactions, hands-on learning, and a sense of shared space that will facilitate my success as a student and future DPT.

Being a member of the Anschutz Medical Campus community will foster collaboration and networking among my fellow students. Learning in the same space as individuals who share my passion for physical therapy will provide ample opportunities for discussion, the exchange of ideas, and peer connection. Interacting with peers will facilitate new insights and perspectives, ultimately shaping us into more empathetic and knowledgeable practitioners. As we explore the city of Aurora and study together, proximity to my cohort of classmates will foster a sense of community and create a strong support network of future physical therapists.

Additionally, in the residential track, I will be surrounded by a field of experts who can serve as mentors. Their expertise and real-world experience will guide me through complex material and provide practical insights beyond what can be learned from textbooks alone. Physical proximity to staff provides opportunities for interaction beyond the classroom. Whether we cross paths on campus or connect outside of office hours, the relationships formed with faculty can open doors to research, internships and my overall growth as a student PT. This extra time with staff allows for informal conversations, advice, and a deep dive into topics that class time does not allow.

Regular access to the university will also enable me to fully engage with my studies and utilize resources on the Medical Campus. Involvement in the Stout Street and DAWN clinic will help me gain critical thinking skills and build clinical competence with hands-on experience. This exposure to experiential learning will create a deeper understanding of physical therapy concepts and techniques. On campus I will study alongside diverse medical professionals, shaping my growth as a provider. Routine interactions with physicians, researchers, nurses, and other professionals will advance my holistic understanding of patient care.

The residential track offers numerous benefits for future physical therapists. It provides an immersive learning environment where theory meets practice with hands-on clinical experiences. It fosters collaboration among peers and mentorship opportunities from experienced faculty. Being a part of CU's residential program will immeasurably contribute to my success as a student and future DPT, equipping me with the skills, knowledge, and support to excel in this field.

University of Colorado

Please use this opportunity to tell us more about yourself that is not reflected in the rest of your application materials. (2000 characters)

Like many others, my introduction to physical therapy was through my own sports injury. After rehabilitating my ACL injury, I was intrigued by the career and the challenge of getting an athlete back to competition. I dreamed of one day working and traveling with a professional sports team. That desire fell by the wayside when my 49 year old father was diagnosed with breast cancer.

After a double mastectomy, the range of motion in my dad's shoulder was severely limited which caused him to struggle caring for himself. He needed assistance with surgical drains, bandage

changes and daily activities. As my dad, he resisted asking for his daughter's help. I insisted on becoming his live-in physical therapist in training, encouraging him to complete his home exercise program. Being involved in my dad's rehabilitation not only allowed me to support him physically but also emotionally. We shared moments of laughter and tears during our sessions together. I used the experience I was getting as motivation for his continued participation when progress was hard. Each motion we did together, every repetition we counted, each time I corrected his form was helping me to reach my career goal. Witnessing firsthand the importance of physical therapy for cancer patients, my understanding broadened beyond athletics and my desire to enter the field grew.

As I have pursued my physical therapy education, I have sought out opportunities to help people improve their quality of life. As a caregiver, coach, volunteer and clinical aide, I have experienced the power of exercise to transform people's lives. Physical therapy is a field that is so much more than returning athletes to the game, it helps people regain independence, confidence and quality of life. While my dream of working with a professional sports team may have faded away, it has been replaced by an even greater purpose - helping those who are fighting against diseases like cancer regain their strength and reclaim their lives.

University of Utah

Describe how your cultural background or experiences (upbringing/familial, language, traditions, neighborhood, etc.) have shaped who you are today. Describe a time when your cultural background was in conflict with another, and how you addressed that conflict. How might that example influence your interaction with patients who have a culture different from yours? (2988/3000 Characters)

I grew up on a street where each house smelled of a different cuisine, each family spoke a different language and practiced a host of different traditions. As kids, we all played together, riding our bikes on cracks in the pavement, running as fast as possible between stop signs, and playing hide and seek in our neighbors' bushes. We shared our traditions, teaching each other how to make tamales, what a bar mitzvah is, and why there are nighttime feasts during Ramadan. Despite coming from a variety of cultures and traditions, the street lights turning on was a universal sign to go home for dinner. Growing up surrounded by diversity taught me to respectfully ask questions, embrace differences and take at least one bite of new food because you might find a new favorite.

My hometown, Columbia Heights, is an ethnically and economically diverse city. Growing up I embraced the mosaic of cultures and was surprised when a white member of my school board made an anti-muslim statement on social media. This was a man I had known for years, the father of one of my friends. His abhorrent comments shocked and angered me. My classmates

and I refused to have a leader who did not embrace and respect every member of our city. We staged a walk-out, gathering outside with signs that celebrated our diversity. Dozens of students, teachers and community members attended a meeting to protest his actions. As a student leader, I chose to speak publicly. I shared my frustration and anger with the uneducated and hateful opinion that he posted, and asked him to resign from his position. Our continued efforts eventually led to the school board members' resignation and departure from our city.

My diverse community has shown me that we are stronger together, connected by values of acceptance, compassion and communication. I have often found that conflict arises from a lack of understanding and misinformation. To avoid and resolve conflicts, I strive to foster open communication. Working in an orthopedic urgent care clinic, I have crossed paths with patients who practice a variety of medical regimens. Whether driven by medical limitations or cultural beliefs, it is important to thoroughly discuss a patient's course of treatment. Some patients take ibuprofen or tylenol, while others rely on heat, ice and essential oils. Others may use turmeric paste and natural supplements to relieve their symptoms. It is essential to have culturally sensitive conversations when creating treatment plans to ensure patients are comfortable and confident in their medical care.

Using these lessons from my community, I will actively listen to my patients, striving to learn about their beliefs and motivations. When interacting with patients who have a different culture than my own, I will engage in compassionate open dialogue. By learning from my patients and respecting their traditions and cultures, I will form trusting relationships that are safe and supportive, facilitating their recovery.