

Candidate Bio and Statement – 2026

The information below was provided by each candidate in response to a request to provide a brief bio and statement of interest and qualifications for the position.

Name: Jody Eckert, PT, DPT, EdD

Title: Professor and Program Chair

Candidate for: ACAPT - Institute for Teaching & Learning Vice Chair

Brief Bio

Dr. Jody Ecker, PT, DPT, EdD is ABPTS board certified in orthopedics. She has served in many roles since starting a career in academia in 2007, including the Director of Clinical Education and in 2021 moving into her current position as Program Chair. She has a passion for continued learning in educational theory and completed a terminal degree in Educational Leadership in 2020. During her time in the DCE role, she was a APTA Advanced Credentialed Clinical Instructor, and taught the Certified Clinical Instructor Program many times as a Certified Clinical Instructor Trainer. Her research portfolio reflects a commitment to advancing physical therapy education, clinical practice, and interprofessional collaboration through peer-reviewed publications, national presentations, funded research, and ongoing scholarly inquiry. Her current scholarly agenda reflects a diverse and impactful scholarly agenda that integrates clinical relevance, educational innovation, and collaborative inquiry. Dr. Eckert served as the Chair for the ACAPT Education Research committee from 2020-2025 and is currently serving as a member of this group.

Candidate statement for Board position: My professional and service experiences have equipped me to support curricular initiatives that advance educational excellence. In recent years, we've implemented strategies to improve firstyear student success and retention, including successcoaching modules, peer tutoring, and exam autopsies. We are tracking outcomes such as academic resiliency, grit, NPTE pass rates, graduation and retention rates, academic warnings and dismissals, comprehensive exam performance, and cohort GPA. This multicomponent intervention is being delivered to a year one DPT cohort and evaluated against aggregated data from three prior DPT cohorts who did not receive these supports.

As program chair, much of my work centers on faculty leadership and professional development, aligned with a commitment to educational excellence. As Chair of the ACAPT Education Research Committee (ERC), we collaboratively published in the Journal of Physical Therapy Education, contributing to an understanding of need assessment for PT education researchers. This work, along with my leadership in other ACAPT-sponsored projects, reflects my dedication to strengthening the national dialogue on faculty researcher experiences. I am currently assisting the ACAPT ERC in development of the Education Researcher Toolkit. I enjoy learning from and collaborating with colleagues and welcome any opportunity to further serve the TIL Institute's mission.

Experience

Candidates were asked to rate their experience with the following criteria. (Developing): no experience, (Proficient): some courses/experience, (Advanced): fully competent with experience and educational courses. Candidates were also requested to identify examples to support their rating.

Advocacy (includes personal, professional, social, community, and patient advocacy): Proficient; Recently, we began an innovative project with strategies to improve student success and retention. Fall of 2025 we engaged in a research study that includes several innovative strategies to improve student success and retention. We are exploring the impact of an intervention consisting of a multi-component academic support strategy. Our approach allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the intervention's effectiveness in supporting academic success and persistence in the DPT program. We hope to both present and publish our work but more importantly provide future justification for budgetary resources such as tutoring services for the graduate level.

Analytical Skills: Advanced; I believe that the process of analysis, problem-solving and solution finding is dependent on a group's ability to communicate and collaborate well. As a group pulled together to represent an ACAPT institute, we can expand our ability to problem solve through opportunities to interact with others who have diverse skills and experiences. Communities of the mind problem solve together and as Vice Chair, I would help serve to facilitate meetings. As Chair of the ACAPT Ed Research Committee, we took time to survey education researchers and completed/published a needs assessment based on that data. Moving forward, we developed an agenda with initiatives that addressed the needs identified. The solutions were identified through focus group and discussions during an ELC education session with stakeholders. I would employ many of these same strategies as they were successful in our work.

Effective Communication & Public Speaking: Advancing; In my work as DCE, Program Chair, and ACAPT Education committee chair, I have had several opportunities to present and deliver a multitude of messages to stakeholders. I've represented in a myriad of roles at CSM, ELC during education sessions, panel discussions and platform presentations. I've hosted APTA and ACAPT social networking events and awards presentations.

Skills to address the ACAPT strategic Initiatives: Proficient; As ACAPT Ed Research Chair, I was able to write progress reports that remained focused on the ACAPT committee objectives provided to us. The budget I proposed was clear in connecting cost of initiatives to ACAPT objectives. The ACAPT strategic plan would drive the work of the institute. Consistent communication with the Board and the liaison is also important when addressing the strategic initiatives and will help us remain focused on the mission/vision of ACAPT.

Skill Set Evaluation

Candidates were asked to rate the following attributes on a scale of 1–5 and identify the top three in each category that best reflect their individual strengths.

STRATEGIC THINKING 4	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING 5	INFLUENCING 4	EXECUTING 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make decisions grounded in data, evidence, and longterm vision.- Generate innovative ideas and solutions.- Clarify priorities and align actions with organizational goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Building trust through empathy, consistency, and authenticity.- Creating inclusive, collaborative environments.- Navigating conflict constructively and diplomatically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Communicate clearly, persuasively, and with confidence.- Advocate effectively for ideas, initiatives, or change.- Build credibility through expertise and reliability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Drive projects forward with discipline and followthrough.- Set clear expectations and deliver on commitments.- Organize people, processes, and resources efficiently.