

Candidate for RIPPT Vice Chair/ Chair Elect

Mary S. Shall, PT, PhD, is Chair and Professor of the Department of Physical Therapy, College of Health Professions, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). She earned her MS in physical therapy from Duke University in 1978 and her PhD in Anatomy from VCU in 1990. The Foundation for Physical Therapy, NIH, and DOD have funded her research in animal models of extraocular motor units, effect of the vestibular system on motor development and the plasticity of motor units with various treatments of peripheral nerve injury. She practiced PT in Oregon and taught at UCSF and VCU before assuming the chair position at VCU in 2012. She has served in various leadership positions within VCU, in the state PT associations of California and Virginia, on the Executive Board of RIPPT and as the nominating committee chair of RIPPT and of ACAPT.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

The RIPPT consortium was formed to promote academic excellence by strengthening the Physical Therapy programs that are located in research-intensive doctoral universities. The faculty in these universities are expected to perform funded research promoting translational applications to improve human health and quality of life. I believe in this goal, even when it has become more difficult to obtain federal funding and balance time with teaching inquisitive students and the needs of home and family. One of the most important challenges we have is fostering the development of our faculty in their research career. The consortium may support their growth by expanding a network of faculty experts in various research methods, research ideas, etc. There are a lot of faculty vacancies and at least 1/3 of our faculty will be retiring within the next 5-10 years. The recruitment of promising DPT students into academic careers that incorporate research is vital to the strength of our profession. RIPPT needs to reach out to all programs to strengthen physical therapy research and encourage their students to consider teaching as a career option. I am particularly interested in faculty development and continuing to respond to changes in technology and the health care environment.