Program

- In his first year, this year’s recipient was elected by his peers to serve on the inter-disciplinary University of Colorado Denver Student Senate and volunteered to serve on the fundraising committee for his class.
- He also served as co-coordinator of the University of Colorado Denver’s Marquette Challenge team for two years. During this time the group recruited nationally recognized speakers to raise money for the Foundation for Physical Therapy. During his tenure, the team placed 3rd out of 60 participating schools raising $11,000 in 2008, and 2nd out of 63 participating schools raising $14,450 in 2009.
- When he was enrolled in an Inter-professional Ethics course with students from various programs on the University of Colorado campus, including students in medicine, dentistry, physician assistant, pharmacy and physical therapy, this year’s winner recognized a need to share physical therapy specific ethical issues with students of other disciplines. After consulting with a faculty mentor, he developed 2 case studies about physician owned practices in physical therapy which are now integrated into the course.

Academic

- While in school, he has maintained a GPA of 3.5, and he completed an Independent Study course in Neuroscience while assisting two faculty members in the writing of a neuroscience textbook.

Clinical

- His clinical instructors have described him as an excellent student, and they were all impressed with his ability to use evidence in clinical decision making and to share his passion for our profession.
- For one of his clinical internships, This year’s recipient was selected for a combination clinical/research experience in which he worked with critically ill patients 50% of the time and worked 50% time on a large research project collecting and analyzing data and performing follow-up outcome testing for participants.
- During this experience, he received numerous compliments regarding professionalism, initiative, problem solving, and use of evidence from members of the medical and research teams. Also, patients and family members commented on his ability to make them feel comfortable and valued during the turbulence of the ICU stay.
- He played an integral role in the background research and development of an ICU Survey for patients and families regarding the benefit of physical therapy in the ICU.
- Although his research affiliation has officially ended, he continues to work with the research team on two manuscripts describing the physical therapist’s role in working with patients with critical illness.
- During the clinical portion of this internship, he treated a patient with a rare neurological disorder, and, as a result, is pursuing a potential publication.

Service

- This year’s recipient has truly embraced the service role of our profession.
- At the Stout Street Clinic, a healthcare facility for the homeless, he provided physical therapy services to individuals in collaboration with clinicians and faculty.
• He has participated in the 9 News Health Fair Body in Balance Screens.
• Additionally, he has volunteered providing pool therapy sessions for an individual living with Cerebral Palsy, and continues to train and orient incoming student volunteers for this aquatic therapy program.
• In 2008, he was elected as the national chair for the student Special Interest Group of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists (AAOMPT). In this role he organizes and executes student social networking events in conjunction with the APTA and actively blogs about healthcare issues, and his contributions have been recognized as noteworthy by students, as well as local and national faculty.
• In addition to attending yearly APTA National Conferences, Combined Section Meetings and AAOMPT conferences, in 2009 he attended legislative days in Washington DC and Washington State, lobbying for issues important to PTs, including the medicare cap, direct access, and practice act changes to allow spinal manipulation by physical therapists.
• Finally, he has organized a grass roots letter writing campaign and marched with 600 other therapists on the Washington State capital, which prompted nationally respected therapist Bob Boyles to say “This student is dedicated, passionate and eloquent. He speaks and lobbies on behalf of the profession at every chance he gets using current evidence and strong logic.”

I am happy to give this year’s PT student of the year award to Kyle Ridgeway.