

At Franklin Pierce University, not everything is learned in the classroom. Students who spend their time at Rindge as an undergraduate immerse themselves in the culture at Pierce, where strong friendships are made, hands-on experiences provide unique opportunities, and dreams are not only discovered, but they are guided toward realization. The College of Graduate & Professional Studies offers students who have a clear vision of their future career an opportunity to capitalize on the small class sizes, personal attention from talented professors, and the chance to work in their career prior to graduation. The Doctorate of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.) program at Franklin Pierce University attracts hundreds of students each year who vie for these competitive placements. A determined, poised, competitive, and intelligent young woman, Alexandra Chouramanis '10, D.P.T.'13, is just one of the amazing students who learned the ropes at Franklin Pierce, both inside and outside the classroom.

Alexandra, better known as "Aleka," grew up in the small town of Mont Vernon, N.H., with her parents and four siblings; she is the oldest of two sisters and a brother. "Being the oldest taught me a sense of responsibility," said Aleka, who served as a role model for her siblings.

Aleka Chouramanis '10, D.P.T. '13

Living the Dream

By Christina Young, Director of The Center for Engagement



*“Tell me and I forget,
teach me and I may remember,
involve me and I learn.”*

~ Benjamin Franklin

Aleka's passion for health and fitness was ignited from the moment she joined a martial arts program at age 11. When she was a sophomore in high school, Aleka got her first gym membership and read about workout routines and diets. She quickly put what she was learning into practice and found that she enjoyed helping others with their diet and exercise questions as well.

When the time came to explore colleges, Aleka's father searched online for a D.P.T. program in New Hampshire and discovered Franklin Pierce. They went to visit Franklin Pierce together for a tour and to speak with professors. "I knew from the start I wanted to be in the D.P.T. program, so I decided Franklin Pierce would be a good choice – plus, the campus was beautiful!" she said. One of the benefits of doing undergraduate work at Franklin Pierce is that there is a clear track for motivated students to the D.P.T. program – the only D.P.T. program in New Hampshire.

Getting Involved

Aleka's experience as an undergraduate was filled with classes, rugby, and multiple part-time jobs. Working multiple jobs taught Aleka time management, but also showed her how much she enjoyed working and communicating with different types of people and personalities. As many students realize when they reach the "real world" after graduation, many transferable skills were learned during their time at Franklin Pierce outside the classroom. "Being able to manage my time in a busy clinic without getting overly stressed is crucial on a day-to-day basis," Aleka said.

In addition to many friendships with classmates, Aleka also formed bonds with staff and faculty during her time at Franklin Pierce. One of her favorite professors, Harry Davis, also served as her advisor and mentor. "Aleka was very competitive," Harry recalled, "not just on the rugby field, but also in the classroom." Harry shared that one of his favorite memories was how she and a particular classmate would study together, constantly attempting to outperform the other. "The minute a test had been handed in, they were eager to know the results," he said, "and Aleka usually came out on top."

Rosemary Nichols, director of Career Services, also expressed how impressed she was with Aleka. "Working with Aleka on her career planning and goal setting has always been a delight. Even as an undergraduate, she exhibited an extraordinary sense of professionalism, focus, and determination, and I have no doubt her contributions in the professional arena will be equally impressive."

Freedom to Learn

Aleka went on to thrive in the D.P.T. program. "I met incredible people and professors," she said. After graduating in May 2013, Aleka secured a position at Bay State Physical Therapy in Boston, feeling well prepared for post-graduation life. "With the amount of independence I had during my clinicals, working in the real world wasn't a staggering transition for me – except for the fact that I sign my own documentation." Aleka cites this freedom and the ability to make important clinical decisions every day as the two most significant differences between being in the program versus being in the working world.

When asked what advice she would give to students about to go into an undergraduate or graduate program at Franklin Pierce University, Aleka said, "Work hard and apply yourself. At Franklin Pierce, I felt that all of my professors were easily accessible, so take advantage of that. If you don't understand something, don't hesitate to seek additional assistance."

Every day in the United States, nearly one million people are helped by a physical therapist. As essential participants in the healthcare system, physical therapists diagnose and treat people of all ages as well as promote fitness and health. Graduates of the D.P.T. program at Franklin Pierce University are skilled and compassionate clinicians who partner with patients to make their lives healthier and more enjoyable. The employment rate of Franklin Pierce graduates has been 100% within six months of passing the licensing exam. We congratulate Aleka on joining the ranks of this valued component of our healthcare system.

