Special Points of Interest

• The College of Allied Health welcomes a new department
• BMD program is a favorite for many Honor students
• CLS graduate to work for the Mitchell Cancer Institute
• CRC offers new patient services at Victory clinic
• OT students promote Backpack awareness
• PA graduate talks about her job at USA
• PT faculty retires
• Learn more about a RAD graduate!
• SPA welcomes new faculty members

Message from the Dean, Dr. Rick Talbott

It is hard to believe that we are already in the middle of the Fall semester and that our students are in full swing with their academic and clinical studies. The College welcomes the addition of a new department, the Department of Emergency Medical Services (EMS). In the Fall of 2007 the EMS Department was approved by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Emergency Medical Services that was developed to meet the ever increasing demand for qualified educators to help shape the future of Emergency Medical Services. The degree is designed to prepare students for the clinical and administrative challenges of a career in EMS and health care and students will be provided with a strong paramedic clinical education. The move of the Department from its long standing home in the College of Continuing Education was consistent with the establishment of the Division of Health Sciences and the move to bring health related degree programs under the Health Sciences umbrella. Mr. David Burns is the Chair of the Department and the College welcomes him, his faculty and students.

We continue to prepare for our move to the new building before the beginning of classes in the Fall. The building construction is still on time. We are anticipating a move over the Summer with a target of May as the move in time. These are difficult economic times for everyone and certainly the University is not immune from the impact of the economic downturn. We, however, continue to be one of the best buys in the state and the region in terms of the cost of quality education and are very proud of both the numbers and the quality of students in all of our undergraduate and professional programs. Many of our alumni have generously contributed to several of our departments over the past year and we are very thankful for your continued support. As always, please keep in touch and let us know if we can be of any service to you.

Dr. Richard E. Talbott, Dean
rtalbott@usouthal.edu

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Message from the Associate Dean

Dr. Julio F. Turrens, Associate Dean
jturrens@usouthal.edu

As you can tell from Dr. Talbott’s message as well as from many of the chairpersons’ letters, we are very excited about the new building. The exterior is almost complete. The excitement is not only because we are moving to a new building, but also because for the first time most departments will be together in the same building. This implies no more traveling between the main Campus and the USA Springhill campus. Furthermore, the building is physically located next to the Biomedical Library and the College of Medicine, which will facilitate access to information and all kinds of professional interactions.

If you have not done so, please complete the Alumni survey on line at http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/ The information you provide is important for assessing the quality of our programs.

Please keep us posted if you change your address and let us know if you want to receive “The Crucible” by e-mail, in PDF format.

Also we want to remind you that “The Crucible” accepts contributions from students and alumni, as well as any information that you may like to share with other graduates and students in the college. Send all contributions to my attention.

Dr. Richard E. Talbott, Dean
rtalbott@usouthal.edu

Dr. Julio F. Turrens, Associate Dean
jturrens@usouthal.edu
Department of Biomedical Sciences

Message from the Chair, William B. Davis

The Fall 2008 semester opened with an enrollment count for registered BMD majors at a robust 451. Of these, 198 are classified as freshmen. The enrollment figure also includes a total of 37 University Honors Program students. This represents about 1/3 of the total Honors students across the University. The new Health Sciences Building under construction on the main campus should be available for occupancy by Summer 2009, and just in time to meet the ever-expanding demands on current space.

I am pleased to add that the Biomedical Sciences Departmental Honors Program is well underway. Three individuals have been admitted thus far. The qualifications and expectations for the departmental program parallel those of the University.

Please do not forget to log on to http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/survey.html and complete the information survey form for both the College and the BMD Department. It is important to us to know where our alumni are and what they are doing.

The coming year is expected to be particularly busy with getting ready to move into our new facility. I look forward to reporting our progress in the next edition of “The Crucible.”

William B. Davis, wbdavis@usouthal.edu

BMD Faculty Member Awarded NIH Grant

Dr. Azin Agah, Assistant Professor of Biomedical Sciences, received an R15 three year grant from the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. The grant is to support investigations on “The Molecular Mechanisms of Extracellular Matrix Abnormality in Scleroderma.”

Departmental Honors Students

Amber Bartlett  Daniel Reed  Jennifer Strahan

Department of Cardiorespiratory Care

Message from the Chair, Mr. William Wojciechowski

Dear Alumni,

Well, here we are again – back in the classroom after a summer respite – ready to begin another academic year. This year will be our last at the “old Prov” (aka: the SHAC). We will move into our new digs in June 2009. I’ll keep you posted as that event approaches.

With moving into the new building on campus and with various writing and profession-related activities involving the faculty, this academic year will be a busy one. Tim Op’t Holt has been elected President-Elect for the National Association of Asthma Educators (AAE). He will be President of the AAE next year. Additionally, Tim is this year’s Chair of the AAE National Program Committee. The AAE will meet in the summer of 2009 (late July) in New Orleans.

David Chang finished his tenure last year as Chair of the Committee for the Accreditation of Respiratory Care (CoARC), the committee that oversees respiratory therapy education programs. He will remain on CoARC as Immediate Past President. Bill Pruitt has been appointed to two editorial boards. One for the publication “RT” which is published quarterly and the other is “Nursing 2009.”

The Victory Clinic (VC), where our faculty volunteer to render patient care services primarily for COPD and asthma patients, will now provide Autotitrating Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) for treating patients with sleep apnea. The cost of a conventional sleep study and equipment has been a barrier to the care of VC patients who have sleep apnea symptoms. These patients complain of morning headache, somnolence, falling asleep while driving, and apnea and snoring (spousal complaint) while sleeping at night. The outcomes of untreated sleep apnea include heart failure, hypertension, and vehicle crashes. The faculty will provide a screening questionnaire to assess patients’ symptoms. With assistance of a grant from a local agency, the clinic is purchasing an autotitrating CPAP machine, tubing, and masks. Faculty will teach patients how to use the device to obtain a night of testing for sleep apnea. Once the test is completed, a local pulmonologist and sleep study expert will review the study for accuracy. The patient will then acquire a CPAP machine and other supplies from equipment either donated to the clinic, or purchased directly by the patient. At the clinic, the faculty will evaluate the progress of these patients. Students from the program also interact with faculty and patients at the clinic.

On the credentialing front, so far, 17 of the 22 graduates of the spring of 2008 have applied to take the NBRC Entry-Level Exam, and all 17 have passed. We are pleased with the 100% success rate, but we would like to see the remaining five apply and pass.

As always, please correspond with us from time to time. We enjoy hearing from you and take pride in what you are doing. Best wishes to all.

Bill Wojciechowski, MS, RRT, wwojciec@usouthal.edu
Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences

Message from Vicki Barrett, Interim Chair, Clinical Laboratory Sciences

The changes in the curriculum have been challenging this year. We now have seniors in the 2 plus 2 format and juniors in the 3 plus 1 format. We believe this change can offer a degree in Clinical Laboratory Sciences to additional qualified students. The shortage of Clinical Laboratory Scientists is severe. Many of our professionals are retiring and we are not educating adequate numbers to replace them. A recent survey of local clinical lab managers indicated an average of 33% of their Clinical Laboratory Scientists (medical technologists) will be retiring within the next five years. We have a lot of work to do! Our department recently heard that Dr. Laurie Beth Owen will be returning to Mobile in October. Laurie is a graduate of the CLS Program and received the 2005 USA Outstanding Alumni Award in Science. She was inducted into the Allied Health Hall of Fame in 2006. She is nationally acclaimed as a skin cancer researcher. Dr. Owen will be assuming the position of Associate Director of the Center for Basic and Translational Science (CBTS) at the Mitchell Cancer Institute. Some of her responsibilities are to:

• Plan, implement and supervise all core research support resources of the CBTS
• Develop and implement formal policies and procedures for all CBTS operations
• Lead strategic planning for future facility/infrastructure enhancements and expansions
• Provide essential leadership for ensuring short-term and long-term financial viability of the CBTS and the CBTS-based research enterprise

• Seek, identify, and support the pursuit of all potential sources of funding for the CBTS
• Advise and assist research faculty in the pursuit of peer-review grant funding

We are very proud of Dr. Owen’s accomplishments.

Vicki Barrett, vbarrett@usouthal.edu

FACULTY NEWS

Sally Bru joined the CLS faculty as an Instructor in September. Sally is a Clinical Laboratory Scientist with many years of teaching experience. She was a lab instructor for didactic courses at the University of Southern Mississippi’s CLS Program, and she was a clinical instructor in our Program for many years at USAMC. She was also supervisor of the Chemistry Department and Core Lab. She worked with the Laboratory Information System team for the USA Hospital System prior to joining our faculty. Sally will complete the requirements for a Master’s degree in Instructional Design in December 2008. Sally is assisting with online CLS course development and laboratory instruction.

Welcome Sally!

Marie White has assumed the position of Clinical Director of the Program. In addition to her other duties in the laboratory portion of the CLS didactic courses, she will oversee students during the clinical practica at USA Hospitals, Singing River Hospital, Shands Teaching Hospitals, and Providence Hospital. She is already doing a wonderful job balancing these responsibilities.

CLS DEPARTMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN MOBILE AREA HEALTH OCCUPATIONS CAREER FAIR

This November, the CLS Department will participate in a Health Occupations Career Fair for 9th, 10th and 11th graders who attend any Mobile or Baldwin County school. The event is hosted by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and is part of a plan to address projected shortages of qualified healthcare professionals for the area. As students disembark from their buses, they will observe a staged accident scene. An ambulance is parked next to two crushed cars. The script for the scenario unfolds; a drunk driver has crossed the median on Highway 98 and collided head on with a 36-year-old pregnant female and her ten-year-old son; the drunk driver is dead at the “scene.”

After that dramatic introduction, students will enter the Civic Center. As they move from room to room, they will participate in hands-on activities that represent the roles of different health care professions. Area health care professionals will guide the students through interactive experiences using medical mannequins and real medical equipment. Students will be actively involved in multiple simulations including delivering the baby, treating wounds and broken bones, both resuscitating “patients” and participating in many other representative activities. Our lab simulation will include performing a quick lab test that ties in with the accident scenario. We will help the students understand the importance and significance of those results and stress the lab’s role in the delivery of healthcare.

As the students depart to return to their respective schools, they will be given a booklet that describes the various Allied Health professions, including Clinical Laboratory Science. Hopefully, the Health Occupations Career Fair will make students interested in professions they hadn’t thought about before. The event promises to be an exciting day for area students and we hope they will want to learn more about Clinical Laboratory Sciences.
Message from the Chair, Mr. David Burns

On August 15, 2008, the Department of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Education officially joined the College of Allied Health Professions as the college's ninth academic department. This move is a result of the continuing efforts by the University's administration to shift all medical-related programs under the new Health Sciences umbrella. The Department of EMS Education has been providing educational programs at the University since 1972. The Department offers programs at both the certificate and Bachelor's degree level. The Paramedic program has been nationally accredited by the Committee on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) since 1989.

On June 22, 2007, the Department gained approval by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) to begin offering a new Bachelor of Science degree program in Emergency Medical Services. This new program is one of only 12 programs of its kind in the country and one of only three in the Southeast. No other school in the state of Alabama offers such a program. Currently, there are 18 students enrolled in the degree program and many more are at the preprofessional component level. The Bachelor's program allows graduates of paramedic certificate and associate degree programs the opportunity to build upon their previous clinical training and expand their career opportunities in EMS management, leadership and clinical care. For more information on this program, visit our department's web-site at www.usouthal.edu/ems.

In addition to the academic credit programs, the Department also has a Training Center that provides non-credit and continuing education classes for emergency healthcare professionals, such as paramedics, nurses and physicians. The Center offers classes in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), and International Trauma Life Support (ITLS), to name a few. The Center also provides non-credit training for business and industry. Classes offered include Emergency Medical First Responder, AED training, and Basic Life Support (BLS).

Lastly, the Department has been awarded grant funds of over $500,000 over the last three years to function as the EMS regional coordinating agency for the seven county southwest Alabama EMS region. The purpose of this grant is to provide technical assistance and support to EMS agencies (i.e., ambulance services, fire rescue departments, etc.) in EMS Region 6, and to also serve in a supportive role for the Office of EMS and Trauma in the State Department of Public Health. The Department is anticipating another award of $373,333 in FY 2009 to continue this program. One of the primary objectives this year will be to begin implementation of the regional trauma system plan for EMS region 6.

Our faculty and staff are excited about the new academic year and the new opportunities that joining the College of Allied Health Professions will bring. Our faculty and staff look forward to working with many of you in the near future. If you need us for any reason, please feel free to call us at 431-6418.

David Burns
dburns@usouthal.edu

Message from the Chair, Dr. Rebecca I. Estes

This fall the Department of Occupational Therapy at USA swept the awards at the state conference! Check out the pictures below and join me in congratulating the awardees! We welcome the 28 members of the new incoming Class of 2010 who joined us in August! They are acclimating to the change to graduate classes and are great to work with! Applications for fall 2009 are due by January 15, 2009; they are available on request through the mail or to download online from the USA OT departmental page: http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/ot/. Read on to learn about the many department, university and community activities and services that the students and faculty have been actively involved in!

Dr. Rebecca I. Estes, riestes@usouthal.edu
OT CLUB UPDATE

Representatives from Pi Theta Epsilon and Pre-OT Club, under the direction of Tracy O’Connor participated in the annual JagFest activities to promote the profession of occupational therapy and participation in the Pre-OT Club. Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE) is an OT honor organization that encourages scholastic excellence of its students and enhancement of the profession. Some of our members participated in JagFest on August 16, 2008 to promote the profession of OT. At the beginning of the semester, members participated in orientation activities with the new students including an icebreaker game, survival tips for new students, and a discussion panel to answer any of their questions. We participated in the Alabama Occupational Therapy Association (ALOTA) fall conference by selling drinks as a fundraiser which was a success. Throughout the year, PTE helps our advisor coordinate ALOTA meetings for students and professionals throughout the south district by planning the meetings and sending mail outs. The members participate in the Pre-OT meetings on campus by mentoring to their members about the profession of OT. We include brief discussions about the different areas and how OT is involved, and provide the students with a hands-on experience of the disability and the profession.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE: BACKPACK AWARENESS

SASOTA hosted an event to promote the National Backpack Awareness Day on September 19, 2008. Members weighed backpacks and handed out flyers to USA students to educate about reducing the risk for chronic back pain. For more information on National Backpack Awareness day or Occupational therapy visit www.aota.org.

FACULTY RECOGNITION

Ms. Donna Wooster was awarded a Service Commendation (ALOTA). This award recognizes her as an ALOTA member who has chaired committees, districts or served a full term on the Executive Board. She was also awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for three years of service as the Alabama Representative to the National Association (AOTA).

Dr. Kathy Lemcool won the Elsie Holmes McKibbin Lectureship (ALOTA). This lectureship honors her as an occupational therapist who has made considerable contributions to the body of knowledge of the profession.

She received agency sponsorship to assist in research expenses. She will also present the Elsie Holmes McKibbin Lecture at the next ALOTA Fall Conference.

Dr. Tracy O’Connor won the OT Award of Excellence (ALOTA).

She was recognized as an OTR who has made a significant contribution to the education and professional development of the members of the Alabama Occupational Therapy Association.

FACULTY PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Wooster presented at the Nevada Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference, on: “Interventions for the Picky Eater.” Ms Wooster and Dr. O’Connor did a poster presentation at the same conference on: “Fieldwork Supervisors and Students Perceptions of the Professional Portfolio.” They also had a poster at the Alabama OT conference on: “Portfolios in Occupational Therapy Programs.”

Dr. Estes had a research paper accepted on “Discomfort Levels and Cervical Positions During Tracker-One Use for Computer Access” which she presented at the RESNA 2008 Annual Conference in Washington, DC. Dr. Estes and Dr. Scaffa presented a poster on “Creativity and Resiliency: Does Age Matter?” at the American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference in Long Beach, California.

ON-GOING COMMUNITY SERVICE: FOCUS FIRST

The University of South Alabama, Department of Occupational Therapy continues to provide vision screening to underprivileged children in our communities. The Fall 2008 schedule has the USA OT students branching out to conduct the screenings in Mobile and Washington Counties. Estimates for this Fall semester indicate between 500-700 children will be screened for vision problems.

Children who do not do well on the screening will be referred for further evaluation to the Sight Savers. The occupational therapy students continue to provide excellent leadership and give generously of their time to help our community. This program fits well within the Occupational Therapy program since Occupational Therapists can specialize in the area of low vision and a growing number of clinics are emerging to address the needs of this population.
SOUTH ALABAMA STUDENT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

South Alabama Student Occupational Therapy Association (SASOTA) is an organization that allows occupational therapy students to participate in community service opportunities and leadership within the program. Members attend several conferences throughout the year including the Alabama Occupational Therapy Association (ALOTA) Spring Conference in Fairhope, Alabama, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) National Conference in Long Beach, California, and the ALOTA Fall Conference in Orange Beach, Alabama. At the ALOTA fall conference, SASOTA members participated in a student forum to generate ideas regarding how to increase student and professional membership to ALOTA. The department as a whole received a pizza party for having the highest number of their students with updated ALOTA membership which will be received later in the semester. Joyce Galloway, SASOTA president, received the ALOTA student scholarship and Ryan Thompson won a GPS system given away by Life Care Centers of America. We are very proud of our students and faculty for their achievements and recognitions. Dr. Kathy Lemcool continues as the faculty liaison for this group.

Department of Physician Assistant Studies

Message from the Chair, Dr. Zari Aliabadi

I am delighted to report that the Department of Physician Assistant Studies graduated its 10th class on July 26, 2008. The entire graduating class has taken their national board exam and we are pleased to report a 100% pass rate. The 100% “first time taker” pass rate attained by the class of 2008 is impressively above the national “first time taker” pass rate for the same board exam, 95%, and the national overall pass rate of 91%. The success of our students is due to the hard work of our faculty one of whom, Mr. Dan Vetrosky was recently selected by the American Association of Surgical Physician Assistants to receive the prestigious John W. Kirklin, M.D. Award for Professional Excellence. This award is bestowed to surgical physician assistants who make significant contributions in promoting their profession and has had only 16 recipients in the past 22 years. We are also proud of the newest member of our faculty Mr. Todd Smith who joined us on August 15, 2008 and has already been a great success. Mr. Smith received his degree from our program and has been practicing as a Gastroenterology PA since 2005. We celebrated our department while celebrating the national PA week by having an open house on October 8. Students and faculty were present to welcome all who came to visit. Over 50 individuals from the community, faculty and staff from the Colleges of Allied Health Professions and Medicine attended the event. We were glad to see such a response to this event.

Our guest writer is Cassie Bullock, PA-C, class of 2007. Cassie is employed at the USA Children’s and Women’s Hospital as a member of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, PICU, medical staff. I would like to thank Cassie for taking time out of her very busy schedule to write for us.

CASSIE BULLOCK, PA-C USA CHILDREN’S AND WOMEN’S HOSPITAL

When I started PA school in May of 2005 I knew I loved critical care medicine, but I never thought I would have the opportunity to pursue my passion. Job opportunities for physician assistants are always changing and evolving but it was well known that critical care PAs were not utilized at South Alabama. Therefore, I worked my way through PA school expecting to search for a job in either family practice or OB/GYN, my other areas of interest, once I completed my training. My professors knew me well, and were aware of my secret passion for critical care medicine, so they too were searching for future job
openings in critical medicine for me. It was during my clinical year that I received the call. An elective opportunity had presented itself in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at the USA Children’s and Women’s Hospital. As you can imagine, I was thrilled to receive the news but also petrified of taking care of critically ill children. This was a position I had never considered, but I was eager to learn more and thus my journey began. Once I started my elective rotation, I realized that I loved this work even more than I could have imagined but the position for a pediatric ICU PA did not even exist. Thankfully as I worked to complete my degree this position was created and it became available soon after I graduated. I applied for the job and was elated to be chosen to join the medical staff of PICU.

I have now been working in the PICU for just over a year and I cannot begin to describe the amazing opportunities I have experienced. Our PICU is a 14-bed unit that is staffed with two pediatric intensive care physicians, one general pediatrician, rotating pediatric residents, and myself. I start each morning by seeing each of the children, evaluating immediate needs, ordering various diagnostic tests, and ensuring proper medications are being administered. The pediatric residents and I see all patients everyday and write our progress notes. The team rounds begins shortly after and we discuss each patient’s progress. Our PICU is a closed unit; therefore we are the primary team in all instances except for surgical patients. Our physicians rotate on a weekly basis due to their strenuous hours. Therefore, my main role is to provide continuity of care for the patients, their family members, and our consulting physicians. Once we have completed daily rounds, the procedure portion of my day begins. All procedures are on an individual basis but they include placement of central venous lines, peripherally inserted central lines, and arterial lines just to name a few. In addition to managing our PICU patients, we also offer deep sedation services for non PICU children who may need peripherally inserted central catheters, burn dressing changes, or abscess incision and drainage. Each day is full of new and exciting events because our patient population is so diverse. We treat children who range in age from two days to eighteen years old. I have been blessed to have the opportunity to work in this wonderful caring environment to help provide excellent care to children who need it. I am very fortunate to be a part of the fun. Also, if you might have the address or phone number of an alumnus with whom you would like to be part of an Alumni Advisory Group to facilitate alumni activities and advise the department, and also plan several regional alumni reunions, contact Dr. Fell at dfell@jaguar1.usouthal.edu to become a part of the fun. Also, if you might have the address or phone number of an alumnus with whom we have lost contact, call (251)434-3575 or e-mail dept@jaguar1.usouthal.edu. We encourage each of you to join the USA Alumni Association http://www.southalabama.edu/alumni and specify your request to become a member of the PT Alumni Society (no extra fee). This will help to support our alumni events. The PT Alumni Event in Mobile on September 19th had over 50 attendees. Crystal Jones (2007) drove the farthest to attend – over 220 miles. The Class of 2007 had the best attendance with six present. And the alumnus representing the earliest class was Noel Phillips Fell (1982).
Is our Web-based DPT Program for Licensed Physical Therapists for YOU???

Our Doctor of Physical Therapy Program for licensed physical therapists (tDPT) program has grown really quickly. We now have nearly 70 PTs enrolled in this fully web-based program and as of Summer 2008, eight students have graduated from the program (see below) with an anticipated additional 12 students graduating in Fall 2008. You can advance your MPT degree to the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) under the guidance of experienced and encouraging faculty at South. Admission is now open only to MPT graduates of the University of South Alabama. As the number of applicants drops the program will be phased out, so don’t wait to apply. The fully web-based program consists of a minimum 20 semester credits of online courses, completed at your own pace while you work. More specific information including the application can be found at the website: http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/pt/onlinedpt.html. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Jean Irion, the Web-Based DPT Program Coordinator at: jirion@jaguar1.usouthal.edu or (251)434-3577.

Congratulations to the four individuals who graduated from the USA Web-based DPT program for licensed physical therapists in May 2008: Miira C Allen DPT (Merrill, WI), Anne M. Boster DPT (Mobile, AL), Rita M Gedney DPT (Pensacola, FL), and Amy C Koval DPT (Rockville, MD); and the two who completed the degree in August 2008 Petra Place DPT (Austin, TX) and Anne Rabern DPT (Prescott, AZ).

USA Physical Therapy Alumni "Facebook" Group

As an opportunity to enhance social networking (in this Web 2.0 world) among USA PT graduates, Dr. Fell has started a Facebook group for “USA Physical Therapy Alumni.” If you have a Facebook account and he hasn’t located you yet, please request to join the group. It’ll be a fun way to keep in touch with your classmates and share photos! Please join us in this new interactive venue. When you log into Facebook (www.facebook.com), and open your account, click on “Groups” and search for “USA Physical Therapy Alumni.” Then you can request to join the group and Dr. Fell will approve so you can see who has already joined. You will have a chance to reconnect with many friends.

Dr. Charles Gray honored at retirement

Dr. Charles Gray who retired in August 2008 after nearly 33 years of teaching Human Anatomy, was honored in both a University retirement reception and an alumni party. It is amazing to think that he will have taught anatomy to 893 PTs including the DPT Class of 2010. His family was able to join him for the University reception on August 25 at the University Terrace, with over 80 in attendance, including wife Linda, son Jeremy Gray, (PT Alumnus 1997) daughter Jennifer Gray Cole, the three grandchildren and a set of twins on the way (family photo attached). At the PT Alumni Celebration in Mobile on September 19th, attendees made additional contributions to the Charles P. Gray PT Scholarship bringing the total-to-date to over $12,000. Several alumni, including Sid Scarborough (1988), Kai McGee Shepherd (1993) Shannon Lassiter Lands (2002), Joanie Friedlander (1989), Hope Backstrom (1991), and Crystal Jones (2007) expressed their tremendous gratitude for the impact Dr. Gray has had on their lives and practice. You can still honor Dr. Gray with a donation to the scholarship, payable to USA PT Department, Mail to Dr. Dennis Fell, USA PT Department, 1504 Springhill Avenue, Room 1214, Mobile, AL 36604. All donations from faculty, University alumni and students will be submitted for matching funds. For example, a $100 donation would increase the fund by $200. All donations to the scholarship are tax-deductible.

ALUMNI UPDATES:

Here is the latest information Dr. Fell has gathered on alumni. We want to include you in the next issue!

Phillip Carroll (1993) moved back to Ruston, LA in 1995 and has worked in home health since then. He now owns his own home health company and enjoys a busy and productive practice.

Julie Brown (2008) and Jonathan Weathers (2008) were married July 12th and now reside in North Georgia.

Lauren Brown Connolly (2005) married husband Sean in November 2006. They have been living here on the Gulf Coast, but recently moved to Philadelphia.

Tony Kennon (1987) was recently elected the Mayor of Orange Beach, Alabama.

Katie Moore (2007) and husband Scott had their second child, Jude Scott Moore, on May 8th. At 8 lbs. 9 oz. and 21.75 inches, Katie says, “He's great!”
**Physical Therapy continued...**

**FACULTY PRESENTATIONS/PUBLICATIONS**

Dr. Dennis Fell and Judy Burnham, Director of the USA Biomedical Library, presented a course together on Web 2.0 tool applications to PT education and clinical practice at the APTA Annual Conference 2008 in San Antonio, TX, June, 2008.

Dr. Elisa Kennedy was a facilitator for the Early Intervention Knowledge Network and presented a poster entitled “An Online Support Group: Health-related Informational Needs of Families with Premature Infants” at the APTA Annual Conference 2008 in San Antonio, Texas.

Professor John Jefferson had a Multimedia Technology Presentation “The Use of CD-ROM/DVD Interactive Case Histories in the Orthopedic Assessment of Peripheral Joints” at the APTA Annual Conference 2008 in San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Elisa Kennedy was a speaker at the 24th Annual Alabama Early Intervention and Preschool Conference “Core Strengthening and Sensorimotor Activities” Mobile, Alabama, November 19-21, 2008.

Laura White, PT, MS, GCS, an adjunct instructor, co-presented an educational session entitled “Mental Health and Wellness Promotion” at the APTA 2008 Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

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**Message from the Chair, Dr. Charles Newell**

The 2008-09 academic year is well underway and the Department of Radiologic Sciences program begins its 32nd year of operation! Thirty eight first-year students were admitted to the Certificate program, and will join thirty four second-year students who are already looking forward to graduation. Our B.S. program enrollment continues to grow with a current enrollment of: MRI (14), Ultrasound (6), Radiation Therapy (16), CT (7), Mammography (4) and Cardio-Vascular (5). The combined departmental enrollment for the Fall semester is 124.

The pass rate for program graduates on the ARRT exam continues to be very good. With two students yet to take the ARRT exam, all other graduates of the Class of 2008 received a 100% first-time pass rate, and we are certainly proud of these graduates.

Graduation for the Class of 2008 was held at the Laidlaw Performing Arts Center on July 24, 2008. Twenty seven students graduated, and the center was filled to capacity. Ms. Anna Kubala, Class of 1991, was the guest speaker, and she provided an excellent presentation. As you may recall, Anna was the featured graduate student in the Graduate Corner section of the 2008 Spring Edition of “The Crucible.” During graduation ceremonies, those graduates recognized for academic and clinical achievement were: Andrew Preston, Graduate Student Award, as well as the Dean’s Award; Mike Smith received the Mallinckrodt Award; Ms. Kimberly Jordan, R.T.(R) received the Clinical Adjunct Instructor of the Year Award, and is employed at Springhill Medical Center. Once again, our appreciation goes to the 2008 Class officers who made significant contributions via support for their fellow class members and the Department. The 2008 class officers were: Samantha Smith, President, Jessica Merritt, Vice President, Jessica Outlaw, Secretary and Alison Garrett, Treasurer.

Charles Newell, cnnewell@jaguar1.usouthal.edu

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**DEPARTMENT NEWS**

Members of the Department’s Advisory Committee for the 2008-2009 academic year are as follows:

- Laura Cleveland, Administrative Director
- Department of Radiology
- Springfield Medical Center
- Mary Hamblin, Administrative Director
- Department of Radiology
- USA Health Services
- Anthony Mosley, Administrative Director
- Department of Radiology
- Infirmary Health Systems
- Kathy Linam, Administrative Director
- Department of Radiology
- Thomas Hospital
- Joseph Thompson, Administrative Director
- Department of Radiology
- Providence Hospital
- Cathy Naylor (Murphy), Faculty
- Department of Radiologic Sciences
- University of South Alabama

- Nick Stout, Student
- Department of Radiologic Sciences
- University of South Alabama
- Misty Davis, Teaching Technologist
- Department of Radiologic Sciences
- University of South Alabama
- Katie Harrison, Student
- Department of Radiologic Sciences
- University of South Alabama

In June 2007, the Radiography Program was site visited by the national accreditation agency, the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT). The JRCERT’s official response in 2008 awarded full accreditation for a period of eight years.

The Alabama Society of Radiation Oncologists (ASRO) gave an additional $5000 in scholarship funds to the Department of Radiologic Sciences in 2008. Scholarships derived from this fund are awarded to a deserving student in the Radiation Therapy program. Radiography scholarship recipients for the 2007-2008 academic year were: Linda Countess – Mary Lou Littleton Scholarship Fund ($2000), Jared Farris and Stephanie Grabowsky – Department of Radiologic Sciences Scholarship Fund ($500 each). Total donations derived from the Spring Semester 2008 Annual Fund drive for the Department of Radiologic Sciences Scholarship Program was $5,426, plus the additional $5000 donated via ASRO. A special thanks is extended to those individuals for providing contributions to our scholarship fund. We will continue to maintain our efforts in this regard in 2009, as we strive to provide financial assistance for deserving students.

The Radiation Therapy program was pleased to host a radiation therapy student, Ms Nikki Echols, from Cardiff University in Wales, UK for two weeks during the 2008 Summer semester. Ms. Echols requested the elective placement at USA...
with the goal of observing the differences in treatment techniques in the US in comparison to those currently used in the UK. She was able to observe procedures in all of our clinical education settings, had the opportunity to meet with physicists, therapists, and radiation oncologists to discuss newer modalities, and sat in on several departmental lectures. She found the techniques employed here to be more advanced technologically than those in her clinical rotations at Cardiff. She also joined USA students in a day of volunteer service at Camp Rap-A-Hope, a camp for children with cancer. A roundtable discussion held the final day for USA students, instructors, and Ms. Echols proved that everyone involved found this to be a wonderful learning opportunity. Her visit allowed faculty and students to discuss professional issues of the radiation therapist in the US and UK.

**GRADUATE CORNER**

The featured graduate for this edition of “The Crucible” is Henry Koehler, Class of 1989. Henry is one of many of our students who, for various reasons, set out in life to pursue one profession, and later decided to enter another profession. Henry received a BS degree in Animal Sciences from Auburn University in 1978. His plan was to become a Veterinarian! Time and circumstances intervened, and Henry became employed in a variety of occupations, including the ownership of his own business. His initial interest in the care of the sick and injured eventually caused Henry to return to school again, and he entered our Radiography program in 1986. Owing to Henry’s past academic experience, the entry level prerequisite courses posed few problems for him. I hasten to add that in my opinion, the radiography courses were not particularly problematic for Henry as well, even though I do recall a minor dispute in Disease class regarding the presence of chlorophyll in various fungi. Be that as it may, Henry was an excellent student, and his advancement in our profession is a reflection of his academic accomplishments. With regards to advancement, Henry began his radiography career at USAMC, and soon became a night supervisor. He held this position until South Baldwin Regional Medical Center came calling. Although Henry had previously applied for the position of Administrative Director of Radiology at South Baldwin, he decided not to apply when the position was vacated in 2000. He received, phone calls from friends at South Baldwin urging him to apply, but Henry was convinced he should stay at USAMC. A final phone call came from the South Baldwin Hospital Administrator, who would not take no for an answer. The administrator asked for directions to Henry’s home, and within minutes was knocking on Henry’s door. Henry, still in the recovery mode from a night at USAMC, answered the door in what may be termed casual dress (flip flops, gym shorts, T-shirt) and a formal or informal interview began. So, one of Henry’s most important interviews, dressed as previously described, ended with Henry accepting the position as Administrative Director of Radiology. Like other first-time administrators, Henry experienced the burden of being assigned to every hospital committee conceivable and in the process, had to prove his abilities to those who did not know him well. Unfortunately for Henry, he has somewhat of a problem in saying no, and usually lives to regret it. However, Henry figured out the internal ropes of the hospital, its inherent culture, and proved himself to others soon after becoming a faint memory. With these accomplishments behind him, Henry quickly began the process of assessing his department’s needs. Much of the existing equipment had seen their best days, and this is where Henry began to make improvements. Over time, the department has seen the acquisition of two CT scanners, a state of the art MRI unit, two ultrasound units, a PET/CT unit and a PACS system. Moreover, the hospital has extended its diagnostic offerings to the Gulf Shores area, which now possesses the same diagnostic capabilities as the hospital. All of this was accomplished in seven short years under the capable direction of Henry Koehler. Henry’s other life experiences are certainly worthy of mention. Along the way, Henry managed to serve thirty-one years in the Alabama National Guard where he was twice awarded the Bronze Star Medal for service during Operation Desert Storm. He also played a significant role in the planning of military security for the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah, following the attack on the World Trade Center Towers. Yes, Henry has been a busy man, but still manages to find time to go fishing, and raise cattle, not to mention the fact that he and his wife Deborah have raised four children, and are now grandparents. I believe Henry best summarized his life experiences when he said, “To me, life has never been dull or without challenge. Every day is there for the picking, and what we do with it is what counts. I had my life planned to go to the School of Veterinary Medicine at Auburn University. Looking back, I realize that I could not have touched so many lives as I have in Radiology. I have no regrets.” Well said Henry, and equally important to those who know you and the patients you serve. Radiology is indeed fortunate that you made that important decision way back in 1986. Best wishes to Henry, Deborah and their growing family.

**FACULTY NEWS**


Ms. Debra Durick gave a “Radiographic Positioning” lecture to the annual Spring ALSRT student meeting in Montgomery, Alabama. Ms. Durick was also honored by the ALSRT at the annual State meeting for her service to the ALSRT as Vice President for 2007-2008.

Mr. Chucri Jalkh gave a “Contrast Media” lecture to the annual Spring ALSRT student meeting in Montgomery, Alabama.

Dr. Newell gave lectures in “Radiation Physics, Imaging Receptors and Skull Positioning” to the annual Spring ALSRT student meeting in Montgomery, Alabama. Another lecture, “The U.S. Supreme Court’s Role In Shaping Federal Disability Legislation,” was presented to the annual ALSRT State meeting during the Spring meeting in 2008.

Ms. Cathy Cooper gave a presentation, “Pulmonary Embolism,” to the annual ALSRT State meeting during the Spring meeting in 2008.

All faculty gave presentations during the Department’s 30th Annual Registry Review Seminar in March, 2008.

As alumni, please remember, you are cordially invited to visit our web site at www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/radiologicsciences. As always, we encourage you to consider assisting other students in our program through donations to our scholarship program. Arrangements to make donations to the Department of Radiologic Sciences Scholarship Fund can be made by contacting Ms. Ginny Turner, Associate Director of Development, at (251) 460-7032. Regardless of the amount, your support will be sincerely appreciated. Alumni are encouraged to submit items of interest for publication in “The Crucible.” Please let us hear from you. Direct your submissions to: Dr. Charles Newell, Department of Radiologic Sciences, 1504 Springhill Avenue, Suite 2515, Mobile, AL 36604-3273. Again, let us hear from you!
Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology

Message from the Chair, Dr. Robert Moore

In August, the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology admitted 27 new students to the Masters of Speech-Language Pathology and Doctor of Audiology programs. We also welcomed two Ph.D. students. This brings our totals to 33 SLP graduate students, 32 AUD graduate students, and 8 Ph.D. students. Our students continue to do well on the national Praxis exam for certification. Of our first two AuD classes, 100% have passed the exam. In our last two MSSLP classes, 98% have passed the exam.

Robert Moore, rmoore@usouthal.edu

RECENT FACULTY/STUDENT PUBLICATIONS


FACULTY/STUDENT NEWS

In August we welcomed two new faculty members who also happen to be husband and wife:

Dr. Kelli Evans is an Assistant Professor in speech pathology. Dr. Evans is originally from Maine and received her M.A. in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Maine-Orono. Her specialty areas include cognitive communication disorders, aphasia, and traumatic brain injury. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, in August, 2008. She is currently teaching graduate level courses in the areas of acquired disorders of language and cognition and medical speech-language pathology.

Mr. David Evans is currently an Instructor in speech pathology. He will receive his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in December, 2008. At that time he will assume the position of Assistant Professor in the Department. Mr. Evans is originally from Colorado. He received his M.A. in Communication Sciences from the University of Maine-Orono. His specialty areas include the physiological and perceptual correlates of stuttering. He is currently teaching graduate level courses in the area of fluency.

Dr. Michael Carpenter has announced that he is returning to his native North Carolina at the end of the Fall semester to pursue other interests. Dr. Carpenter has been an Associate Professor in the Department since 2004. He has been a valuable member of the Department and will be missed. We wish Mike, Tris, Ethan, and Grant the best for the future. A search has begun to replace Dr. Carpenter, chaired by Dr. Ishara Ramkissoon.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

Each year one student pursuing an MSSLP degree, one student pursuing an AuD degree, and one student pursuing an Undergraduate degree in Speech and Hearing Sciences are awarded Marjorie Faircloth Scholarships for excellence in the classroom and clinic. The Marjorie Faircloth Scholarships are named in honor of our first departmental Chair, Dr. Marjorie Faircloth. These scholarships are funded by donations from alumni, friends, and faculty of the Department. This year’s honorees are:

Stephanie Langston – MSSLP
Felicia Cordell Owens – AuD
Jeni L. Riddle – Undergraduate
The Crucible
University of South Alabama
College of Allied Health Professions
UCOM 1500
307 N. University Blvd.
Mobile, Alabama 36688-0002

Visit us online at http://www.usouthal.edu/alliedhealth.
Contact us to receive your copy of “The Crucible”.
Send us your contact information so that we may add you to our mailing list.

Websites of interest to Faculty, Staff, Students and Alumni

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