Hello again from the University of South Alabama’s Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions. I am hopeful that with the coming of the Fall weather, everyone’s new academic year is off to a smooth start and happy to report that we are enjoying the annual excitement of welcoming new students, greeting returning students, and launching another exciting academic term. The University has set new records in terms of its enrollment, 16055 students, and the College is certainly contributing to that success with our continued substantial growth in both our undergraduate and graduate programs. The information I hear from our colleagues across the country is consistent with our experience here in Mobile, that is, that the health professions are enjoying ever increasing application numbers to our programs and thus an ever increasing quality of our graduates. While obviously of benefit to our institutional bottom lines, it more importantly bodes well for the quality of care that future individuals requiring our services will receive and the quality of the scholarship of our graduates. As you can see from the reports from the departments, our faculty continue to provide excellent educational and clinical preparation for our students and we are very pleased with the almost 100% employment rates of our graduates. This of course is due to the quality of the graduates and their top percentile scores on national and state qualifying exams. Our alumni have been very generous and supportive of our programs through scholarship endowments and other development support of the College. We appreciate all you do to maintain the high quality of programs at South Alabama and are pleased to bring you the updates included herein from our departments and offer our best wishes for the coming year. We also look forward to hearing from our graduates and colleagues across the country and would invite your contact if we can be of any service. I would especially enjoy the opportunity to welcome you to our campus and building should your travels bring you to Mobile. Best wishes for a prosperous and healthful year.

Rick Talbott, Ph.D. 
rtalbott@southalabama.edu

This year the advising office has had major changes. After more than 10 years working in the advising office, Ms. Selicia Hughes moved to Huntsville to take a new job at Alabama A&M. We wish her the best in her new position. The new advisor for Biomedical Sciences and for Speech and Hearing Sciences is Ms. Karen LaSarge. Ms. LaSarge came from the department of Physician Assistant Studies.

In addition to Mr. Hunt and Ms. LaSarge, we had to create a position to hire a third advisor for the college. The new advisor is Ms. Linda Stearns, and she came to us from the Registrar’s office. It was necessary to create this advising position because of the increasing number of students in the Professional Health Sciences program. Currently there are over 300 students enrolled in this program. In addition to students in the Professional Health Sciences, Ms. Stearns will advise students enrolled in Cardiorespiratory Care.

The Advising Office implemented a new online service for students to make or modify appointments with their advisors. Not only can students make the appointment at a convenient time, but this service also reminds students of their upcoming appointment 24 hours ahead of time.

Qualifying students in EMS, Paramedic, and Radiologic Sciences continue to be eligible to receive a subsidy through the Workforce Investment Act. The funds are up to $10,000 per year for a total of two years and are awarded based on the financial need of the applicant. For more information, you may contact the chairperson in each of those three programs.

As always, feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments. If any of your classmates (current or former) does not receive The Crucible, please let us know so we can add their email address to our mailing list.

Julio F. Turrens, Ph.D. 
jturrens@southalabama.edu
New Development Officer for Allied Health Professions

MESSAGE FROM MORGAN SEELEY, NEW DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

As the new Development Officer for Health Sciences, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and let you know how delighted I am to work with the Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health. I look forward to helping our college continue to grow and provide opportunities to move USA to a nationally competitive level.

In the past few months we have received several generous contributions, including the Dr. Marjorie E. Scaffa Professorship in Occupational Therapy. If you would like more information about ways you can honor your department in the form of a private contribution, please contact me directly at mseeley@southalabama.edu or 251-414-8065.

Biomedical Sciences

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, DR. WILLIAM B. DAVIS

We are into the fall semester 2014 and the BMD program continues to be a solid major for the University.

As of Fall 2014, the program has over 500 students for the 5th year in a row including 202 freshmen enrollees. Biomedical Science majors currently make up about 30% of all prehealth students across the institution. Out of 65 Medical School Early Acceptance Program students, there are 44 Biomedical Science majors. At least 20 of the 2014 spring BMD graduates who applied have entered post baccalaureate health programs. It is also noted that of the 203 University Honors students, 44 are BMD Majors. Of those 44, there are 7 senior BMD majors completing an Honors Research Thesis for the 2014-15 academic year.

We welcomed a new addition to the BMD faculty in May of this year, Dr. Brad Swiger. Dr. Swiger is a graduate of both the BMD program and the Basic Medical Sciences Ph.D. program here at USA. He comes to us from the University of Mobile. Dr. Swiger is an Assistant Professor and teaches Anatomy & Physiology I & II for the BMD Department.

IN THE NEWS

Pat Capps Covey Biomedical Sciences Scholarship

The recipients of the Patsy Capps Covey Biomedical Sciences Scholarship for the 2014-15 academic year are: Jonathan Bui, Shawn Deas, Isabel Kessler, Christopher J. Riley, and Cade Watson. These students are upper division Biomedical Science majors. Applications for this scholarship are accepted during the spring semester and are awarded to the students the following fall semester toward tuition and fees.

Congratulations to Isabel Kessler (left) and Shawn Deas (right). Not pictured are: Jonathan Bui, Christopher Riley, and Cade Watson.

UCUR Summer Research Program

Two BMD majors received Summer Research grants from the UCUR Summer 2014 Research Program and worked in Dr. Michael Spector’s lab: Anu Pandit and Devang Patel. Angela McGaugh was part of the Volunteer program.

Ms. Andrea Butts, a senior student in Biomedical Sciences, received an award for the top project in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program. The title of her project is: “Regulation of Mucin 1 (MUC1) and Multi Drug Resistance- Associated Protein (MRP-1) by Honokiol in Breast Cancer Cell Line, MCF-7”. She will present a poster at the 2015 National Conference on Undergraduate Research in Spokane, Washington, in April of next year.
FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Ms. Patricia Brewer (Radiologic Sciences), Ms. Sally Bru (Biomedical Sciences-Retired) and Dr. Terry Ravine (Biomedical Sciences) teamed up to conduct a clinical research study, which examined a potential source of microbial infection for radiation therapy patients. Samples taken from water baths used to heat moldable thermoplastic patient immobilization forms were cultured for detectable microorganism growth. Results indicated that 42% of the sampled heating devices demonstrated bacterial growth. These findings along with a set of recommendations to prevent infectious agent transfer to these debilitated patients are being published as a peer review article in the next edition of Radiation Therapist one of two journals published by the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT). Interdepartmental studies like this one really can have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the patients we serve.


Dr. Mockett and Dr. Shokolenko also authored publications this year:


Dr. Julio F. Turrens authored publications as well:


FACULTY PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Kari J. Dugger presented a poster at a recent meeting:


Dr. Julio F. Turrens gave presentations:

Webinar on Responsible Conduct of Research, Council on Undergraduate Research.


Keynote speaker at the 9th Undergraduate research Stupka Symposium, Department of Biochemistry and Biophysicis. Iowa State University, April 3rd 2014.

Dr. Thulasiraman gave a presentation:

Thulasiraman, P. Natural Products and Breast Cancer: Restoring sensitivity to retinoic acid by curcumin in triple negative breast cancer cell lines. Noncoding RNA Forum, March 2014

AWARDS AND HONORS

The following faculty members were designated by a student sponsor for the “Top Prof” award by the Mortar Board Honor Society for 2013-2014:

Robin J. Mockett
Michael Spector
Padma Thulasiraman
Julio F. Turrens

Dr. Stanfield will be the site coordinator again this year for the 27th Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup at Municipal Park on September 20th. Please contact her for volunteer opportunities!
Cardiorespiratory Care

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, MR. WILLIAM WOJCIECHOWSKI

Dear Alumni,

Well, the fall semester is in full swing. We have a class of 22 enthusiastic and eager juniors anticipating each day of class, and 22 weary seniors looking forward to graduation.

The faculty have had a busy and gratifying academic year. Tim Op't Holt has been selected by the American Respiratory Care Foundation to be the recipient of the Mike West Patient Education Achievement Award. This recognition goes to a respiratory therapist who demonstrates excellence in patient education. Tim earned this tribute for his efforts in spearheading and coordinating the work done by the faculty at the Victory Health Partners clinic in Mobile. Bill Pruitt was selected as the Outstanding Asthma Educator by the Association of Asthma Educators. Congratulations to Tim and Bill for these meritorious honors. Bill Wojciechowski completed his first year as Vice-President of the Alabama Society for Respiratory Care.

The Department faculty have been involved with implementing problem-based learning (PBL) in the baccalaureate degree program at the University of Dammam in Dammam, Saudi Arabia where Dr. Hajed Alotaibi (class of 2001) is Chair of the respiratory therapy program. Two of the faculty, Bill Wojciechowski and Tim Op’t Holt, have already spent eight weeks each at the University of Dammam (UD) teaching humidity and aerosol therapy, bronchial hygiene therapy, and airway management, as well as working with faculty there to implement PBL. Dr. David Chang and Bill Pruitt will be in Dammam during this fall semester teaching mechanical ventilation and completing the implementation of PBL into the UD curriculum.

The program faculty remain vibrant and industrious, as they continue to work to meet the needs of the students and the respiratory therapy profession.

Another open invitation goes out to all the alumni of this program to visit us tail-gating at all the Jaguar football games played at Ladd-Peebles Stadium. We gather hours before each home game in the parking lot behind the south end zone scoreboard. We would like to see you there.

In closing, we trust that you are enjoying a rewarding and fulfilling career. Please feel free to contact us anytime. Go Jags!!!

Emergency Medical Services

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, MR. CHARLES ERWIN

Growing Programs: The Emergency Medical Services Department has been in existence for 41 years and recently has witnessed many exciting changes. While we were located on the Brookley Campus, the department was focused solely on training paramedics. Since moving to the Main Campus, the department has expanded the scope of our educational programs by offering a bachelor's degree in both Emergency Medical Services and Professional Health Sciences. As a result of our degree expansion, our department has enjoyed an increase in student population from 50 to 60 students to nearly 600 students in 2014.

BS / EMS Degree Program: As the program continues to grow, we are pleased to announce that this degree program was approved in May 2013 by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), validating our bachelor's degree in EMS. Of the twenty-four institutions in the nation offering an EMS baccalaureate degree, our program is the third largest. The BS in EMS has grown from 155 students in 2013 to 211 students in 2014. Information on the Bachelor's Degree in the Emergency Medical Services program is located at www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/ems or contact Ronald Morgan, BS Program Director remorgan@southalabama.edu.

BS / Professional Health Sciences Degree Program: Our Department is the home for the Professional Health Sciences Degree program. This program is designed for students who wish to have a well rounded background in health sciences, but do not wish to pursue a specific professional degree. This degree path also allows students in pre-professional programs that have changed their mind about specific professional degree programs to apply most of their course credits towards another degree. The program provides broad information in health-related disciplines and also in health informatics. Graduates from this program should be suited to work in the hospital setting, health insurance companies, pharmaceuticals, long-term care facilities, administrative assistants to hospital managers, physician offices, or health informatics technicians. The degree offers two tracks to choose from: Healthcare Informatics or Health Care Management. This exciting degree path has grown from 244 students in 2013 to 341 students in 2014. Information on the program is located at www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/ems or contact Ms. Linda Stearns, Academic Advisor for Allied Health Professions at lstearns@southalabama.edu.
Emergency Medical Services continued ...

EMS Certificate Program: Our certificate programs continue to grow as well. The three certificate programs include: EMT (one semester), AEMT (one semester), and Paramedic (three semesters). The National EMS Education Standards have now been fully implemented and the first cohort took their national certification examinations in December and accomplished a 100% first time pass rate. This program has grown from 23 students in 2013 to 48 students in 2014. Information on the program is located at www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/ems or contact Jason Brooks, Program Director jbrooks@southalabama.edu.

Alabama Gulf EMS System (ADPH EMS Region 6): AGEMSS has been awarded our ninth contract with the Alabama Department of Public Health to serve as the regional agency for the seven southwest counties: Baldwin, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, and Washington. This year’s contract is $222,622 with the nine year total of $2,104,197.00.

The region must continue to maintain the trauma system; establish a stroke and STEMI system; provide trauma system orientation; assist with primary education (Emergency Medical Responder and Emergency Medical Technician); provide continuing education classes; provide protocol education, updates, and evaluation; maintain the Medical Director's Accountability Committee and Plan; maintain the Regional Trauma Advisory Council; and maintain the regional quality improvement plan. The Alabama Gulf EMS System has been the leader in the progression of EMS policy and education in the state by developing and successfully gaining approval from the Alabama State Board of Health for a heparin pilot study with Medstar EMS, Cardiology Associates, and Thomas Hospital. The region has also been tasked with the development of state STEMI and stroke plans. The region has invested in the department by purchasing a $25,000 TBL classroom and has also purchased a significant amount of new lab equipment including an ambulance that can be used as a mobile lab. The region has also been very active in continuing education by providing education for 959 regional EMT’s and Paramedics. Information on the program is located at www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/ems or contact David Garmon, Executive Director dgarmon@usouthal.edu or agemss@usouthal.edu.

Department of EMS’s Continued Commitment to Service: Our commitment to the university and the local community continues to be very strong as we have five of our faculty who serve as paramedics for the Jaguar football team, which has saved the athletic department thousands of dollars by donating our expertise in emergency service to the team during summer camps and football games. We were able to fill our vacant faculty position with an outstanding new faculty member, Tom Dixon. Our department was honored by the accomplishment of one of our faculty, Amanda Creel, who published internationally at the EISTA Conference where she won “Best Paper”. We also continue to offer free CPR classes to local school teachers, most recently we have provided education and certification to Grand Bay Middle School and Baldwin County Christian School, and we also offer an annual free CPR class to the staff and faculty of the University.

Charlie O. Erwin; cerwin@southalabama.edu

Occupational Therapy

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM CHAIR, DR. DONNA WOOSTER

As we start the new academic year it’s important to note that some major and important changes have happened as the Department of Occupational Therapy continues to grow. I have stepped up to the role of Interim Chair for the Department of Occupational Therapy. All our USA graduates know me, as I have been here for twenty years now. This is a very exciting opportunity for me. Our former chair, Dr. Marjorie Scaffa, has decided to step down from the chair’s position to work with the College of Nursing for several years on grant funded research. Dr. Scaffa remains within the department teaching courses and engaging in scholarly work.

The Occupational Therapy Department is now actively engaging our students in research projects that they start and follow through with over three semesters. This past year our students conducted research on mirror therapy for post stroke patients, sensory motor food play for children who are resistant eaters, OT practitioners’ knowledge and confidence at screening geriatric clients for depression, and the efficacy of a sleep workshop for parents of children with autism. Each project provided some community service as well as addressed the need to learn to conduct research for our students. This is very exciting for the university, the community, and our occupational therapy profession as we contribute evidence regarding the interventions we provide.

I participated in a community service project with our OT students called Homeless Connect. We participated in interdisciplinary health screenings for individuals who are homeless. The event provided an abundant variety of services from all types of agencies under one roof for one day at the Mobile Civic Center. It was amazing to watch all the students in action as we screened and helped so many individuals.

Charlie O. Erwin; cerwin@southalabama.edu
Recently we received approval to search for two additional full-time faculty members. One position requires that the applicant have a doctoral degree; it can be a PhD, EdD or OTD. The other position is for an applicant with an earned master’s degree and several years of experience. Please get the word out, and if you or someone you know is interested, please contact the department at 251-445-9222.

The Department of Occupational Therapy is thriving as we continue to fulfill our mission by providing quality education in occupational therapy, contributing to the scholarship of our profession and improving the health and quality of life of people in the community through service.

Dr. Donna Wooster; dawooster@southalabama.edu

**Occupational Therapy Faculty**

**NEW FULL-TIME FACULTY**

**Allison Steele, MS, OTR/L**

Assistant Professor and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator

This summer we welcomed Allison Steele full time to our program as our Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Allison brings lots of enthusiasm to the job and has already been calling and coordinating fieldwork sites. She has worked in the Mobile area for several years and knows many of you already. If you want to take level I or level II OT students and do not yet have a contract with us please call Allison at 445-9233. Allison will also be serving the Alabama Occupational Therapy Association as the South District Chair and will be coordinating continuing education and social events for OTs. Watch the ALOTA website for news. She is also working with our students for advising the South Alabama Student Occupational Therapy Association. We plan to keep her busy.

**REGULAR FULL-TIME FACULTY**

**Courtney Sasse, MA EDL, MS OTR/L, MA DPS**

Ms. Sasse continues to teach full time here in the USA OT Program while also pursuing a doctoral degree in Depth Psychology and Somatic Studies at Pacifica Graduate Institute. We are fortunate to keep her on faculty as she criss crosses the US. Prior to becoming an occupational therapist she worked for years as an educator, grant writer and administrator. Ms. Sasse continues her scholarly work with both book chapters and presentations. Her research interests include occupational therapy and the arts, community-based practice, aging populations, and neuropsychology. She is also actively pursuing certification in the Brene Brown *The Daring Way* methodology to help men, women, and adolescents learn how to show up, be seen, and live braver lives.

**PART-TIME FACULTY**

**S. Blaise Chromiak, MD:** Dr. Chromiak is a board-certified Family Practice physician. He has extensive experience treating adult and elderly patients in primary care settings. This is his third year teaching OT 504 Neuroscientific Bases of Occupational Performance.

**Lindsey Dana, MS, OTR/L:** Ms. Dana is a graduate of the USA OT program (class of 2008) and has many years of experience in clinical practice primarily in skilled nursing facilities and home health. She is teaching OT 544 Neuromusculoskeletal Assessment.

**Karen Hyche, OTD:** Dr. Hyche works for CMI Education Institute (a provider of continuing education) and the ARC of Walker County providing therapy services to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In addition, she provides OT evaluations on an as-needed basis for Restore Therapy Services. She has experience providing assistive technology services in a variety of settings. Dr. Hyche is teaching OT 558 Technology and Environmental Interventions in OT.

**Melissa (Engin) McCraw, MS, OTR/L:** Ms. McCraw is a graduate of the USA OT program (Class of 2012) and has experience working in pediatric and adult practice settings. She is teaching OT 201 Introduction to Occupational Therapy to undergraduate students.

**Tracy O’Connor, OTD:** Dr. O’Connor is a former full time faculty member in the Department of Occupational Therapy who has been working at the USA Medical Center for the past several years. She is co-teaching OT 527 Occupational Evaluation II with Dr. Scaffa.
PART-TIME FACULTY continued

Arnold Ondis, MSM, OTR/L: Mr. Ondis has a Master’s degree in Management from Troy University and 15 years experience in a variety of health care management positions. This is his third year teaching OT 546 Supervision.

Lisa Tekell, OTD: Dr. Tekell is a former OT faculty member and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator at the University of Tennessee in Memphis. She has experience in a variety of practice settings including home health, skilled nursing, assisted living, and independent living facilities. Dr. Tekell also served as a community integration specialist and has a special interest in occupational therapy services in community-based settings. She is co-teaching OT 559 Professional Leadership with Dr. Wooster.

DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AWARDS

The Department of Occupational Therapy is always so appreciative of the many fieldwork supervisors that help our students grow. It’s amazing how many sites and supervisors we need each year. We can’t do this program without all of you. So, it’s always hard to determine which ones to honor in any given year. We honored our award winners at the student pinning ceremony in Dec. 2013. The winners for this year are:

2013 Outstanding Alumni Award – Shannon Norris, B.S., OTR/L (Class of 2001) with Kids Kount

Shannon and her husband Mike Norris are both graduates from USA Department of Occupational Therapy. Shannon used her love of pediatrics and her talents to become the co-owner of Kids Kount Therapy Services. She has taken level I and level II fieldwork students for years for us. Her private clinic has participated in collection of data regarding the effectiveness of sensory integration and has been featured on 60 minutes. We are so proud of her accomplishments and her commitment to provide high quality pediatric services in both Baldwin and Mobile counties.

2013 Fieldwork Supervisor Award — We had an unusual tie this year. Our students recommend and vote in the winners of this award. Our Winners are:

Jeff Liller, OTR/L with Saads Home Health. Jeff has also taken level I and level II OT students for years for us. Students consistently brag about what an excellent experience they have when they are with Jeff.

Merritt Shaw, OTR/L with Springhill Hospital. Merritt has an advanced certification in Lymphedema and she has an infectious enthusiasm for her work which has trickled down to our OT students. She has influenced several to consider getting the advance credentials after graduation. Merritt serves as a wonderful role model to our students.

2013 Special Recognition Award

Kristye Chastang, PT, physical therapist and owner of Buckaroo Barn received our special recognitions award. Kristye’s commitment to provide hippotherapy in our area has benefitted many children. She has continued to take groups of our occupational therapy students with her to teach them the basics of hippotherapy and what it can offer our patients.

2012 Award Winners

FW Supervisor - Renee Hall, BS, OTR/L, CHT
Renee continues to guide students along in their development of expertise in OT and treatment of hand injuries. She is an inspiration to many students and works diligently to help them understand and progress along the way.

Special Recognition - Dorothy Williamson, OTR/L for the hundreds of occupational therapy students and occupational therapy want-to-be students you have allowed to work with you and your patients for all of these years. She has been an advocate for our program all along.

Outstanding Alumni Award - Danielle Peters, MS, OTR/L Ms. Peters has been assisting us with teaching our classes as well as taking students on fieldwork at her private clinic Blue Bird Therapy. She is always willing to help the OT students and program.

SOUTH ALABAMA STUDENT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION (SASOTA)

SASOTA has been very active this past year. We have donated our time and talents to many charitable organizations and events including the Goodwill-Easter Seals Walk, The Autism Speaks Walk, The Down Syndrome Buddy Walk, Martin Luther King Day events with USA, and activities with clients from VIA. SASOTA hosted a 5K in Spring 2014 that included running, walking, and rolling along while in costumes. The students stay active and visible in the community and reach out as much as possible.
**Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE)**

Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE), USA’s occupational therapy honor society, serves the university and the public while promoting an understanding of occupational therapy. PTE members participate in several leadership and scholarly activities each year. Members were involved in the occupational therapy program orientation this year, welcoming new students and providing them with tips for academic success in graduate school. In September, PTE members will attend Camp I Believe; this camp encourages healing for children who have suffered the loss of a loved one. Members will mentor the children and encourage participation in camp activities such as fishing and swimming. PTE members will also attend the Alabama Occupational Therapy Association fall conference in Orange Beach, Alabama. Throughout the fall and spring semesters, PTE members will present to students in the USA Pre-OT Club, promoting an understanding of various occupational therapy subjects such as splinting and adaptive equipment.

By: Jessica Goff, OTS, PTE President at USA

**Special Accomplishments**

**Dr. Marjorie Scaffa** and **Courtney Sasse** presented two posters at the 2014 American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference in Baltimore. The posters addressed topics related to the role of OT in primary care and the development of a trajectory model of change.

Also at the AOTA conference in Baltimore, **Dr. Marjorie Scaffa** co-presented a poster with **Myriam Scaffa**, an occupational therapist from Argentina. The poster described research regarding a Spanish translation and cultural adaptation of an assessment for clients with brain injury. These two OTs met for the first time 4 years ago at an OT conference in Chile and have been doing genealogical studies to ascertain their family relationship.

The second edition of **Dr. Marjorie Scaffa’s** textbook titled *Occupational Therapy in Community-Based Practice Settings* has been published. In addition to co-editing the text with Dr. Maggie Reitz, Dr. Scaffa wrote or co-authored nine chapters including chapters on public health, program planning and evaluation, primary care, and substance abuse treatment. The textbook was highlighted at the American Occupational Therapy Association conference in Baltimore.

**World Federation Congress in Japan**

In June 2014, **Dr. Marjorie Scaffa** presented a session at the 16th *International Congress of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists* which was held in Yokohama, Japan. She presented a model of resilience after disaster that is based on research conducted regarding the impact of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill on physical and mental health and occupational participation. **Courtney Sasse** was co-author on the presentation, and was instrumental in the research and development of the model.

**Interprofessional Education Grant**

In collaboration with nursing faculty member Dr. Joyce Varner, PI, **Dr. Marjorie Scaffa** has received grant funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration for a three-year initiative to develop, implement and evaluate an interprofessional education experience for nurse practitioner and occupational therapy students. The project will involve students collaboratively learning about meeting the health needs of adults and the elderly.

**Endowed Professorship**

**Dr. Marjorie Scaffa** and her husband, **Dr. S. Blaise Chromiak** made a deferred gift of $250,000 to create the **Dr. Marjorie E. Scaffa Professorship in Occupational Therapy**. The endowed fund will support an annual stipend to attract a new, outstanding faculty member, or to recognize an existing faculty member who makes an exceptional contribution to the department and profession. This is the first endowed Professorship in the Pat C. Covey College of Allied Health Professions. A reception was held to acknowledge their gift publicly on June 11, 2014.
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, DR. DENNIS FELL

At the graduation of the DPT Class of 2014, the 1000th PT graduate of the PT entry-level program, Dr. John Fletcher, walked across the stage and received his diploma. The education that Fletch and his classmates received represents nearly 40 years of program development, the efforts of numerous faculty to continue to grow the quality of the program, and the high quality of students that USAPT attracts from across the US. We are just now hearing NPTE results from the Class of 2014, with all passing so far, and two near-perfect scores.

The DPT Class of 2017 recently started their first semester. We admitted 40 students (from nearly 550 applicants and 400 qualified applicants) with a record average cumulative GPA of 3.88!!!, average science GPA of 3.7 and average GRE score of 305 (on the new scoring system). We continued our tradition of “orientation to the beach” :-) at Gulf Shores on the first Tuesday afternoon, and had an afternoon full of sun with no rain! Now they are fully-focused on Anatomy, PT Skills and Ex Phys. For the DPT Class of 2013 there was a 100% ultimate pass rate on the NPTE, with 32/33 students passed on their first attempt, including one PERFECT score – amazing!

The Mission/Service trip for 2014, in conjunction with CMMSA, will be Dec 13-21 in the Dominican Republic, the same location that I had the great pleasure to take 9 PT students last August to provide PT services and spiritual care for the people there. Dr. Matt Day will join me this year. Maybe sometime you’ll consider joining the Alumni who supervise on the trip.

Please join us as we continue our USAPT Class Reunions, especially if you graduated in the one of the anniversary years listed below!!! We will facilitate Class Reunions for the highlight classes achieving major milestones, in conjunction with the Alabama APTA Spring Conference at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, AL, April 10 – 12, 2014 <http://ptalabama.org/events/?eventID=124&date=04/10/2015>. You can register for the conference and get your CEUs, and of course, enjoy the great beaches. This time we will highlight graduates from 1980 (35 yr), 1985 (30yr), 1990 (25yr), 1995 (20yr), 2000 (15yr), 2005 (10yr), and 2010 (5 yr), and any other particular classes that want to get together (let us know) with some specific activities for each class that participates. If you are interested or would help coordinate contacts with your class, please contact Dr. Dennis Fell, 251-445-9330 or email pdept@southalabama.edu.

Keep us informed about your life events – we love seeing the photos on Facebook or in the mail. And please send me an email with specific news/promotions/specialty/children/grandchildren/etc. that I can include it in the next alumni updates – see our website! What a satisfying profession! And despite the most challenging year of my life this past year, I have great joy in thinking of all the graduates out there who are changing lives, bringing hope and optimizing movement!

Be sure to check out the new Faculty/Student Group Photo on our website: http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/pt/studentinformation.html.

Hope to see you soon!

Dr. Dennis Fell
dfell@southalabama.edu; http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/pt/
Physical Therapy continued ...

STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS

DPT Student Receives National Scholarship

Congratulations to Alex Bell, Class President of the Class of 2014, was the recipient of a $1,000 national scholarship “ASAHP Scholarship of Excellence” from the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions.

Dr. Barry Dale returns to USA!

The department is very pleased to announce that Dr. Barry Dale rejoined the faculty in August 2014. Dr. Dale graduated with his BSPT from USA in 1994 and while working as a PT completed both Master and PhD degrees and also his DPT. He was a PT faculty member here from 2002-2007 and then joined faculty at University of Tennessee-Chattanooga from 2007-2014 to be closer to family. In addition to being a PT and an ATC, Dr. Dale holds specialty certification as OCS, SCS, CSCS and dry needling. The students that Dr. Dale taught will know that this is great news for the department, with great benefit for the department. Barry and Tracey have two children: Jackson (8) and Hannah (5).

Retirement of Dr. Rosemary Archambault-Norris

Dr. Rosemary Archambault-Norris, was one of the earliest PT faculty members at USA and taught here until 1991. She was Department Chair from 1986-1990 and then moved to St Louis and was on faculty at St Louis University for 24 years. Dr. Archambault-Norris retired from SLU in June 2014, and now has been honored with status as Emeritus Professor in the department. Congratulations to Rosemary! Donations are still accepted to the Archambault/McCoy PT scholarship.

DPT Students Engaged in Service

• During Fall 2014, Year II students, supervised by Dr. Laura White, are providing PT services to residents of Cathedral Place, a senior apartment community in downtown Mobile. Students deliver healthcare as part of an interdisciplinary team of students in medicine, nursing, PA, and PT. This experience allows PT students to develop interprofessional skills of communication and teamwork, practice clinical skills, and provide healthcare to an underserved population.

• For six years in a row, the DPT students have participated in a service learning activity as organizational leaders and volunteers with the Down Syndrome Society of Mobile County. The annual Buddy Walk promotes acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome.

• In August 2013, 9 second year students traveled with Dr. Dennis Fell, Dr. Diane Pitts, and two other alumni (Ashley Wells and Mary Gregory) and a local clinician (Maria Barreiro), with leadership and coordination by Duane Baxter of Christian Medical Ministry of South Alabama (CMMSA). The 15-team members screened and provided physical therapy services and personal care to 141 patients for a total of 455 service hours.
USAPT Physical Therapy Alumni "Facebook" Group

Dr. Fell started the "USAPT (Univ. South Alabama) Physical Therapy Alumni" Facebook group in Fall 2008 as an opportunity to enhance social networking and reconnection among USA PT graduates. Now there are nearly 410 of the 1025 PT alumni (help me find all the others!) who are part of the online social networking group, including at least one person from the very first PT class. This year, Dr. Fell also created, within the group, a photo album for each PT class all the way back to 1978, which created quite a stir of activity and comments! The album cover for each album is the class composite for your class, so you can look back to remember what you looked like and what you wore for your graduation portrait! So now it is your turn... check it out and then scan and add any fabulous photos you have of yourself, your classmates and the faculty from "back in the day!" Let the tagging begin!

If you have a Facebook account, maybe we haven't located you yet... It'll be a fun way to keep in touch with your classmates and share photos! When you log into Facebook (www.facebook.com), and open your account, click on "Groups" and search for "USAPT (Univ South Alabama) Physical Therapy Alumni" Then you can request to join the group and Dr. Fell will approve your request so you can see who has already joined from your class. Please help us find other USA alumni and invite them to join the group. Who knows who you might find there?

Alumnus Presentation to Students

In April 2014, Dr. Jeremy Fletcher (2010) and Dr. Patrick Casey gave a presentation to the students on interprofessional communication based on their experience in the military PT practice environment during their recent deployment.

USAPT Alumnus Named to Alabama Board of Physical Therapy

In December 2013, the Governor appointed Alina Adams (co 1991) as a new member of the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy. Alina is the Program Director of the PTA Program at Wallace State College in Hanceville. She is serving along with continuing board member Eric Dekle (class of 1994) who is currently Chair of the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy. The program is proud to have graduates serving in significant roles in the physical therapy profession!

New PT Scholarship Founded by Dennis & Noel (Phillips) Fell

The "Bud and Dot Phillips PT Scholarship" was instituted in Summer 2014 through a donation by Dr. and Mrs. Dennis (Noel Phillips) Fell, Nathan and Elana Fell, and Hannah Fell, along with other family and friends. The scholarship is named in memory of Noel's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Milton Anthony (Dorothy Simons) Phillips, Jr, both lifelong residents of Bay St Louis, MS. Bud, a small business owner on Main Street, and Dot, a registered nurse at Gulfport Hospital, and home-health and ostomy nurse, were both huge supporters of their daughter Noel, and the USA physical therapy program from which she graduated. In Dorothy's fun-loving nature, she often referred to a physical therapist as a "sizzical spigarius" :-). They were both frequent and effective, but informal, recruiters for our PT program from along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The scholarship was instituted to memorialize the perpetual generosity of Bud and Dot, and their loving nature as parents and grandparents "Pere" and "Mere". Once fully funded the scholarship will be awarded annually to a graduate student in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program. Tax-deductible donations to the scholarship can be mailed to the department: Dr. Dennis Fell, University of South Alabama, Physical Therapy, 5721 USA Drive N, HAHN 2011, Mobile, AL 36688.

The Next PT Scholarship

The Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative was announced in conjunction with the University of South Alabama's recent celebration of its 50th anniversary. This new undergraduate scholarship campaign purposes to permanently increase the number of scholarships and extend the scope of support to a broader audience. Every gift toward undergraduate scholarships will be matched dollar for dollar, up to $25 million. Scholarship donations from alumni, friends and community partners are tax-deductible and will multiply the impact on the University and its students.

To take advantage of this initiative, the department is now developing a Year-1 PT Scholarship for which early-entry Advanced Undergraduate students can apply. Through this initiative, any donation made to this scholarship is eligible for matching. For additional information, please contact Morgan Seeley at mseeley@southalabama.edu or visit the Mitchell-Moulton website athttp://www.southalabama.edu/development/mmsi.htm.
Congratulations to Grandparents Irion on their First Grandson!

The department offers happy congratulations to Brittney and Kyle Irion upon the birth of their son Henry Reynolds Irion on July 4, 2014 in Johnson City, TN. He weighed 8 pounds 5 ounces, and all are well. The proud grandparents, Dr. Glenn “PeePaw” Irion and Dr. Jean “MeMaw” Irion, are very happy and excited! Grandbaby #2 is on the way to their daughter, Lindsay, and husband, Jordan Flynn in late November on the West Coast.

Alumni Updates

The latest news we’ve received regarding the alumni listed below is now posted on our department website Alumni page. Let us know about your promotion, certification, move, new job, grandchildren… We want to include you in the next issue! Also help us get in touch with other alumni who are disconnected.


Faculty Scholarly Productivity

Peer-Reviewed Publications in the past academic year:


Faculty Scholarly Presentations at National Conferences:

Physical Therapy continued ...

Faculty Scholarly Presentation at National Conferences continued

- **Price, T., Gubler, C., and Irion, J.M.** Assessment of a new training model for the reduction of non-contact ACL injuries in female athletes. Alabama Academy of Science, Ninety First Meeting. Auburn, AL. March 2014
- **Irion, J.M.** Capturing Women into your Aquatic Therapy Services: Proof, Practical and Probable. Combined Sections Meeting of the APTA, Las Vegas, NV: 2/5/14

Courses Taught at National/State Conferences:

- **Fell, D.W., Burnham, J.F.** Embracing Technology, Enhancing Therapy: Education within University Programs. (0.25 CEU) APTA Annual Conference and Exposition, Salt Lake City, UT. June, 2013.
- **Fell, D.W.** A Roadmap to Intentionally Develop International Collaboration. (0.15 CEU) APTA Annual Conference and Exposition, Salt Lake City, UT. June, 2013.

**FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS**

- **Dr. Jean Irion** will be inducted into the Alumni Hall of Fame for the West Virginia University College of Physical Activity and Sports Science. The ceremony will take place on November 7, 2014.
- **Dr. Coral Gubler,** following seven years of dedicated service, was promoted to rank of Associate Professor with tenure in August 2014.
- **Dr. Matt Day** and his wife Bethany with Lucas (6) and Melayna (3) were on leave-of-absence Jan – May 2014, for physical therapy mission experience in Ecuador. Bethany volunteered as a pediatric PT in an outpatient clinic half the week and volunteered with the kids at a Daycare facility, both in Quito. Matt volunteered three days a week in Santo Domingo “Centro Medico Hombo a Hombo” doing PT outpatient and home visits.
- **Dr. Dennis Fell** is currently serving as Chair of the Southern Consortium of Physical Therapist Education Programs, Vice-President of the Alabama Chapter of APTA, member of the Editorial Board, Journal of Physical Therapy Education, and recently appointed as Membership/PR Chair of the APTA Neurology Section.
- **Dr. Glenn Irion** is currently serving as appointed Chair for the Specialized Knowledge Task Force for Specialization in Wound Management for ABPTS, and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Acute Care Physical Therapy.
- **Dr. Jean Irion** is currently a Board Member of the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS) of the APTA.
- **Dr. Elisa Kennedy** serves on the Social Media Subcommittee, Communications Committee of the APTA Section on Pediatrics, and Book Review Editor of Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics.

**USA PT Alumni Society and Future Gatherings**

The PT Alumni Advisory Group will be reformulated to facilitate alumni activities and advise the department, and also plan several regional alumni reunions. Please contact Dr. Dennis Fell if you are interested in participating, some by cell phone or Skype. Also, you might have the address or phone for an alumnus with whom we have lost contact. Call (251)445-9330 or email <ptdept@southalabama.edu>.

We are also starting a specific Physical Therapy Society within the USA Alumni Association [http://www.southalabama.edu/alumni](http://www.southalabama.edu/alumni). If you are a USA Alumni Assoc. member, you can help us form the PT Society just by saying that you want to have membership in the PT Alumni Society (no extra fee). So please contact Dr. Fell dfell@southalabama.edu to let him know you want that designation. This will help us get financial support for our regional alumni events. **Help us plan an alumni event in your area!!**
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, DR. DIANE ABERCROMBIE

The academic year 2013-2014 proved to be a year filled with the elements of changes in the workplace and ample opportunities for personal growth through challenge, perseverance and patience. Physician Assistant (PA) education has changed significantly over the past several years, as has the face of PA educators. This academic year we said goodbye to two pivotal PA educators in our program; Dr. Zarintaj Aliabadi, Professor and Ms. Cheryl Davis, Assistant Professor and Director of Clinical Education. Each enjoyed several years of successfully participating in the transformation of our student body to those of confident and competent clinicians providing culturally sensitive patient centered care. They leave behind a legacy of transformation and change, and their absence is felt on a daily basis. As one enjoys the gratification of time spent with husband, children and grandchildren; the other enjoys re-entry into the workforce providing compassionate care in pediatric and adult mental health. We also said goodbye to our Admissions Coordinator, Ms. Karen LaSarge, who continues to use her gifts of encouragement and empowerment in an Academic Advising position with the College of Allied Health Professions.

The program completed year one of its new professional curriculum and its 2014 Accreditation Validation Site Visit June 19-20, 2014. Continuing accreditation is the term used to describe accreditation that is granted when an established program is in compliance with the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, (ARC-PA) Standards, 4th edition, 2013. The University of South Alabama PA Program received its initial accreditation June 1996. Program evaluation and systematic assessment is an essential component of protecting the interests of the public, including current and prospective PA students, and the PA profession by defining the standards for PA education and evaluating PA educational programs to ensure their compliance with those standards. Our program has successfully employed continual self-study analysis as the foundation for improving quality in the content and processes of our preclinical and clinical educational components. The construction of our Self Study Report (April 2014) and preparation of our Validation Site Visit (June 2014) was a perfect example of effective teamwork of faculty, staff, students, clinical preceptors, alumni and other important stakeholders demonstrating: 1) shared goals and objectives, 2) clearly defined roles, 3) open and effective communication between all stakeholders, 4) trust in the process, 5) respect for each team member, and 6) appropriately dealing with conflicts that arose as part of our massive team undertaking. As a result, the program received only four minor observations and has submitted appropriate response documents. We are eagerly anticipating our accreditation final report due to arrive by September 30, 2014.

In July 2014, the program graduated its 17th PA class (581 total graduates)! Our 2014 graduates are in a number of stages of employment in a variety of medical settings, including but not limited to, general surgery, orthopedic surgery, emergency medicine, oncology, primary care, cardiology, gastroenterology, pediatrics, and armed forces. Although many of our graduates are still choosing specialty medicine over primary care, we are experiencing a small, yet significant amalgamated pendulum swing towards primary care medicine. To impact the decision of first-choice practice towards primary care, our curriculum has amalgamated a number of pedagogies: 1) integration of community-based experiences during the didactic phase, 2) interprofessional, community-based opportunities with the College of Medicine (COM) and College of Nursing (CON), 3) incorporation of a variety of service-learning opportunities with vulnerable populations, 4) community outreach programs in Mobile and Baldwin Counties in areas of need such as Baypointe Residential, Habitat for Humanity, Boys and Girls Club, Penelope House, etc., and 5) annual PA student organization charity fund-raising event.

These vast and various community-based, outreach projects and service learning help our students develop life-long tools and understandings of how to be effective and knowledgeable leaders and elements of change in diverse community settings. They allow for interaction with diverse populations, career experience, engagement in interprofessionalism, critical thinking and interpersonal skills, professionalism, and a host of tangible and intangible characteristics important to the provision of patient centered care. The ultimate goal would include these types of activities as PA students transition to powerful vehicles of change as PA clinicians and educators.

The program continues to enjoy strong collegial bonds with its growing alumni base. Our alumni are working in almost every medical discipline, both primary care and specialty medicine, and represented in over 40 states across these United States. One graduate recently stated:

"I have been working at Daughters of Charity, a community clinic in New Orleans’ 9th Ward. I’m truly working in the very diverse community I call home. We have an interesting cross-section of patients, from the very poorest uninsured to recent transplants with insurance who are teaching in New Orleans schools or working for a non-profit who simply want to go to a clinic in their neighborhood. I have my own panel of patients and A LOT of complicated patients. It’s been a real challenge, tougher even than PA school! I wanted to be in a community clinic regardless…”
Physician Assistant Studies continued ...

Stories like these remind my faculty and myself the real reasons why we choose to include PA education as a career trajectory; to share our unique skills, gifts and talents to transform like-minded individuals to those who will excel towards quality patient experiences and exceptional patient satisfaction.

On a final note, I continue to experience personal growth and change in my leadership position. These characteristics build character and do not occur in isolation or rapidly, but rather, on a continuum. Both can be scary, tiring, frustrating and repetitious, and is not an automatic process. Personal growth, I’ve discovered, is a life-changing journey and requires a plan. It is essential for self-satisfaction and success. To use the words of Oprah Winfrey, what I know for sure is the following:

- From all appearances, circumstances may seem daunting and opportunities limited. However, there is a greater force at work behind the scenes working in both me and the circumstance.
- When your accomplishments are fueled by faith, you can be certain that you will never celebrate alone.
- Listen in love and with intention.
- Learning to accept others is oftentimes much more important than always seeing eye-to-eye.
- Do not be afraid to make mistakes, be wrong, or be vulnerable. Perfection is truly a myth!
- You will be given the desire and strength you need to mature into the “who” you were created to be, an amazing, unique individual who brings value to the world.
- Never, never, never forsake your values, morals and ethics.
- Develop a plan lest you become the menu of others.

I would like for my voyage as Program Director and Chair to be one that leaves this department better than it was when I came. I want to be a beacon of positive change because I sincerely believe that by striving to become a better person, a better leader, a better teacher and a better colleague, I can encourage the faculty, staff, students and alumni to optimize their capacity and performance to impact others in a positive manner. After all, we are placed on this earth to edify and lift each other up. Thus, I hope to provide the type of mentorship and leadership that allows the faculty and staff to know they are valued and needed on a daily basis. I want our students to know their very existence takes the PA curriculum from paper to life and meaning. I want our alumni to know they are the hope for the future of healthcare and our champions for medical and social justice. Maya Angelou so eloquently stated, “Courage is the most important of all virtues, because without courage, you cannot practice any of the other virtues consistently.”

We say good bye and blessings to Dr. Aliabadi, Ms. Davis and Ms. LaSarge
Physician Assistant Studies continued ...

THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW!

The PA program would like to present and welcome our new colleagues who have answered the call to become a part of this dynamic and growing educational program. I present to you the following:

Bri is a native of Portland, Oregon and attended the University of Portland where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Bio-Chemistry. While at the University of Portland, she was an Army ROTC cadet and after graduation spent 5 years on active duty as a Chemical and Biological Weapons Officer. During her time in the military she worked with many Physician Assistants and loved their ability to be the voice for patient education and compassion. She decided to leave the military to pursue training in Physician Assistant studies. Bri attended Wake Forest University's School of Medicine Physician Assistant Program in North Carolina and upon graduation completed her Masters in Medical Sciences and became a certified Physician Assistant. Since then she has worked in the Emergency Room and most recently in Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery. Bri joined the Department of Physician Assistant Studies in April of this year and teaches in the didactic curriculum, with a focus on Infectious Diseases. During her time at the University of South Alabama she plans on working towards her PhD in Basic Medical Sciences. She and her husband are proud new parents of their second child, Kyle Ann, born June 2014.

As a graduate of the University of Alabama, former resident of Mobile and Spring Hill College employee, I was pleased to recently return to Mobile after several years out of state. The growth of the University of South Alabama was so impressive during my 17 year absence; I knew immediately that this is where I wanted to work. My first two years at South were in the Registrar's Office, both at the Service Desk and in Graduation. This gave me valuable insight into the many services provided to students, staff and faculty as well as the enormous task of graduating thousands of students every year.

I was thrilled to have the opportunity to move to the Physician Assistant Studies department as Admissions Coordinator in May 2014. The PA profession is so interesting and relevant in today's health care environment. The faculty, staff and facilities of our program are impressive as are our students who have passed rigorous standards to be selected for acceptance into the program. I love working with students and potential applicants and hope to give them the attention and information that they need to be a viable candidate for our program.

I received a Bachelor of Arts in Biology in 1993 from Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia. For several years I worked as an Officer Manager with Middle Tennessee Ear, Nose and Throat in my home town of Murfreesboro, TN. It was there that I became familiar with the physician assistant profession. I chose to attend the University of South Alabama Physician Assistant Program because of its reputation for providing excellent PA education and training, coupled with the fact that Mobile was home for my daughter and husband's law practice.

After graduation from USA in 2006, I have worked in Dermatology, Cutaneous Oncology and Dermatologic Procedures, Primary Care and Dermatologic Procedures, and Internal Medicine. I hold certifications in the operation of Candella Yag and Alexandrite Lasers.

I chose to join the USA PA program family because of my excitement to translate the care of the patient to the care of the clinical student and their challenges to become practicing clinicians. As a huge proponent of community service work (medical missions, Big brothers Big Sisters, skin cancer screening events), I hope to facilitate our students to become involved in a variety of community service experiences in order to reinforce compassion and respectful behavior towards patients and their families.
The PA profession was first proposed in the United States when Charles Hudson recommended to the American Medical Association (AMA) in 1961 the "creation of two new groups of assistants to doctors from nonmedical and non-nursing personnel." Dr. Eugene A. Stead, Jr. of the Duke University Medical Center in North Carolina assembled the first class of physician assistants in 1965, composed of former U.S. Navy hospital corpsmen. He based the curriculum of the PA program in part on his first-hand knowledge of the fast-track training of medical doctors during World War II. "National Physician Assistant Week" is celebrated annually in the US from October 6 through October 12. This week was chosen to commemorate the anniversary of the first graduating physician assistant class at Duke University on October 6, 1967.

This year the PA program will host its annual PA Open House in celebration of PA Week on Thursday, October 9, 2014 from 4 to 6 pm in the Biomedical Science Department Auditorium. This year plans to be even more spectacular. We have invited a host of alumni to join in the celebrations, as well as all students, and our young and aspiring Pre-PA society members.

The program will be bestowing five (5) scholarships this year at its Open House Ceremony. For the first time The Parker Family Endowed Scholarship in the amount of $1250.00 will be given, as well as, four Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) scholarships totaling $20,000! The literature echoes the rising cost of tuition and its impact on underrepresented minorities and others from vulnerable populations and categories. These scholarships are given to assist those students who may disproportionately experience financial barriers in their education but is representative of the program mission to educate compassionate and competent individuals from diverse backgrounds to become highly qualified physician assistants who desire to work in a primary care setting.

**FACULTY HAPPENINGS!**

Dr. Vetrosky celebrates his 33rd year as a Physician Assistant and his 18th as a faculty member at USA’s Department of Physician Assistant Studies. He continues to practice clinically in a Urology practice in Pensacola and is Co-Chair of the Advanced Clinicians Group at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola. He is a founding member of the Council on Surgical and Perioperative Safety and is an invited member on the American College of Surgeons Committee on Patient Care. He is a past president of the North Carolina Academy of Physician Assistants, the American Association of Surgical Physician Assistants, and the Urological Association of Physician Assistants.

At the University he is a faculty advisor to the Student Run Clinic at 15 Place and a member of the ad hoc committee on Interprofessional Education for the Division of Health Sciences. He is presenting on Advances in Prostate Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment at the AASPA Annual meeting in San Francisco this October, and has co-authored an educational training program for surgical assistance for the American Urological Association Education Council.
Robin is a California native who is a proud member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe and graduate of CSUF Comparative Literature, cum laude. She has spent many years abroad in Europe as a writer for the key industries of Semiconductors, Security Systems and Electron Microscopy. She was also a trained volunteer for a youth at risk organization. Upon returning to the United States, Robin discovered a fascinating study that would change her entire professional path: Physician Assistant Studies. After completing the program at USA, Robin became a certified practitioner and has worked in the areas of Internal Medicine, Family Practice and Urgent Care. While in practice, Robin kept in close contact with the university’s PA program serving as guest lecturer, PE proctor, clinical preceptor and serving on the Admissions Committee. In January, 2013, Robin became a full-time faculty member in the PA department teaching clinical medicine. Her areas of interest include Interprofessional education, health disparities, cultural diversity and the non-traditional student. Robin is fluent in Dutch and has working knowledge of French and German. The PA faculty and staff continue to busy themselves with teaching, advising, scholarly activities, mentoring, community service and the day-to-day operations of the didactic and clinical curricula. Our students work to excel in their training and continue in the spirit of giving through their community participation efforts, mission trip in December, and charitable events.

PART-TIME FACULTY

Our part time faculty, Angela Dugger, PA-C, MHS; Sarah Sparks, PA-C, MHS and Elizabeth Eisenbeis, PA-C, MHS remain loyal, dedicated clinicians who provide their educational expertise and training each week with our didactic students. Students have benefited significantly from their skills and knowledge base. They are greatly appreciated for their roles in helping the program provide the breadth and depth of education necessary for confident and competent physician assistant graduates.
White Coat ceremonies celebrate an important milestone in the lives of first-year physician assistant students, who begin a new chapter in their journey of lifelong learning after a rigorous 15 month (70 credit hours) didactic curriculum. White coats are symbolic of the professionalism that is expected of students during physician assistant school, and as practicing physician assistants.

This ceremony reaffirms the community’s support of the educational process that prepares future health care professionals for practice. On this day, students pledge their commitment to their professions and to the health of the patients they will serve by repeating the PA Oath.

Contributing to the care and healing of others is a privilege and an awesome responsibility. The White Coat placed on each future health care professional is more than a familiar lab coat - it is a cloak of competence, communication, caring, curiosity, character and community.

Ms. Cassie Bullock Woodall, PA-C, MHS, USA Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, served as the guest speaker at this year’s event. This day was celebrated by students, their families, alumni, faculty and staff.

**Advisory Committee to the Admissions Committee**

Under the leadership of Ms. Cheryl Nicholls, Educational Outreach Specialist, the USA PA program has initiated its first Advisory Committee to the Admissions Committee. The Advisory Committee is comprised of a number of community leaders who graciously volunteer their time and talents to promote the mission of the program. The new committee members are as follows:

Katie Barker, PA-C, MHS  Cardiology Associates
Darwin Bolden  Project Coordinator, SW AL Workforce Development
Capt. Lee Braswell  U.S. National Guard
Dr. Kendall Foster  Foster OB/GYN
CiCi Kyle, PA-C, MHS  Springhill Hospital, EM
Terria Moore  Health Science Technology Director
Aimee Risser  CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters
Katie Smith  VP/Trust Officer, Trustmark Wealth Management
Danny White  Regional Director/Education Director, Team Focus USA
Bridget Wilson  Director of Workforce Development/Project Manager, Bay Area Health Coalition
Physician Assistant Studies continued ...  

Advisory Committee to the Admissions Committee continued

The primary function of the Physician Assistant Studies Advisory Board is to research, advise and inform the admissions committee and faculty regarding issues that affect the program’s mission, values and goals.

The program looks forward to the vision, guidance and assistance this new entity will provide to continue the PA program to propel into the future. One of its current endeavors relates to revision of the current program admissions policy to allow for entrance of those prospective applicants who may have experienced academic bankruptcy or early academic failure.

On behalf of the faculty, staff, students, alumni and all those who help to transform the PA student to the PA clinician, “Never stop dreaming.” Paulo Coelho.

Grace, mercy and peace multiplied,
Diane Abercrombie; dabercrombie@southalabama.edu

Radiologic Sciences

Message from the Chair, Dr. Charles Newell

With the 2014-2015 academic year underway, the Department of Radiologic Sciences begins its 38th year of operation. Forty-four juniors were admitted to the B.S. program, and will join fifty senior students who are quickly acclimating to the demands of the second year. The combined Departmental enrollment for the fall semester 2014 is 94. Current senior student enrollment in the various modalities is: MRI (15), CT (13), Mammography (4), Ultrasound (5), Radiation Therapy (9), Cardio-Vascular (9) and Radiology Administration (8).

The Class of 2014 was the first class to complete the new baccalaureate program. Our initial review of the new B.S. curriculum, including student didactic and clinical achievement, indicates the new curriculum is fulfilling the needs of program students. Thus at this writing, there are no major curricular revisions planned for the foreseeable future.

Although all of the ARRT scores for the Class of 2014 have not been received, initial reports indicate that the Class of 2014 is doing well. The first-time pass rate for Radiation Therapy students was 100%.

Graduation for the Class of 2014 was held in the large lecture hall in the Health Sciences Building on July 25, 2014. Thirty-two students completed various modalities and the Lecture Hall was filled to capacity. Since all students are eligible to participate in the University’s fall graduation, the Department held an Honors Convocation and students received certificates for the various modalities completed during their senior year. Those students recognized for academic and clinical achievement during the Honors Convocation were Alecia J. Grimm, Radiography, Carly T. Wood, Computerized Tomography, Lauren K. Renz, Radiation Therapy, David C. Ezell, Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Ashlie H. Parker, Ultrasound, Megan Greathouse, Mammography, Lauren A. Wineland, Cardio-Vascular Interventional, and Megan Greathouse, Dean’s Award. A reception for the graduates and their families was held in the lobby of the Health Sciences Building.

The Department’s scholarship fund continues to receive support from faculty, alumni and other individuals interested in the allied health professions. As I have indicated in previous editions of the Crucible, our scholarship funds currently enable the Department to award $3,700 annually to three deserving students which are always appreciated. However, with tuition at $292.00 per semester hour, one can readily see that $3,700 does not go very far. So, once again I request that alumni and others consider making a small donation to one of our scholarship funds. Regardless of the amount donated, each donation adds to the continued growth of the scholarship fund that eventually leads to an increase in the amount each scholarship recipient receives. Any assistance you may lend will be sincerely appreciated.

Best wishes to all!
Charles Newell; cnewell@southalabama.edu
Radiologic Sciences continued ...

The Department currently provides four scholarships which are:

- The Department of Radiologic Sciences Scholarship ($1000 per annum)
- Mary Lou Littleton Endowed Scholarship ($2000 per annum)
- Radiation Therapy Scholarship ($700 per annum)

STUDENT NEWS

Erryce Hamilton (left) and Michelle Weston (right), Class of 2014, were selected to represent Alabama as part of the Student Leadership Development Program sponsored by the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT).

In July, graduating Radiation Therapy students (left to right) Lauren Renz, Amanda Meyers, Morgan Roney, Ana Villalpando, and Cory Baker visited the University of Florida Proton Therapy Institute in Jacksonville for a tour of the facility, a lecture on the physics of proton therapy, and observations of therapists during proton therapy treatment delivery. This facility is one of only 14 proton therapy facilities in operation in the US, and has employed more USA Radiation Therapy program graduates over the past 10 years than any other employer.

Erryce Hamilton (left) and Michelle Weston (right), Class of 2014, were awarded 2nd place for their entry, Trauma Pelvis, in the Scientific Exhibit competition at the 2014 Alabama Society of Radiologic Technologists conference (AISRT).

Erryce Hamilton accepts the Ralph LeCroy/Ann Watson Memorial Scholarship award of $500 from Cheryl Walton, ALSRT Education Delegate (middle) and Annette Ferguson, ALSRT President (right). The scholarship recognizes an outstanding Alabama student pursuing education in radiologic sciences. The scholarship was awarded during the Annual AISRT meeting in April.
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A former graduate, Kesia McDaniel Torrance – Radiography 1999, Ultrasound 2000 and B.S 2012, along with her husband, have opened a private ultrasound school (Sonotech Institute, Inc.) in Atlanta Ga. The focus of the curriculum is directed to vascular and echocardiography. Congratulations Kesia, and we wish you the very best in your new venture.

ALPHA ETA

Alpha Eta is a national allied health honorary organization that recognizes the academic accomplishments of students completing allied health programs. This year ten radiologic science students were inducted into Alpha Eta during the Pat Capps College of Allied Health Professions annual recognition ceremony on March 27, 2014. Congratulations go to Cory Baker, Julia Dawkins, Megan Greathouse, Marissa Gutierrez, Erryce Hamilton, Danielle Niewind, Ellen Norris, Hannah Tison, Lauren Wineland and Jennifer Young.

FACULTY ACTIVITIES

Ms. Cathy Cooper

Cooper, C. Patient Care and Education. Presented to radiographers and student radiographers at the Alabama Society of Radiologic Technologists Annual Meeting, Orange Beach, AL, April 2014.


Cooper, C. Developing Contrast Protocols for Radiation Therapy. Presented to radiation therapists at Central Alabama Radiation Oncology Center Lunch and Learn, Montgomery, AL, January 2014.

Cooper, C. I Can’t Believe They Turned THAT In!. Presented to radiographers at the Fall Conference for the Alabama Society of Radiologic Technologists, Huntsville, AL, October 2013.

Ms. Patricia Brewer


Brewer, P. (Radiologic Sciences), Bru, S. (Biomedical Sciences) and Ravine, T. (Biomedical Sciences) conducted a clinical research study, which examined a potential source of microbial infection for radiation therapy patients. Samples taken from water baths used to heat moldable thermoplastic patient immobilization forms were cultured for detectable microorganism growth. Results indicated that 42% of the sampled heating devices demonstrated bacterial growth. These findings along with a set of recommendations to prevent infectious agent transfer to patients will be published as a peer review article in the next edition of the Radiation Therapist by the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT).

Mr. Chucri Jalkh

Jalkh, C. Out With the Old, In With the New. ALSRT Annual Meeting, Orange Beach, AL 2014.

Ms. Cherie Pohlmann

Pohlmann, C. Hypoplastic Heart. RADSYM, Biloxi, MS, October 2013.

Pohlmann, C. Multiple Gestations. RADSYM, Biloxi, MS, October 2013.


**Radiologic Sciences continued ...**

**FACULTY ACTIVITIES continued**

Ms. Cherie Pohlmann *continued*

Pohlmann, C. Ultrasound Basics. USA Radiology Residents, Mobile, AL May 2014.

Pohlmann, C, MS, RT(R), RDMS (Radiologic Sciences), Ellen B. Buckner DSN, RN (Nursing), Susan Hayden RN PhD (Nursing), Leigh Minchew, DNP, RN, WHNP-BC, collaborated in writing two chapters regarding *Female Anatomy and Development and Conception and Fetal Development* for a textbook titled *Evidence-Based Maternal-Newborn and Women’s Health Nursing*. Publication pending.

Mr. Dale Smith

Smith, M.D. Standardizing the Exposure Index in Digital Radiography. ALSRT annual meeting, Orange Beach, AL 2014.

**OFFICE/APPOINTED POSITIONS IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Cathy Cooper

Alabama Society of Radiologic Technologists, April 2013-April 2014
  Co-Chair for the 2013 Fall Conference, Huntsville, AL
  Chairman of the 2014 Annual Meeting Committee, Orange Beach, AL
  Member of the Bylaws Committee
  Member of the Public Relations Committee

  Attended the Annual Governance and House of Delegates Meeting in Albuquerque, NM, June 2013

Senior Delegate for the Alabama Society of Radiologic Technologists, July 2013 - June 2014.

Charles Newell

Legislative Liaison, ALSRT 2014-2015.

Patricia A. Brewer

Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology, Accreditation Site Visitor, promoted to Team Chair status in 2014
  Alabama Society of Radiologic Technologists, Secretary/Treasurer
  Annual Conference Planning Committee
  Association of Educators in Imaging and Radiologic Sciences, Membership Committee

Cherie Pohlmann

Webmaster for Alabama Society of Radiologic Technologists

As alumni, please remember you are cordially invited to visit our facilities in the Health Sciences Building and our web site at [www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/radiologic sciences](http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/radiologic sciences).

As always, we encourage you to consider assisting students in our program through donations to one or more of our scholarship programs. Arrangements to make donations can be made by contacting The University of South Alabama Office of University Development – 300 Alumni Circle – Mobile, AL 36688-0002, Telephone: (251) 460-7032 – FAX (251) 461-1776 — e mail development@southalabama.edu or the Department of Radiologic Sciences, Telephone: (251) 445-9346 – FAX (251) 445-9347. Regardless of the amount, your support will be sincerely appreciated.

Alumni are also 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, 5721 USA Drive N – HAHN 3015 - Mobile, AL 36688-0002 or cnewell@southalabama.edu. Again, let us hear from you.
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, DR. ROBERT MOORE

This has been another good year for the department. Dr. Ishara Ramkissoon has completed her grant, Environmental Literacy in Marine Science & the Health Impact of Pollution. Dr. Ramkissoon developed an excellent educational program for faculty and students in the Mobile County school system. As a result, she has been notified that it is likely that the grant will be renewed for at least one more year. During the year Dr. Ramkissoon also completed two other grants, an ASHA Multicultural Activities Grant and a grant titled Validation of the American English Matrix Sentence Test from the University of Oldenburg, Germany.

Dr. Julie Estis was elected President of the University of South Alabama Faculty Senate. She will serve during the academic year 2014-2015.

Drs. Kelli and Dave Evans have relocated to Bellingham, Washington. Both have accepted positions with the University of Western Washington. We wish Kelli and Dave and their family the best in the future.

Mrs. Grayson Hill has joined our faculty as an Instructor in Speech Pathology. Mrs. Hill is a graduate of the University of Montevallo. She will be providing clinical education to our MSSLP students in the Speech and Hearing Center. She has worked for the past several years at Thomas Hospital/Infirmary Health System as a Speech-Language Pathologist.

In May 2014 we graduated 22 students with MSSLP degrees and 8 students with Au.D. degrees. Thirty-five undergraduate students also graduated with degrees in Speech and Hearing Science in May. Michelle Johnson, Valerie Lanier, Kimberly McWherter, and Julie Sellers graduated cum laude, Jessica Dobson, Mary Grafe, Christina Knowlton, Chloe Kruewedewagen, Mary Grace Stewart, and Ellen Watson graduated magna cum laude, and Marisa Ard, Monika Rotondo, and Megan Smith graduated summa cum laude.

In August 2014 the department welcomed 20 new students to the MSSLP program and 11 new students to the Au.D. program. We also accepted 3 new Ph.D. students. This brings our totals to 44 SLP graduate students, 41 AUD graduate students, and 7 Ph.D. students.

Robert Moore; rmoore@southalabama.edu

RECENT FACULTY AND STUDENT PUBLICATIONS


RECENT FACULTY AND STUDENT PRESENTATIONS


Speech Pathology and Audiology continued ...

RECENT FACULTY AND STUDENT PRESENTATIONS continued


Ramkissoon, I., Batavia, M. (2014). Hearing status and auditory evoked potentials in teenagers and young adults who reported exposure to secondhand smoke. Hearing Across the Lifespan (HEAL) Conference, Cernobbio (Lake Como), Italy.


STUDENT RECOGNITION

During graduation ceremonies in May several student awards were presented.

Kelley Byerley – Outstanding MSSLP student
Marissa Land – Outstanding AuD student
Bree Blackwell – Outstanding undergraduate student
Shelby Wiggins – Dean’s Award

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. These scholarships are funded by donations from alumni, friends, and faculty of the department. This year’s honorees are:

Megan Smith – MSSLP
Jennifer Hammond – AuD
Kayla Ford – undergraduate

In 2009 Dr. Bryce Evans began the Dr. Bryce Evans Book Endowment. The endowment is to fund an award to assist a deserving undergraduate student in purchasing textbooks for their classes. This year’s winners of this award were:

Natalie Sartain
Kelsey Thomas

SHAA Outstanding Student Award:

Lori Foran
OUTSTANDING OFF-CAMPUS SUPERVISORS

In 2012 the faculty began to recognize outstanding off-campus supervisors who volunteer their time to help us train our students. This year the recognized supervisors were:

Speech-Language Pathology – Infirmary Health System
Audiology – Jennifer LaBorde, Au.D.

Faculty Recognition

Dr. Richard Talbott serves as a Board Member of ABESPA.

Dr. Julie Estis and Dr. Susan Gordon-Hickey are representing the department and college as members of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Estis is the current President of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Gordon-Hickey is chair of the Salaries and Benefits Committee.

Dr. Ishara Ramkissoon serves as the Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Trustees for Mercy Medical.

Dr. Brenda Beverly is a member of the Learning Tree of Mobile Advisory Board and a member of the Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee.

Dr. Brenda Beverly is the Editor of ASHA Perspectives, SIG 1.

Dr. Paul Dagenais is a member of the Board of Trustees, Mercy Life.

Mrs. Kendra Hudson is a consultant to Mobile Community Action, Inc. (Head Start).