A Message from the Dean

As we watch the wondrous emergence of spring, many of our students are anticipating that long sought and hard won day when the President grants them the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of graduation. We look forward to welcoming as professional peers another class of outstanding students from our several allied health programs. Once again our graduates have distinguished themselves by outstanding performance on their national qualifying examinations and several departments have continued a multiyear trend of 100% first time pass rate. Perhaps more revealing of the excellent work of our faculty than the first time pass rate per se is the average scores of our students in comparison to others across the nation. Our students scores are in the upper half of all students in the country across all programs and in several programs are in the upper quartile. We congratulate our graduates for their hard work and achievements and the faculty for their outstanding guidance and mentoring efforts.

Things have certainly not been in hibernation during the winter months at the University of South Alabama, and we are very pleased to be a part of the emergence of a major and positive administrative change in the University. As I reported in the last edition of the Crucible, the newly conceived administrative model for a Health Sciences Center is moving forward with the search for the newly created Vice President for Health Sciences position. The university was blessed with an applicant pool of many nationally recognized scholars in the health care arena and on-campus interviews are currently being conducted. It is anticipated that the President will make his recommendation to the Board in the near future and that we will move rapidly to the facilitation of the new structure.

Bids have been let for the new Allied Health and Nursing building and it is anticipated that the new structure should be ready for occupancy within the next two years. The USA Campaign for Excellence, the first major capital campaign of the university, is moving forward with great success. The new building provides many opportunities for our alumni and friends of the college to participate by their generosity in providing support for this most worthy and needed effort. Please contact me or any of the faculty if you would like more information about participation in this critical effort to further the mission of the College and the University.

On March 29, the College of Allied Health Professions held its annual awards banquet. This year we combined the Alpha Eta awards ceremony with our faculty awards and Hall of Fame alumni recognition. I am happy to report that Dr. R. Wade Shields, an outstanding alumni of our Physician Assistant program is this years recipient of the Hall of Fame award. Dr. Shields is a geophysicist who worked with Mobil Oil analyzing seismic data to determine oil-drilling locations. After he retired he joined the PA program because of his desire to volunteer in medical missions in the US and other countries. In the aftermath of Katrina, Dr. Shields has volunteered for a free clinic in New Orleans, his hometown.

The other awardees during the banquet were all graduating students recognized by Alpha Eta as well as the faculty receiving the College of Allied Health Professions Research, Service and Teaching Awards. The Research award went to Dr. Robert Moore, in the department of Speech Pathology and Audiology. The recipient of the Service Award was Richard Nenstiel, chair of Physician Assistant studies. The teaching award went to Dr. Barry Dale, from the department of Physical Therapy.

I look forward to hearing from you and, as always, please visit us whenever you are in the Mobile area.

Richard E. Talbott, Dean
A Message from the Associate Dean

There is always something to be proud of in the College of Allied Health Professions. On Thursday March 8th, several of our faculty members received the “Top-Prof” awards given every year by the Gold Key chapter of Mortar Board, the Senior Honor Society. Seven of the thirty-two recipients (22%) are members of our college. To put this in context, the faculty members of the College of Allied Health Professions represent only 8% of the faculty at the University of South Alabama! What makes this award so special to all is the fact that the nominations come from our students. The recipients of this year “Top-Prof” were: Ms. Tracy O’Connor and Ms. Kathy Lemcool, from Occupational Therapy, Drs. Dennis Fell and Barry Dale from Physical Therapy, Drs. William B Davis, Cindy Stanfield and Julio Turrens from Biomedical Sciences.

On another topic, if you are a graduate from our programs, don’t forget to visit our web page and complete the on-line survey. The web site is http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/. We will need your responses to both the College and discipline–specific questionnaires. Your feedback to these questionnaires is important to us and to our future graduates. It also affords you a voice when we discuss improvements to our programs. Please complete these questionnaires before May 31, 2007.

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

Biomedical Sciences

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, WILLIAM B. DAVIS

The Department of Biomedical Sciences continues to grow. The expansion includes the addition of a faculty position. This has been brought about by the added role of the BMD program in the joint effort between the University and the Auburn University Harrison School of Pharmacy to make available in the region doctorate level education in pharmacy. The program was approved by the Alabama Commission for Higher Education on March 2nd of this year. While the majority of the courses will be delivered by telecommunications from Auburn to the students attending at the USA campus, the physiology component of the curriculum for the students here will be made possible by on-site lectures and laboratories taught by BMD faculty. Auburn’s Mobile-based doctorate program in pharmacy is scheduled to begin fall 2007 and will enroll 24 students.

The BMD program remains committed to the goal of preparing graduates for a successful experience in post baccalaureate health-profession schools or graduate studies. Currently at least 6 of the 18 graduates in the BMD Class of 2007 have already been accepted to medical or dental school. The total number of BMD majors at the University is also soaring over 250.

We are conducting a campaign to obtain data about our alumni base. Please log onto http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/survey.html, the college web page and complete the information form for both the college and the BMD Department. It is short and should not take but a few minutes. The information will contribute to improving the existing program and planning for future development.

In the meantime, I look forward to reporting continuing progress in biomedical sciences in the next issue of The Crucible. Please let us hear from you and visit the departmental web site http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/biomedical.

Other News:

Dr. Julio Turrens served in two NIH review panels: National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases on “NIAID Partnerships with Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)”, and National Institutes of Diabetes and Kidney Diseases on “Biomarker Development for Diabetic Complications.”

Dr. Cindy Stanfield has a third edition of her book published, Stanfield and Germann, Principles of Human Physiology, 2008, Pearson Education.

On February 10, 2007, the University of South Alabama hosted the Regional Science Olympiad. The Science Olympiad is a competition between middle and high school teams. This year’s Olympiad was one of the largest ever for this region, with 23 middle schools and 14 high schools competing. There were 46 different events held on campus that day. Tournament Director was Cindy Stanfield, Biomedical Sciences. Score keeper and Assistant to the Tournament Director was Mike Spector, Biomedical Sciences. Drs. Cindy Stanfield and Julio Turrens obtained a $1,000 grant from the Scientific Honor Society of Sigma Xi to sponsor part of the event. Overall, the Science Olympiad was a success with the top 4 middle school teams and the top 3 high school teams participating in state competition.

Several Allied Health faculty assisted in the Olympiad by judging events, including Biomedical Sciences faculty Mike Spector (Disease Detectives, high school) and Brad Davis (Disease Detectives, middle school), and Julio Turrens (Mission Possible, middle school), and Clinical Laboratory Sciences faculty George Harwell, Vicki Barrett, Marie White, Sally Bru, and Stephen Bru (Food Science, middle school). Several Biomedical Sciences students participated as judges for 11 events (Write It Do It, Storm the Castle, Forensics, Metric Estimation, Remote Sensing, Balloon Race, Science Word, Simple Machines, Circuit Lab, Experimental Design, and Scrambler), and helping with logistics. Our former Dean, Dan Sellers, and his wife Laura judged the Sound of Music. The secretary for the Health Professions Program Ursula Romano helped with registration.
We are actively recruiting to fill the faculty vacancy that will occur on August 1st. Ads are appearing in AARC Times, Focus, The Chronicle of Higher Education, and some websites on the Internet. If you know of anyone who qualifies, and is seeking to enter the field of respiratory therapy education, please direct such persons to me. Perhaps, you yourself qualify, and are interested. Let me know.

Our new clinical affiliates, Thomas Hospital, Sacred Heart Hospital, and West Florida Hospital, have done a great job working with our students this past year. At the same time, we continue to receive excellent support and clinical education from USA-MC, USA Children’s & Women’s Hospital, Mobile Infirmary, Springhill Memorial Hospital, and Providence Hospital, and Mercy Medical. We are indebted to the support that these institutions provide to our program and students.

Please check in with us once in awhile to let know where you are, and how you are doing. The faculty and I wish you continued success in your careers.

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Clinical Laboratory Sciences

Message from Dr. George Harwell, Chairman, Clinical Laboratory Sciences

The senior year students, CLS Class of 2007, are eagerly anticipating their Presentation of Certificates and Awards Ceremony and USA Commencement in early May 2007. They are gaining their new clinical laboratory skills during the clinical rotations at our affiliated hospital labs. Two of the CLS senior students had their clinical preceptorships at Singing River Hospital (SRH) Laboratory, Pascagoula, MS. Additionally, some students were able to have a short rotation at the local Springhill Medical Center laboratory. We look forward to additional clinical laboratory affiliates to provide clinical experiences for our CLS students. The USA Medical Center and USA Children’s and Women’s Hospital laboratories continue to provide the majority of the required clinical experiences for our students. The laboratory administrators, clinical adjunct faculty, clinical laboratory scientists (MTs), and other clinical lab staff at these labs are essential to the USA professional program. We definitely appreciate their past and future efforts!!

National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week is April 22-28, 2007. The theme is: Laboratory Professionals: Quality Care from Quality Professionals. The USA CLS faculty, students, and staff will CELEBRATE this week via small celebration events, i.e., cake and punch, lab tours, recruitment activities, at the SHAC, UCOM, and USA main campus. We hope that all of you who plan to celebrate this time at your laboratory, and we will share news of these celebrations. Please continue to support our recruitment efforts by sharing the USA-CLS career information with your contacts; ask potential students to contact the CLS office at 251-434-3461, or view the website at http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/clsl/. We hope you will assist us with this essential recruitment effort!! Please tell your success stories to potential students!!!

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Message from William Wojciechowski, Chairman, Cardiorespiratory Care

At the end of this semester, another class of respiratory therapists will enter the workforce. The class of ’07 is the 26th graduating class from this program. The faculty would like to extend congratulations to them, and to wish them good luck as they embark on a career in respiratory therapy.

The irony is that as the class of ’07 will begin its career, and Fred Hill, who arrived here in August of 1980 will retire as of August 1, 2007. Enough cannot be said to describe what Fred has meant to this program. He has contributed so much to its growth, development, and reputation within the circles of respiratory therapy education. I am sure that Fred would like to hear from you before he leaves. I am providing you with his e-mail address so that you can communicate with him before he retires: fhill@usouthal.edu.

The following is some recent Alumni News from Jonathan Hoiles, USA CLS graduate, Class of 1998: Upon completion of the MT (now CLS) program at USA in June 1998, I worked at UAB for nearly 2 years. At UAB, I was a bench technologist in the Blood Bank, where I was cross-trained in every area. I joined the Navy in Feb 2000 and was commissioned an Ensign. After six weeks in Officer Indocritination School in Newport, RI, I was ordered to report to Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCSD). My first six months were spent in the Lab Administration Office learning the ropes of a Naval Officer, a Medical Service Corps officer, and a Laboratory Officer. I was transferred to the Transfusion Service where I was initially responsible for everything from quality assurance to quality control, from proficiency testing to inspections and assessments, from contract management to military readiness for my enlisted staff. After 2 years in the Transfusion Service, I was transferred to the Core Lab where I was strictly a manager of contracts, budgeting, personnel, workload review, etc. I attended evening classes at the University of Phoenix where I earned a Master's in Business Administration - Health Care Management in June 2002. In May 2003, I transferred to Naval Hospital Keflavik. This was a very small hospital in Keflavik, Iceland where I was the only Laboratory Officer on the base. For the first time since graduating from USA, I was able to work in hematology, serology, urinalysis, microbiology, chemistry, blood bank, etc. In June 2005, I was selected to attend the Armed Services Blood Bank Fellowship at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. It is the largest SBB program in the country and graduates have a terrific pass-rate for the SBB exam. The program was very exciting and challenging. The following six months were spent completing coursework and a research project to satisfy degree requirements for a Master's in Health Sciences.

I have now reported back to NMCSD to be in charge of the largest military donor center on the west coast. Our primary mission is to collect blood in support of operations occurring overseas followed by blood support for local military treatment facilities.
Clinical Laboratory Sciences continued . . . .

Faculty News

Prof. Vicki Barrett and Dr. Wesley Denny are continuing with conducting preliminary DNA studies for a research project. This project involves the isolation and PCR amplification of mitochondrial DNA from feathers collected from migrating birds that have been captured for banding by the Hummingbird Study Group. Prof. Barrett is also continuing a new clinical affiliation negotiation with a prospective clinical site in Florida.

Dr. Rick Carliss is currently engaged in a search for novel analgesic drugs using a new class of compounds called ionic liquids. Ionic liquids are chemical compounds that result in liquid forms of solid crystals at room temperatures. Ionic liquids have been found to have different physical chemistry when compared to the same crystals dissociated in aqueous media.

Dr. Terry Ravine has submitted USARC grant proposal to study promotion of Dictyostelium ameba aggregation (gathering) by human platelet activators, which cause platelets to form a collective entity known as a platelet plug. Dictyostelium are unicellular free-living amebae which change into a multicellular form called a slug when food becomes unavailable. They belong to a unique family of ameba referred to as cellular slime molds.

Occupational Therapy

Message from the Chair, Dr. Rebecca I. Estes

A first for me - a message from the Chair! I took over the position January 2, 2007, from the outgoing Chair, Dr. Marjorie Scaffa. I am very pleased that she remains on the faculty to share her knowledge and expertise. Administration, faculty and staff have all welcomed me in the true warm southern manner. I look forward to leading the Department of Occupational Therapy as we embark on the next stage of growth and development.

The brief notes below highlight some of the ongoing, exciting activities the faculty, staff and students have been involved in.

Pi Theta Epsilon of USA Update

Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE) has been very active within the OT department and with associated organizations on campus. PTE acts as a sponsor for the undergraduate level Pre-OCCupational Therapy Association and provides seminars on the role of OT in different practice settings to their members. We also coordinate extra learning opportunities for our fellow graduate students through the assistance of community practitioners, who provide additional lectures on specialized areas of OT practice. Lastly, our organization is preparing additional resources for the OT students by assembling survival kits for Level II fieldwork and creating tip sheets for new OT graduate students. Ms. Tracy O’Connor continues as the faculty liaison for this group.

Faculty Recognition

Please congratulate the faculty on the recognition for their continuing and dedicated work!

Ms. Tracy O’Connor and Ms. Kathy Lemcool were invited to the Mortar Board Senior Honor Society banquet and were presented the “Top Prof” award!

Dr. Marjorie Scaffa was appointed by Dr. Carolyn Baum (AOTA President) and Dr. Penelope Moyers (AOTA President-elect) to the AOTA Board Ad Hoc Group on Health and Wellness to facilitate achievement of the AOTA Centennial Vision 2017. According to the letter of appointment, Dr. Scaffa was “selected because of her work and recognition as a member who can assist the profession and the Association in executing strategic activities to address the issues facing practice.” For her efforts, Dr. Scaffa will receive an AOTA Service Award and will be recognized at the AOTA annual conference in April in St. Louis.

Dr. Marjorie Scaffa will be presenting at the American Occupational Therapy Association annual conference in St. Louis, Missouri in April. She will be speaking about the needs of persons with disabilities in disaster situations. Dr. Scaffa coauthored an official document for AOTA on the role of occupational therapy in disaster planning, response and recovery.

The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice accepted an article titled “Introduction of an Emerging Technology Device Through PowerPoint Training” by Dr. Estes (USA) and Dr. Ishee (TWU), it is scheduled for publication in the next issue.

On-going Research: Young Adult CVA Clients

The occupational therapy students are in the process of recruiting young adults who had a stroke, one to ten years ago. We are conducting phone interviews to determine the needs of this population. Young adults are often left out of the support networks available to the older patients. Additionally, many times the needs of these young adults are very different. If you know of anyone who is at least 21 but under 60, was an adult at the time of the stroke, and had the stroke 1-10 years ago and he/she would participate, please have them call Donna Wooster, 434-3923.

Occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy are working cooperatively to develop a website to address some of the needs of this population.
Nationally of Note: AOTA Centennial Vision 2017

A number of the constituency groups of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) participated in a comprehensive process to develop a vision for the profession’s centennial celebration in 2017. The vision states:

“We envision that occupational therapy is a powerful, widely recognized, science-driven, and evidence-based profession with a globally connected and diverse workforce meeting society’s occupational needs.”

In order to facilitate the achievement of the Vision, the leadership of the AOTA has convened six task groups to provide information to the AOTA Board of Directors, the Representative Assembly and AOTA staff regarding issues facing the profession of occupational therapy that are integral to fulfilling the Centennial Vision. The task groups will address the following issues:

- Children and Youth
- Productive Aging
- Mental Health
- Health and Wellness
- Work and Industry
- Rehabilitation, Disability and Participation

On-going Community Service: Focus First

The Department of Occupational Therapy is pleased to once again be offering cost-effective vision screening in our community. Five leaders have been identified from the occupational therapy program to coordinate these vision screenings in area head start and preschool programs. This is a direct response to identify and remediate the visual problems of underprivileged children who live in urban and rural poverty and who without this program would experience difficulty in learning and reading. Our students are going out on Tuesday mornings to provide this needed service. They have already been to Mount Vernon, Prichard, and some Mobile day care centers. If other allied health students are willing to volunteer some time for this screening please contact Donna Wooster at 434-3923. On site training will be provided and you will be with more experienced students. It’s a wonderful cause and looks good on your resume. We are trying very hard to get money to actually own the equipment required to complete these screenings so that we can schedule them more frequently on our own. We are accepting donations for this cause as we need to raise about $3000.00. If any organization would like to make a donation or if any student groups would like to conduct a fundraiser to help with this cause, that would be much appreciated.

Student Recognition

Academic Excellence Award: Every year the Dean of the College of Allied Health Professions, Dr. Richard Talbott, presents an award to a graduate of the occupational therapy program for academic excellence. This year, two students were honored with this award, Kim Courchesne and Sarah Norris. These two graduates accomplished something that had not been done before in the Masters degree occupational therapy program. They completed the entire curriculum with a 4.0 cumulative GPA. Please join us in congratulating them on this outstanding achievement.

The 2006 student fieldwork award was given to Marie Willoughby. This award is given to the student who receives the top overall score on fieldwork. Congratulations Marie, good work!!

Additional Notes to Keep You Informed:

Fieldwork: The 2006 fieldwork supervisor award was given to Mrs. Brenda Dunlap. Brenda works at USA Children's and Women's Hospital. We would like to thank her for her continuous dedication and contributions to our program!

A website resource for fieldwork supervisors was created and revised by Donna Wooster and Tracy O'Connor (http://www.usouthal.edu/alliedhealth/ot/twsupervision). We deeply appreciate the contribution of our fieldwork coordinators and hope the website provides valuable resources. We would love to hear your feedback and suggestions!

Pre-OT Club: The Pre-OT club participated in the USA Nature Trail Work Day sponsored by Gamma Theta Upsilon in October of 2006.

Admissions: Application for entry to the fall 2007 class were due Jan. 16th, 2007 and the eligible candidates for the fall 2007 entry class were invited to interview. Those who qualified were then invited to join the USA OT family – we should have a full cohort. Look for more information in the fall CRUCIBLE!

Physician Assistant Studies . . . .

Message from the Chair, Mr. Rich Nenstiel

As most of you already know, this will be my last opportunity to introduce an article from one of our graduates. I have announced my retirement from USA at the end of spring semester. I will retire with 26 years of service, 11 of which have been with the PA Program. It has been a great experience, especially the opportunity to meet, and work with, so many great people at the hospitals and university. The most enjoyable part has been the interaction with students. I am always amazed at the change in students from the “deer caught in the headlights” look on orientation day to the confident professionals who graduate 27 months later. It has been my privilege to play a small role in that transition! There will be a search for a new department chair and I have every confidence that a great candidate will be identified. I also believe that the change will be good for the program, as change usually is!

Our guest writer for this edition is Tyre Conrey, PA-C, Class of 2002. Tyre has worked in several specialties and geographic locations since graduation. I have asked her to write about her most recent experiences. Tyre was selected by the American Academy of Physician Assistants to participate in a program introducing PAs to the National Health System in Scotland. She has been in Scotland for about 6 months and her blog has been fascinating. Enjoy!!
Physician Assistant Studies continued

Physician Assistants in Scotland

In April of 2006, I came upon an article in one of our professional magazines, Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants, in which Andy Kerr, the Scottish Minister of Health, spoke of the need for great change in the NHS, the socialized health care scheme for the UK. Minister Kerr said that the NHS in conjunction with the Scottish Executive and the National Education of Scotland would be hiring American PAs in an effort to evaluate our role as healthcare providers.

Prior to reading this article, I hadn’t really considered leaving my job in emergency medicine let alone my family and friends in Colorado. I was happy where I was but after discussing this unique opportunity with a colleague, I realized there were many reasons to pursue this offer: First, to live abroad and experience another culture, second, to travel to places that I would not have been able to do otherwise, and third, to work as a PA in a foreign country and to learn about and compare the differences and similarities between the American health care delivery system with that of the NHS.

Not long after applying for this position, I received an e-mail to interview in early June in San Francisco, the site of the annual PA conference. So I swapped my shifts at work, bought a plane ticket, and headed to San Francisco with an open mind. My interview was held at the Fairmont Hotel, which is at the top of a very big hill. Mistakenly, I got out of the taxi at the bottom of the hill which I do not recommend in San Francisco! The interview process lasted for a few hours. It was formatted with a time for questions from a panel of NHS representatives and clinicians who asked us to respond to several clinical scenarios, our reasons for applying for this position, and what did we hope to gain personally and professionally from this project. After our individual interviews, we were allowed to question a couple of American PAs practicing in England as to their work and life experiences in the UK. This was followed by the completion of several forms to expedite our employment with the NHS should we be chosen.

Approximately one week after interviewing, I received a job offer from the NHS, and I accepted it. I was to be assigned to NHS Tayside in acute medicine with some overlap in Accident and Emergency (A&E). As my job was to begin in September, I had a lot of preparation to do: quit my current job, sell my car, pack and ship my belongings to Scotland, and tell my friends and family about the next adventure that I was to embark on. Yes, there were a lot of physical tasks that I had to undertake but the mental and emotional voyage was just beginning.

On September 30, 2006, I landed in Edinburgh where I was met at the airport and taken to my new home. I share a flat in Broughty Ferry, a coastal suburb of Dundee. Broughty Ferry is what you would picture a Scottish seaside town to look like with its narrow streets, old buildings, and a castle at the end of the road.

Although I had just arrived over the weekend, I had no time to waste. I had to get over my jet lag quickly as Monday would be my first official day of work at Ninewells Hospital. Ninewells is a large teaching center associated with the University of Dundee Medical School. Registrar training (residency programs), nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, and dentistry are also attached. Ninewells has 900 beds for a population of 400,000 and is a very busy hospital.

I have been working at Ninewells for almost 6 months. My first two months were spent in the Acute Medical Receiving Ward. This ward is operated similar to the emergency department in the US only the patients are medically ill as opposed to having received some sort of trauma, e.g., they may suffer from chest pain, syncope, COPD, renal failure, Acute Coronary Syndrome, congestive cardiac failure, and the like. These patients are admitted from the A&E or from their general practitioner’s (GP) office, or they may arrive via the community ambulance service or private car. Every day this ward routinely admits 30-60+ very ill patients in an 8-12 hour period. Of course, the patients’ medical conditions are similar to those I have treated in the US. For me, the greater challenges have been in learning new medications and procedures. For example, I routinely place IVs, push medications, and perform ABGs, tasks typically done by nurses and respiratory therapists in the US. I have also come to rely less and less on diagnostic tests to give me the answers I need but rather depend on a thorough exam and clinical judgment.

Other challenges I have faced are the lack of access to a particular beneficial treatment, test, or medication. For example, Scotland is very “anti-radiation,” so they limit x-ray and CT scans because of the dose of radiation you are “inflicting” on the patient. Also, at Ninewells the prescribing of medication closely adheres to a formulary for a specific illness, so you have very limited prescribing choices. On the other hand, it seems GPs prescribe medications with more freedom by not always following the recommendations of the formulary.

I have also noted that medical training is relatively inexpensive in comparison to the US. I would go so far as to say that PA training in the US is more costly than medical training in Scotland. Also, the doctors-in-training are paid much better here in comparison to other European medical training programs. Although Scotland appears to have a plethora of doctors, that is, there are more doctors here than they have jobs for in the future, in joining the European Union the work reduction for residents from 56 to 48 hours per week has actually created a shortage in manpower. This situation is being addressed with a complete overhaul in health care training by introduction of a program called Modernising Medical Careers, which hopefully will quicken the current training of the doctors.

Overall, I have found the differences in medical practice to be immense when money and risk of liability are removed from the equation. Doctors only want to work 9-5 and are quite resistant to any infringement upon their time out-of-hours. The further along a doctor gets in their career the fewer patients they actually see and thus work less. The impression given can be an overwhelming sense of apathy and laziness. Ironically, this isn’t very realistic because the patient load is actually increasing, especially among geriatric patients, who are the most dependent population on the health care system.

So six months into this experience I ask myself: why am I here? Initially, my emotional response was shock with what I saw happening around me. These days it is just sadness and frustration because I feel there is such a disservice happening to the patients. Many of us are still struggling to find our footing in a country where our supervising physicians still don’t understand our role in the delivery of health care and thus don’t know how to properly utilise a PA. At times, it seems the different boards saw a project attached to a monetary sum and focused on problematic areas in their regions without fully understanding or accepting this concept of a less expensive but well trained and highly qualified practitioner as an alternative to the highly compensated doctor. On the positive side, I have had opportunities to travel throughout Europe, and even to Kenya. I have also had the pleasure of meeting and working with a variety of great people from a different culture and experiencing the delivery of healthcare from a very different perspective.
Message from the Chair, Dr. Dennis Fell

The first DPT class will graduate in May 2007. The department is growing. The student body is growing. The DPT program is growing. We have just completed our 2007 admissions process for the Class of 2010 (the fourth DPT class). We had over 180 applicants this year and the committee interviewed almost 80 students for our 36 positions. The quality of the applicant pool was excellent with average GPA 3.61 and average GRE 1060 among those who were interviewed, making for a very competitive and difficult selection process.

In the department, we realize that what we do as PT faculty members is not so much about our lectures but about the quality physical therapists that our program produces. It is always so wonderful to hear of the life achievements, family additions, and professional satisfaction among our alums, plus those jewel comments when we have opportunity to meet one of your former patients who brags on the way you care for your patients! That makes us proud!

Come see us soon and join us for one of our alumni events. It would be great to visit!

Recent Faculty Presentations/Publications:


Dr. Glenn Irion, APTA Combined Sections Boston MA: Presentation “Effect of Upper Extremity Movement & Anthropometrics on Sternal Skin Stress” Irion G, Boyer S, McGinnis T, Thomason M and Trippe A (a student research project!)

Dr. Jean Irion, APTA Combined Sections Boston MA: "Certification/Recertification Forum", & presentation "Women`s Health Specialization: Where We Are Now and Where We’re Going”

Prof John Jefferson, APTA Combined Sections Boston MA. Poster presentation: "Provocative Tests For Median Nerve Involvement In Asymptomatic Individuals". Jefferson J, Fanton S, Higgin, H; Tang K, Wixwat J. (a USA student research project!)

Dr. Elizabeth “Elisa” Kennedy, APTA Combined Sections Boston MA. “Pediatrics Practice Forum”

Three of our faculty members, Dr Dale, Dr Fell, & Prof Jefferson, have had presentations accepted for the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) in Vancouver, British Columbia in June 2007. Details in the next issue.

Alumni Updates:

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

Kim Enlow Baxter (1996) now has two beautiful children: Bailey 2 years old and Owen 8 months old. She and her husband Duane recently moved back to Mobile serving as staff members with Campus Outreach on the USA campus.

Faith McElveen Berryman (1990) is a faculty member and ACCE in the PTA program at South University in Montgomery, AL.

Jeff Boyles (1991) recently completed two terms as President of the Alabama Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association. He is now serving as a missionary in the village of San Juan in Southern Belize. He and Tiffany have a two year old daughter Ann Marie.

R. Barry Dale (1994) is an Assistant Professor in our department. He and his wife Tracy now have a son, Jackson, now nearing his first birthday.

Rich Evans (2001) now lives in Houston with wife Patricia (a pediatrician) and their second child is on the way. Rich lived and practiced PT in Socorro NM for three years.

Holly Lathinghouse Gunning (1993) completed her doctoral degree (EdD) in August 2005 in Curriculum and Instruction with a dissertation exploring the relationship between personality, professional behavior, and clinical experience. She has been on faculty of the PTA program at Gulf Coast Community College in Panama City since 1998 and became the Coordinator of the program in 2004.

Marna Guerra Hallman (1993) is now manager of outpatient orthopedics at DCH with a staff of eight. She married in 2003 and enjoys the two Boston Terriers (Buster and Tee). “Life is good!!” she says… She achieved her OCS certification in 2000. Since 1999 she has run two marathons! WOW!

Niva Nokes Harrison (1988) is a faculty member and at the PTA Program at Wallace Community College in Dothan, AL. Niva has also served as a Chapter Council Member for Alabama Chapter of APTA as the By-Laws Committee Chair.

Robert Murphy (1999) entered the Jesuits, a Catholic Religious Order, in 2003 and is currently studying to be a priest. As part of his training Robert was sent to San Salvador, El Salvador to study Spanish and Theology. While there, Robert worked as a PT in a nonprofit medical clinic. He will soon be returning to his studies at Saint Louis University.

Quinn Sirmon (2005) has partnered with one of his CI's Bryan Soulie to open his own private practice PT clinic "Hub City Physical Therapy" in Hattiesburg, MS. The clinic is doing very well and his family is great! Go Quinn!!!
Physical Therapy continued..........

USA PT Alumni Society
Dr. Charles Gray now serves as the Faculty Coordinator for the PT Alumni Society. As part of this growing initiative, the department is building an Alumni Advisory Group to facilitate alumni activities and advise the department. If you would like to be a part, contact Dr. Gray at cgray@jaguar1.usouthal.edu. We also will begin to plan regional alumni events in different portions of the state and beyond as you are interested. Help us get this going!

Help us establish contact with alumni for whom we have lost contact. We want to keep you informed about these events, send your updated contact info or updated contact information for other individuals in your graduating class, please call (251)434-3575 or email pdept@jaguar1.usouthal.edu. We encourage 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 support our alumni events.

USAPT Offers a Web-based DPT Program for Licensed Physical Therapists
Our Doctor of Physical Therapy Program for licensed physical therapists (DPT) program is really growing. We now have 49 PTs enrolled in this fully web-based program (16 new admits this Spring) representing nineteen states: NY, VA, CA, IN, AR, AL, IL, FL, GA, LA, WI, NC, MD, MS, AZ, CN, PA, MO, ND, NY. You can advance your PT degree to the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) under the guidance of experienced and encouraging faculty at South. 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/dpt/onlinedpt.html

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Jean Irion, the Web-Based DPT Program Coordinator at: jirion@jaguar1.usouthal.edu or (251)434-3577.

This Spring another USA alumnum, Paige Lusk Scoper (co 1995), has enrolled.

Radiologic Sciences

Message from the Chair, Dr. Charles Newell

The spring semester is winding down, and we are again in the early process of student selection for the 2006-2007 academic year. Due to the large number of applicants, the Departmental Admissions Committee has elected to adopt a new approach in scheduling applicant interviews. In the past, we have conducted interviews on a weekly basis beginning in early March and continuing to early June. This year we plan to conduct three four-hour interview sessions on Saturdays, with the first session scheduled in late March, and the final session scheduled for early June. To maximize our efforts, we plan to establish interview teams composed of faculty and volunteers, such as program graduates. If you are interested in serving as an interviewer, please contact Ms. Kathy Kymbal at 434-3456. The Admissions Committee serves an important function, and we will certainly appreciate any assistance you may lend. Our pool of qualified applicants continues to be strong, and information concerning the program is now available on our web site at http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/radiologicsciences. You are cordially invited to visit our web site.

2006 was a most successful year in the growth of our scholarship offerings. As you may recall, Dr. Jessie T. Littleton, M.D. donated $20,000 last year to establish a scholarship, which is now known as the Mary Lou Littleton Endowed Scholarship. The University provided matching funds, which will provide an annual scholarship of $2000 to a deserving second-year student. The 2006 recipient of the Mary Lou Scholarship was Ms. Katie Gaviria.

I am also pleased to announce that Kenny Breal (Class of 1988), Joey Jefferson (Class of 1994), Derek Bonner (Class of 1992), Mike Burroughs (Class of 1992), Brad Dombroski (Class of 1993), and Matthew Tures (Class of 1992) donated a total of $1000 to the scholarship fund. At their request, the donation was to be expended during the 2006 academic year. The recipient was Ms. Tami Brannon, who is a second-year student. We sincerely appreciate the support of these alumni.

The Alabama Society of Radiation Oncology (ASRO) and the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO) donated $5000 to the department in 2006. The original purpose of the donation was to support educational activities in radiation therapy. With the permission of ASRO and ASTRO, we have forwarded the funds to USA’s office of Development and Alumni Relations for the purpose of establishing a scholarship fund for students enrolled in our Radiation Therapy program. At present, the scholarship will award up to $500 annually, and hopefully more with future donations from alumni and others.

The Department of Radiologic Sciences Scholarship fund continues to receive donations from departmental faculty and alumni. Currently this fund has accumulated $22,000. As a result, we were able to award a scholarship of $650 to Ms. Kristen McBride, a second-year student, for the Spring Semester, 2007. The projected amount to be awarded in 2008 is $800. Please remember that it has taken twenty-plus years to accumulate $22,000 in this fund, and thus your continued support is needed if we are to see an increase in the amount awarded each year. I hasten to add that the same can be said for the other scholarships mentioned previously.

The University recently announced the start-up of the 2007 Annual Scholarship Fund campaign. Please remember that regardless of the amount, your donation will enable the department to take another step toward improving our scholarship offerings. Arrangements to make donations to any of our scholarship programs can be made by contacting Ms. Ginny Turner, Associate Director of Development, at (251) 460-7032.

Alpha Eta is a national allied health organization that recognizes the academic accomplishments of students completing allied health programs. Congratulations go to Brittney L Childers, Jennifer R. Lewis and Mary A. Smith who are this year’s new members in Alpha Eta. They were officially inducted into Alpha Eta during the College of Allied Health Profession’s annual Faculty Recognition Ceremony on March 29, 2007.

The department’s annual registry review was held on March 6, 7, 8 and 9. Fifty-five students from Alabama, Florida and Mississippi attended. Dr. Newell also presented a physics and imaging lecture to students attending the ALSRT meeting in Montgomery on March 29. Dr. Newell continues to work with engineers associated with T-Vent, Inc. in the development of a DR system. The major goal of the project is to develop a CCD based DR system, which will be targeted to smaller installations at a fraction of the cost of currently available DR systems. To date, the prototype employs a Gadox phosphor. The project is being conducted in the department’s energized lab at the Springhill Campus (SHAC). Initial testing shows the system to be compatible with other systems relative to resolution, dosage and overall image quality.
Radiologic Sciences continued . . . . .

The Graduate Corner

Radiologic Pharmaceutical sales has been a popular field, in which many of our graduates have entered in recent years. Examples include Mary Francis (Mantel) Krause (Class of 1994), and Trae Jackson (Class of 1996). Both began their careers as staff radiographers, and later entered cardiovascular imaging. Prior to entering sales, Mary Francis was employed as a Cardiovascular Interventional Technologist at Brookwood Medical Center in Birmingham, AL. After several years of employment as a Radiologic Pharmaceutical Imaging Specialist for GE Healthcare, Mary Francis decided to pursue the role of a full-time mom, and eventually moved to Mobile where she now resides with her son and husband.

Trae began his career in sales as a Cardiovascular Clinical Education Specialist with Philips Medical Systems, which was entirely compatible his major modalities of interest in CIT and CT. However, in 2002, he decided to extend his area of expertise to MR, and became a sales consultant for Berlex Laboratories. Today, he is responsible for maintaining and increasing paramagnetic and non-ionic iodinated contrast accounts in a large geographical area. His current position is Senior Sales Consultant and District Trainer for Berlex. In addition to sales, he is responsible for training new employees, as well as setting up and managing district and national meetings for Berlex. Trae resides in Daphne, AL.

Speech Pathology and Audiology

Message from the Chair, Dr. Paul Dagenais

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology. As summarized in the article by Dr. Adams, the event was marked during the annual student banquet. It was a great success.

With the end of the academic year approaching, we are looking forward to the graduation of our first class from the Doctor of Audiology program. We will be holding a hooding ceremony during the morning of May 5th, the day of graduation. The hooding ceremony will be held in advance of our annual reception that will be held at the Mobile Country Club thanks to Dr. Talbott, our Dean. For the first time, the graduating undergraduates and their families have been asked to join the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology graduates at this reception. Also as the year ends, top performing students were honored by induction into the Alpha Eta Society on March 29th. Students included undergraduates Kortni Ennis, Whitney Dreibelbis, Karrie Johnson, Stephanie Langston and Debbie Edwards and Master’s students Joana Coblentz, Jessica Johnson, Alicia Peck and Emory Sisty. Kim Brown was our Au.D. recipient and Susan Hickey was our Ph.D. recipient.

The Department’s commitment to research continues. This year, we have been well represented at local, state and national conferences. While the national conferences have been venues for faculty to present results from original research, more local presentations have been focused on assisting professionals around the area to obtain CEUs. This has included a six hour presentation to the Bay Area Speech and Hearing Association by Drs. Guendouzi, Williams and myself. The Department was well represented by Drs. Beverly, Estis and Moore as well as Doctoral Student Susan Hickey at the Speech and Hearing Association of Alabama’s annual convention that was held here in Mobile. It should be noted that Dr. Bob Moore has had an excellent year with seven manuscripts accepted for publication by peer-reviewed journals.

This year we had three Master’s SLP students complete thesis projects. Joana Coblentz completed a study in the area of voice performance that was directed by Dr. Julie Estis. Stacy George’s study involved a determination of physician attitudes towards dementia. This project was directed by Dr. Jackie Guendouzi. Finally, Julie Paresi completed a listening study directed by Dr. Estis and Dr. Moore that involved a comparison of recordings made by the US Army using traditional and experimental microphones. Additionally, a recent Ph.D. graduate, Debra Blanton, has had her dissertation accepted for publication by ASHA’s LSHSS journal.

In the Fall, Susan Hickey will join our faculty as an Assistant Professor in Audiology. Ms. Hickey is currently completing her Ph.D. under Dr. Moore’s direction and will also receive her Au.D. degree concurrently. She will graduate at the end of Summer semester. Ms. Hickey has been extremely productive as a doctoral student. She has had three manuscripts accepted for publication, being first author on two of them. She has also made several presentations at the national level. With this hire, the Department will have a full complement of five Ph.D. audiology faculty. This has not happened in the past.

Finally, we have been notified that construction on our new building is to begin shortly. The building, that will be located at the corner of USA North and University Blvd, should be ready in two years. We can’t wait.

Department of Speech Pathology & Audiology Celebrates 40th Anniversary

by: Dr. Elizabeth Adams

2007 marks the 40th anniversary of the USA Department of Speech Pathology & Audiology. Beginning in 1967, the Speech and Hearing Center was directed by Dr. Bryce Evans. With the University itself in only its fourth year and classrooms in short supply, the first classes were taught in the lobby of the girls’ dormitory. Since that time, the Department has grown to include 10 faculty members and 6 clinical supervisors and has graduated over 1000 students with a Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree, or Ph.D. In May, the Department will graduate an additional 19 students earning a Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology and 5 students earning the Doctor of Audiology degree, the first class of Au.D. graduates from the University.

The Department kicked off the 40th anniversary celebration during the annual banquet, which was held February 22 at the Mobile Country Club. Area Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists who serve as off-campus supervisors for graduate students were invited as special guests and were recognized for their service. Many area alumni were also in attendance and acknowledged. A second celebration was incorporated into the University Reunion Social at the Speech & Hearing Association of Alabama’s annual conference March 2.
Websites of interest to Faculty, Staff, Students and Alumni

http://www.usouthal.edu
http://www.usouthal.edu/alliedhealth/survey.html
http://www.usouthal.edu/alliedhealth
http://www.usouthal.edu/alliedhealth/biomedical
http://www.usouthal.edu/alliedhealth/cls
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http://www.usouthal.edu/alliedhealth/speechandhearing

http://www.usouthal.edu/alumni