A Message from the Dean

The College of Allied Health Professions (CAHP) was featured in a recent campus publication for the outstanding performance of our graduates on their national qualifying examinations. As the article pointed out, the faculty have done an outstanding job in the preparation of our students as evidenced by the fact that for the past five years, CAHP graduates have averaged more than 95% pass rate on their national qualifying/certification exams and, in 2007, five of the seven clinical departments achieved a 100% first time pass rate. I have often referred to the great performance of our students and our faculty in previous *Crucible* editions but this truly is an outstanding record and speaks to the overall quality of education at USA.

Our annual combined faculty awards, Hall of Fame, and Alpha Eta banquet was a great celebration of our faculty, students, and featured another outstanding graduate from our college, Lt. Col. Brian Casleton (see the Clinical Laboratory Sciences Department section). This event, held at the Country Club of Mobile, gives us a chance to recognize outstanding performance by our faculty and students and to give special recognition for the outstanding work of one of our graduates. Please contact any of our department chairs if you have individuals you would like to nominate for our Hall of Fame recognition.

Faculty and staff are busily preparing for our Spring graduation ceremonies and look forward to the annual celebration of the successful completion of another year. The progress on our new building is right on schedule and we are busily engaging in the most satisfying task of selecting color schemes, furniture, and lab equipment. There are many opportunities for alumni and friends of the College to make a significant contribution to our future students by donations to the new building project. For more information please contact me or Dr. Joe Busta, USA VP for Development.

As always, best wishes for a joyful and healthy Spring and please keep in touch.

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

A Message from the Associate Dean

Faculty awards: On February 13, members of the USA chapter of “Mortar Board”, the National Senior Honor Society, honored several faculty members in the college with the “Top-Prof” award. Seven of the thirty-four recipients are faculty in the College of Allied Health Professions, including:

- Dr. Azin Agah (Biomedical Sciences)
- Dr. Zari Aliabadi (Biomedical Sciences)
- Dr. Jean Irion (Physical Therapy)
- Dr. Julio Turrens (Biomedical Sciences)

Considering that our faculty members constitute less than 8% of all the faculty on campus, the fact that over 20% of the awardees belong to our college makes us feel very proud of their accomplishments.

College awards: Dr. Marjorie Scaffa, department of Occupational Therapy, received the Service Award from the College of Allied Health Professions. Dr. Brad Davis, chair of Biomedical Sciences, was recognized with the Teaching Award. Congratulations to both for their contributions.

Advising office: We want to welcome Ms. Andrea Branch who became our newest academic advisor in December. Ms. Branch was previously working as an academic advisor in the Graduate School at Auburn.

Dean’s office: We also welcome Ms. Angie Harvison who joined the Dean’s office as an Administrative Assistant in February. Ms. Harvison worked as a secretary for the women’s basketball team in the Athletics Department.

Contributions to the Crucible: We want to remind you that the “Crucible” accepts news and other information that you may like to share with other graduates and students in the college.

Julio F. Turrens, Ph.D.
jturrens@usouthal.edu
Biomedical Sciences

Message from Dr. William B. Davis, Chair, Biomedical Sciences

As the 2009 Spring Semester comes to a close, as always, we reflect on our graduating seniors. There are 35 in the 2009 class. The Senior Awards Convocation is scheduled for May 9, 2009, 11:00 a.m., at the Laidlaw Performing Arts Center and we look forward to recognizing each. At this early date, we know that already 14 are going on to post baccalaureate health programs.

This summer will be a very busy one for BMD as we prepare for our move to the 4th floor of the new Health Sciences Building located at University Blvd. and North Drive. The building provides considerable space for teaching and research and the location on the campus offers ideal proximity to the Charles Baugh Biomedical Library and other facilities which contribute to supporting the program. The move will occur around the latter part of July in coordination with other departments in the college.

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

William B. Davis
wbdavis@usouthal.edu

Alpha Eta Enrollment

The following students are BMD's nominees for membership in Alpha Eta.

Rylee K. Burt
William A. Kittrell
Pallavi A. Kumbla
Joseph A. Kundukulam
Sonia L. Savani
Brynna K. Wansick

BMD Top Prof Awards


Graduating BMD Seniors - Spring 2009


(*) USA Honors  (**) Departmental Honors

Science Olympiad

The Science Olympiad is an annual competition testing scientific knowledge and prowess between schools. The University of South Alabama hosted this year’s Southeast Alabama Regional Science Olympiad with Cindy Stanfield (BMD) and Patty Davis (Chemistry) serving as this year’s Tournament Directors and Mike Spector (BMD) serving as Scorekeeper.

A total of 15 middle school and 10 high school teams competed in 66 different competitions including Anatomy, Ecology, Experimental Design, Health Science, Meteorology, Reach for the Stars, and many more. Mike Spector and Brad Davis (BMD) prepared and judged the Disease Detectives event. Several Biomedical Science students and other prehealth students served as judges of events or otherwise helped out with the event.

The top 3 teams at both levels (high school and middle school) will compete at the State Science Olympiad. This year’s top high school teams were Bayside Academy (2 teams) and Alabama School of Math and Science. The top middle school teams were Brewton Middle School, WS Neal, and Cottage Hill Baptist.

Gumbo-Chili Showdown

The University of South Alabama medical school students hosted their first Gumbo-Chili Showdown to raise money for the Regan Robinson Young Scholarship Fund. Cindy Stanfield (BMD) entered the chili contest as the Prehealth Team and AED entered the gumbo contest as Team AED. Several Biomedical Science students helped with both teams, and Team AED won the best decorated booth contest.

Publications

Dr. Mike Spector has written an article entitled “Central (Intermediary) Metabolism” for the upcoming 3rd edition of the Encyclopedia of Microbiology. The Encyclopedia of Microbiology is edited by Moselio Schaechter and published by Elsevier, Inc.; the expected publication date is in the middle of April 2009.


Gumbo-Chili Showdown

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Cardiorespiratory Care

Message from William Wojciechowski, Chairman, Cardiorespiratory Care

Dear Alumni,

Well, believe it or not, we are getting closer to date when we will occupy our new building. The moving schedule has us taking occupancy of the classrooms and lab on May 19th and our offices on June 16th. It’s been a long journey since the days in the double-wide trailers across the street from helipad and the Medical Center.

... And, as usual, at this time of the year, we will be graduating (May 9th) another corps of respiratory therapists. I know that they will be elated to have their bout of “senioritis” cured. You remember that syndrome, don’t you?

After an 11-year hiatus, our program underwent its accreditation process under the auspices of the Committee for the Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and the Committee for the Accreditation of Respiratory Care (CoARC). Imagine. The last time we underwent the re-accreditation process was 1998! Well, on February 19th and 20th, the program was found to be in compliance with the standards set forth by those bodies. We look forward to receiving a five-year accreditation window with the possibility of having additional years tacked on, based on our yearly program status reports.

The entire faculty, David Chang, Tim Op’t Holt, Bill Pruitt, and Bill Wojciechowski, have been invited to speak at the Focus Conference for respiratory therapy in Orlando, May 14th and 15th. This event will mark the first time our entire faculty will have spoken at one event.

Up for a challenge? Rest assured that you can do this privately and anonymously. No one but you will know the outcome. You are invited to test your knowledge and understanding of respiratory therapy by taking Web-Based Credentialing Exam Review on the web site created by David Chang. The web site can be accessed by logging on to www.rtexams.com.

This summer Tim Op’t Holt will assume the position of president of the American Association of Asthma Educators (AAE) for 2009-2010. Bill Pruitt has been elected to the AAE board of directors.

Our program is poised to experience its highest enrollment of students ever this fall. Presently, we have 36 applications to review for August 2009. That is the highest number of applications in the history of the program.

Well, I hope that life is treating you well, and that your career to moving forward. As always, please drop us an e-mail when the opportunity presents itself. We truly would like to hear from you. Take care.

William Wojciechowski
WWojciec@usouthal.edu

Clinical Laboratory Sciences

Message from Vicki Barrett, Interim Chair

The University of South Alabama Administration has made the decision to close the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences. This was a decision based on the shortfall of state funding for the University. The Class of 2009 will be our 33rd and last graduating class. Four of our junior students relocated to the University of West Florida and three others are considering the University of Southern Mississippi. Other students decided to stay at USA and change the course of their studies. Our 10 senior students are back from the clinical practica and will finish Clinical Correlation and Review and Intro to Research coursework and are scheduled to graduate in May.

The Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences is very proud of all of our graduates. In an economy where jobs are scarce, it is very rewarding to be in such great demand. New data from the American Society for Clinical Pathology in March 2009 indicate that the laboratory workforce shortage has reached crisis mode. In 46% of laboratories nationwide, it is now taking three to twelve months to fill a vacancy. I sincerely hope that the Mobile area laboratories can find ways to address this shortage in the future.

In addition to the many graduates we have in clinical laboratories all over this country, we have many who are researchers, physicians, physician assistants, managers, and in other areas of health care. We have two graduates who have been elected into the College of Allied Health Hall of Fame. We have one graduate who received the Outstanding Alumni Award in the area of science by the USA National Alumni Association and is now director of research activities for the Mitchell Cancer Institute. We have another graduate who was nominated for the Outstanding Alumni Award this year. We are exceedingly proud of the accomplishments of all of our students and of the dedicated faculty, clinical adjunct faculty, and staff over the past years. Thank you for all that you have done for this Program. It has been a privilege and a joy to teach in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences over the past 19 years.

Vicki Barrett
vbarrett@usouthal.edu
Message from the Chair, Mr. David Burns

First Graduates of BS Degree Program
I am happy to report that the Department of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will be graduating its first BS Degree students at the University’s Spring Commencement this May. Candidates for the inaugural class are shown below:

Jeff Carter  Curtis Mathis
Phillip Creighton  Linda Oldham
Chuck George  Josh Ramey
Ben Jernigan  Melissa Sutton
Tina Maloy  Mark Turner

The BS Degree Program, approved in 2007, allows graduates of paramedic certificate and associate degree programs the opportunity to build upon their previous clinical training and expand their career potential in EMS management, leadership and clinical care. The program is one of only 12 programs of its kind in the US.

Paramedic Program
The Department’s Paramedic Certificate Program has seen a nearly 70% increase in enrollment this Spring over last year. The Program currently has about 85 students at five different levels throughout the curriculum. The Mobile Fire Rescue Department’s new Paramedic Cadet Program and the new BS Degree program in Emergency Medical Services have been significant in recruiting new students to the program. The department also has 26 students enrolled in its Basic EMT Program this Spring.

EMS Region 6 Program
The Department received a continuation grant in the amount of $300,000 for FY 09 from the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) to continue in its role as the regional EMS lead agency for the seven county southwest Alabama EMS region (aka the Alabama Gulf EMS System or AGEMSS).

Several initiatives undertaken by AGEMSS over the past year include:

- Equipped 100% of the Region’s ALS transport services (ambulances and helicopters) with Rescue CPAP machines. CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) is quickly becoming the standard of care for the pre-hospital treatment of congestive heart failure and other diseases that cause severe respiratory distress in emergency patients. AGEMSS purchased and distributed 110 Rescue CPAP machines to 17 ALS transport services in Region 6.
- Distributed a total of 110 inflatable infant car seats and 112 Pediatric Spine Boards to ALS ambulance services in Region 6. The car seats and spine boards were purchased through an EMS for Children (EMS-C) grant through the Alabama Department of Public Health.
- Continued to assist the ADPH with the State Trauma System Plan. Over the past year, AGEMSS has formulated its Regional Trauma System Advisory Council (RTAC) and gained the approval of its Regional Trauma System Plan from the State Trauma Advisory Council and the State Committee of Public Health (SCPH). Over the next few months, AGEMSS will be assisting the ADPH with field assessments to determine the level of trauma care (Level I, II, or III) that can be provided by each of the 17 hospitals in Region 6.
- Continue to provide educational and information sessions pertaining to the Alabama Trauma Systems Plan. AGEMSS will be providing up to 80, two-hour educational and information sessions to emergency personnel in EMS Region 6 including, EMT’s, Paramedics, Nurses, Physicians, volunteer and paid fire fighters, and law enforcement personnel.
Occupational Therapy

Message from the Chair, Dr. Rebecca I. Estes

This spring the Department of Occupational Therapy had over 35 applications for the Class of 2011. We are reviewing late applications and expect another excellent class! The list of activities below show how involved in department, university and community activities and services the students and faculty are!

The class of 2008 held their graduation ceremony at the Radisson Admiral Semmes Hotel. It was a night of celebration for the graduating class and of appreciation for the area clinicians who consistently support our program. The following clinicians were recognized at the 2008 graduation ceremony:

Phillip Bradley, OTR/L - Fieldwork Supervisor of the Year
Valley McCurry, OTR/L - Outstanding Alumni Award
Karen Smith-Colicchio, PT - Department Service Award.

Community Service

The University of South Alabama, Department of Occupational Therapy continues to provide vision screening to underprivileged children in our communities through the Focus First program. The OT students visited many Head Start and Preschool Programs in Mobile and Washington Counties. The occupational therapy students continue to provide excellent leadership and give generously of their time to help our community.

Dr. Marjorie Scaffa and the students in the second year of the occupational therapy program participated in the Martin Luther King Day of Service. The students offered screenings for depression to older adults living at Central Plaza Towers in Mobile. The students learned a great deal about the mental health concerns of seniors, and the older adults enjoyed the conversation and companionship of the students.

Outreach & Service

Donna Wooster, MS, OTR/L recently accompanied faculty and students from another occupational therapy program, Worcester State College in Massachusetts, to Nicaragua. A new partnership was formed with an orphanage in Nicaragua for children with disabilities called Hogar Belen which means Home of Bethlehem. This orphanage is funded by Mustard Seed International. The children receive lots of loving care from the small dedicated staff, however, conditions are primitive. There are no wheelchairs for the children with cerebral palsy. There are few toys. The orphanage staff were hungry to learn from us what they can do to help the children at the orphanage. Paperwork is currently underway to allow Ms. Wooster to travel with students from the USA College of Occupational Therapy back on an annual basis to provide care and staff instruction for this facility. Any graduates wishing to be involved are welcome to contact Ms. Wooster at 434-3923. If you can donate any pediatric therapy equipment to this worthy cause, please contact Ms. Wooster.

Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE), the occupational therapy honor society, is dedicated to promoting the profession of occupational therapy and increasing scholarly excellence among its members. Every semester, PTE collaborates with the Pre-OT club to provide mentoring sessions that present information regarding the different areas of practice and techniques that constitute our profession. The sessions consist of a small informational discussion followed by hands-on demonstrations. PTE members presented sessions on interviewing skills, sensory integration, and the handwriting without tears program. The interviewing session was lead by one of the Occupational Therapy Department faculty members, Dr. Kathy Lemcool. By providing these mentoring services, the members of PTE worked toward fulfilling their organization’s mission and purpose. Dr. Tracy O’Connor serves as the faculty liaison for both the PTE and Pre-OT Club.

Pre-OT Club Fall 08 the Pre-Occupational Therapy Club scheduled a time to cook and serve dinner to the Ronald McDonald House of Mobile and interact with the families that were staying there at that time. This spring semester they are looking forward to participating in an annual Easter Egg Hunt hosted by a local therapy clinic in Mobile, AL.
Occupational Therapy continued . . . . . .

South Alabama Student Occupational Therapy Association (SASOTA), is an organization for the current students in the occupational therapy program. Members have attended several OT conferences and seminars in the past year including the Alabama Occupational Therapy Association (ALOTA) in August and the Car Fit seminar in Fairhope this past month. Several members are planning to attend the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) National Conference in Houston, TX in April. At the AOTA Fall Conference, SASOTA members participated in a student forum to generate ideas about how to increase student involvement in OT practice at state and national levels. We hosted an event on USA’s main campus to promote National Backpack Awareness Day in September. SASOTA members weighed backpacks and handed out flyers to USA students to promote the prevention of chronic back pain. In addition, we distributed flyers at several local elementary schools. In December we donated gifts to the L Arche adult day care center. Dr. Kathy G. Lemcool continues to serve as the faculty liaison for this group.

Faculty Recognition & Presentations

Please congratulate the faculty for their continuing dedicated work!

**Dr. Tracy O’Connor** received a small grant from the Association of College Honor Societies to assist with developing a USA, Department of OT, Constraint Induced Therapy Clinic for Adults and Pediatrics. She is collaborating with the Management class and Dr. Nancy Van Slyke (retired faculty) to develop the tools and plan out the layout for the clinic.


**Dr. Rebecca Estes** was appointed as the Vice-Chair of the national organization of program directors in occupational therapy. She was also chosen to participate in a Leadership Training Fellowship sponsored jointly by the American Occupational Therapy Foundation and the American Occupational Therapy Association.

**Dr. Rebecca Estes** and co-author C. Fette published an article titled: *Community Participation Needs of Families With Children With Behavioral Disorders: A Systems of Care Approach*, in Occupational Therapy in Mental Health, Volume 25 Issue 1, 44, 2009.

**Dr. Rebecca Estes** and **Dr. Marjorie Scaffa** and co-author Madhuri Mulekar will be presenting research results in a poster at the American Occupational Therapy Association Conference in April in Houston, TX. The poster is entitled “Exploring the Relationship Between Creativity and Resiliency: Implications for Occupational Therapy Practice”.

**Dr. Marjorie Scaffa** will be presenting a session on *Health Promotion Advocacy and Strategies throughout the Lifespan* with a colleague, Dr. Maggie Reitz from Towson University, at the American Occupational Therapy Association Conference in Houston, TX in April 2009.

**Dr. Marjorie Scaffa** is guest editing a special issue of *Occupational Therapy in Health Care* on OT professional education. The special issue will examine how occupational therapy educational programs are addressing the profession’s Centennial Vision and preparing students for future emerging practice opportunities. This is the fourth special topics issue on education edited by Dr. Scaffa and Dr. Pat Crist from Duquesne University.

Physician Assistant Studies . . . . . .

**Message from the Chair, Dr. Zari Aliabadi**

The Department of Physician Assistant Studies has had a very successful past six months. We were delighted to see one of our colleagues, Dan Vetrosky, receive his Ph D during the fall commencement. Our student society, AL-PASS hosted its 9th annual charity golf tournament to benefit the Penelope House in Timber Creek on Saturday March 24th, a successful event with rave reviews from almost all participants. Seven members of the class of 2009 including Justin Edmondson, Brian Neillan, Patrick Nelson, Jamaal Upshaw, Maria Paredes, Katie Awalt, and Karla Barron were honored during the Annual College of Allied Health Profession Banquet. We were excited and proud to witness their induction into Alpha Eta Society and congratulate them once again for receiving such a great honor. We look forward to graduating the class of 2009 in July and the matriculation of the class of 2011 on May 11th. The class of 2011 will have 40 students, an increase of 4 over previous years, who were chosen from a record number of outstanding applicants. The matriculating class will boast an average GRE of 1127, an average cumulative GPA of 3.57, an average age of 24, and all in our new facilities in the brand new Health Sciences building.

Our guest writer is Kathy Hintz, PA-C, from the class of 2001. Kathy is employed at the Mostellar Clinic as a member of the internal medicine department. I would like to thank Kathy for taking time out of her very busy schedule to write for us.

Zari Aliabadi
zaliabadi@usouthal.edu
**Physician Assistant Studies . . . . .**

**Kathy Hintz, PA-C Mostellar Medical Clinic**

I grew up in a rural area where access to medical care was limited. This shaped my goal to work with the underserved. I attended the Physician Assistant Studies Program at the University of South Alabama in order to achieve that goal. I graduated from the PA program in 2001 and joined the university’s student health clinic where I worked as a PA for just over a year. Although I loved my job in student health I was still drawn to working in rural healthcare. I had enjoyed my rotation in family practice while in PA school very much because it allowed me to do a little of everything. So, when a family practice position in rural Alabama became available I decided to change jobs.

For the next six years I worked in a rural health clinic near Grove Hill, Alabama. My supervising physician was able to be in that clinic only one day a week and his practice included both OB/GYN and general surgery. Many of my patients didn’t go to the doctor until their condition became severe. This was in part because they were either unable to drive or because they did not have reliable transportation to get to Mobile to see a specialist that was 1.5 hours away. This left me and my supervising physician to care for whatever problem they were having. I can’t begin to list or describe all the medical problems I saw and treated or how much I learned while assisting in procedures and surgeries. It was a great privilege to be able to provide care to my patients who had limited access to care.

I also had the opportunity to develop occupational-health contracts with several lumber mills nearby which allowed me to help mill workers frequently by treating wounds, suturing cuts, and removing foreign bodies, including splinters the size of pencils and metal pieces from eyes. Occasionally I handled emergencies that ended up at the clinic because it was closer than any emergency room. The biggest reward was to see the patients get better. Patients who were so appreciative of just having a provider close by to take care of them; patients who just wanted someone who shared their concerns regarding their health, not a provider that herds patients in and out. One truly develops a relationship with their patients when working in rural areas where you can make a difference just by patient education and community outreach alone.

I had to leave the rural health position that I loved so much since my husband is in the military and we had to relocate. It was two years later that we returned to Mobile, that was just one month ago. I was blessed to find another position in rural health working at the Mostellar Medical Clinic in Irvington/ Bayou La Batre. Mostellar is a federally funded clinic with special programs that allows them to provide services to people without any insurance at a discounted rate. These services include medication assistance programs that help offer free or discounted medications. There are a total of 12 providers at Mostellar currently. We see emergencies/ urgent care and treat a variety of illnesses. I currently work in the internal medicine department but the clinic has pediatrics and Ob/ Gyn departments as well. I have only been there for a few weeks now but I hope to love it as much as my previous position in rural healthcare.

The patients here seem just as appreciative and just as in need of health care, patient education, and someone to take a few minutes with them to explain their condition in terms they understand. I find taking those few minutes, showing I care, getting to know my patients and building their trust is my reward for working in medicine, especially with the underserved. I love my job and love being a physician assistant providing health care to an underserved population.

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**Physical Therapy**

**Message from the Chair, Dr. Dennis Fell**

By the time you get this newsletter, we’ll be in our new PT space in the newest and largest instructional building on the main campus. PT will be occupying the south wing of the second floor of the new building with the OT department. The building is located at the southwest corner of University Blvd and North Drive (just across the parking lot from the College of Medicine). We will be planning some alumni events and open houses for alumni to visit, but if you are ever in the area, please drop in to see us in our new digs.

The DPT Class of 2008 has now entered the real world. Of the 28 graduates, 100% have passed their licensure exam (93% on their first attempt, compared to a national first time pass rate of 83%).

The Charles P. Gray Physical Therapy Scholarship, with the generous contributions from 30 years of alumni has now grown to over $12,000 and will be self-sustaining. Thanks to each of you who honored Dr Gray by contributing to the scholarship. Almost 30 alumni attended the retirement reception given for Dr Gray by the Department and PT alumni. It was a great time with good food and lots of fun memories!

PT School continues to be fun, as shown in the PT student photos, in addition to very demanding (just the way you remember it). But in the long-term, all that work pays off with a great profession and friendships some of which last a lifetime.

Dr. Dennis Fell
dfell@jaguar1.usouthal.edu
http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/pt/
Physical Therapy continued………..

To alumni and friends,

Thanks for all the support and encouragement you have given me throughout the years and during the occasion of my recent retirement. It has been nice seeing many of you at various receptions throughout the state and here in Mobile. I am also thankful for the contributions to the scholarship fund and am happy to report that an award will be made this year to a deserving student. The early days of my retirement have been busy with grandchildren, Honey do’s, some photography and gardening but not necessarily in that order! I’ve also been given the opportunity to participate in the anatomy courses and find that to be a nice transition into “semi-retirement”.

Keep in touch and best wishes to all,

Charles Gray

Class of 2007 Alumni Offer Panel Discussion For Year-I and Year-II

DPT graduates from the Class of 2007 organized a lunch-time seminar for Year-I and Year-II students on Feb 25th. The current students provided a wonderful covered-dish lunch for students and faculty and the 2007 graduates gave a panel discussion on issues related to the job search process, transition to professional, a variety of work settings, and “new-professional” issues including ongoing professional development. The day was a great success. The department would like to thank Chris Stewart, Stephanie Boyer, Bethany Merkel Engl, Valerie Shankland Sullivan, Heather Sollie, and Summer Mathis Taylor.

Class Of 2007 Graduates (Summer Mathis Taylor, Heather Sollie, Valerie Shankland Sullivan, Bethany Merkel Engl, Stephanie Boyer, and Chris Stewart) gave a lunch-time seminar on "new-professional" issues for Year-I and Year-II students. The students provided the lunch and the DPT alumni provided the wisdom!
Keith Ganey PT, MEd, SCS, ATC
Awarded Clinical Specialist Certification

The department wishes to congratulate Rodney Keith Ganey upon his achievement of Sports Clinical Specialist (SCS) certification by the APTA’s ABPTS. Keith is a 1988 graduate of our program and is currently enrolled in our Web-based DPT program (tDPT) for licensed physical therapists.

Which of you is next? We want to encourage each of you to pursue clinical specialization.

Web-based DPT Program for Licensed Physical Therapists phasing out

Our Doctor of Physical Therapy Program for licensed physical therapists (tDPT) program grew really quickly. With over 80 PTs who have been enrolled in this fully web-based program, an administrative decision was made to phase the program out. Letters were mailed to all eligible MPT graduates with a March 1st deadline for the final admission cycle to this program.

Congratulations to the individuals who graduated from the USA Web-based DPT program for licensed physical therapists in December 2008: Brandon Balenger, Susan Burke, Wendy Byrd, Claire Coolbeth, Laura Grabowski, Wendy Harris, Tyler Hale, Laura Lei-Rivera, Victoria Mogen, Katherine Schultz, Erin Sullivan, and Joan “Dodie” Vance.

Faculty Awards/Honors

Dr. Jean Irion and Dr Glenn Irion have been awarded a $5,000 grant by the APTA Section on Women’s Health for a study related to High Risk Pregnancy.

Dr. Fell Awarded by ALAPTA

Dr. Dennis W Fell, was awarded the 2008 Chapter Leadership Award by the Alabama Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association (ALAPTA). The Award selected by the Chapter Council recognizes a non-elected Chapter Council member making the most significant contribution resulting in Chapter growth and individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in their service to the ALAPTA.

Dennis was honored for his seventeen years of service to Alabama including Research Committee Chair, Nominating Committee and Nominating Committee Chair, and teaching numerous continuing education courses for the chapter. He has also contributed seventeen years as a faculty member with eight years as the Department Chair at the USA program. In addition, Dennis has served in leadership and service positions in the Education Section (currently Nominating Committee Chair), Academic Administrators SIG, Pediatric Section and Neurology Section (Telecommunications committee, former E-New editor, currently serving as Section Treasurer).

Recent Faculty Presentations/Publications

Dr Dennis Fell gave two presentations at the International Physiotherapy Conference at the University of Pretoria in South Africa in October 2008 (Changing Incidence in Applicants Being Verbally Discouraged from Entering Physical Therapy Profession: Results over Eight Years from One Program D Fell; & Mapping the Core Journals of Physical Therapy Literature D Fell, J Burnham, M Buchanan, H Horchen, J Scherr.)

Dr Dennis Fell was a panel discussion leader for the South Africa National Physiotherapy Educators Forum in Pretoria, South Africa in October 2008.

Dr Glenn Irion presented a platform presentation on Effects of Upper Extremity Movements and Transfers on Sternal Skin Stress at the 2009 Combined Sections Meeting in Las Vegas, NV, Feb 12, 2009.

Dr Jean Irion presented Ergonomics in Ultrasound Practice, at RADSYM in Biloxi, MS in October 2008.

Dr Jean Irion presented “Women’s Health Specialization Update 2009: The Road to Specialist Certification” and a platform presentation “The Effect of Aquatic Intervention on Function and Quality of Life on a Patient with Psoriatic Arthritis” at CSM in Las Vegas, Feb 2009.

Prof John Jefferson gave a Platform Presentation: Nerve Conduction Velocity And F-Wave Latency During The Upper Limb Neurodynamic Test For The Ulnar Nerve at the APTA Combined Sections Conference 2009 in Las Vegas, NV.

Dr Elisa Kennedy presented the a post-professional course ”Optimizing Development of the Older High-Risk Infant in the NICU and After Discharge” at Hofstra University in New York City, Nov 2-3, 2008.

Dr Elisa Kennedy represented the Section on Pediatrics of APTA as a panel member discussing the topic of Personnel Issues in Early Intervention at the Office of Special Education Early Childhood Conference in Washington, DC, Dec 2008.

Dr Elisa Kennedy presented a workshop and consultation regarding therapeutic intervention for the high risk infant for PTs and OTs at Alabama Children's Hospital in Birmingham, AL, Jan, 2009.

The Drs Irion have jointly authored a Lippincott textbook on “Women's Health in Physical Therapy” due out in June 2009. More on that in future editions.

Dr Glenn Irion’s chapter “Lab Tests and Values” was just published in the 3rd edition of Goodman’s “Pathology: Implications for the Physical Therapist.” (2009)
**Alumni Updates**

*Here is the latest information Dr. Fell has gathered on alumni. Let us know about your promotion, certification, move, new job, grandchildren... We want to include you in the next issue!*

**JoEtta Fauver Barefoot** (1992) says she is “truly blessed” with her family and in her full time position at Alacare Home Health and Hospice. JoEtta has been married to Blair Barefoot for nearly six years and they have a 3-year-old son Jaden (August 2005) and daughter Britton just born in August 2008.

**Patrick Benefield** (2005) now lives in Denver, CO, working for the VA hospital as an outpatient therapist, “literally treating everything” from individuals with tumor, bad backs, amputation, to TBI and Stroke. He recently bought a 120 year old Victorian home in downtown that he is starting to restore.

**Andrew Bennett** (1999) and **Heather Giroir Bennett** (1999) just opened a 12th clinic in Texas www.texpts.com They include fully integrating residency training, fellowships, and now even internship at the student level. Andrew has his Orthopedic Clinical Specialist certification and completed a fellowship. Their family includes Joshua (7), Anna (4), David (15mos)...with #4 on the way in May. Andrew says “Heather is a super mom”.

**Donovan Brooks** (1997) and **Shannon Halverson Brooks** (1996) say “12 years of marriage have flown by.” Donovan works for Mid-South Home Health and Shannon still works in the school system in Mobile. They have three children: Kyla (10), Trent (9), and Brayden (6) who “is a blast as he is the family clown”. They have a great family portrait on their Facebook page.

**Lea Hurlburt Burnaman** (2001) lives in Alexandria, LA with husband Dustin (married Oct 2007). Dr Fell found her on Facebook. She works in inpatient rehab center and also does some home health. They have their basset hound, Dexter, and she spends a lot of her free time keeping in shape by running and circuit training, reading and painting.

**Angela Gattis Fowler** (2005) married Evan Fowler, former tennis player at USA, in June 2008. She practices just north of Atlanta. She is preparing to open her own practice in Alpharetta. To the faculty she said “Thanks for everything.”

**Mark Gagnon** (2005) married his college sweetheart in January 2009. He has worked in New Iberia, LA. since graduation in an inpatient rehab unit floating to acute and outpatient as needed at a small hospital.

**Natasha Howell** (2001) lives in Lucedale, MS and works in home health as one of 4 area rehab leaders for the company. She stays busy with work, church and her 3 kids... Serena(7), Trent(5) and Presley (2).

**Amberly Cooper Mason** (2004) opened a private practice clinic in Spanish Fort in May 2008 and it is going great. Plus, she has a 2 year old. She says “we stay pretty busy.” She is also on Facebook.

**Kristy Scheblein McGehee** (2000) is married with a 3 1/2 year old boy named Matthew. She works at Rehab Associates in Wetumpka, AL doing orthopedics and specializing in women's health.

**Heather Hillhouse Melancon** (2005) married and now is expecting their first child, a daughter, on May 7, 2009! She works at an outpatient clinic in Bogalusa, LA, Therapeutic Concepts. “Small clinic but I love it!”

**Robert Murphy** (1999) graduated from the St Louis University Seminary and is now teaching Theology and Spanish at the Jesuit High School in Dallas, TX. He also works on the athletic training staff and coaching soccer. “So I am busy but well and getting to mix all my interests.”

**Jennifer Prevost Peyerl** (1999) recently connected with a few of her PT classmates through Facebook. She is married with three kids; Jenevieve 8, Cole 5, and Paisley 1, and works for a local non-profit home care agency and does contract work as well.

**Lisi Fox Phillips** (1999) lives in Fort Payne now, but will be moving to Chattanooga, TN. They have 2 little girls: Trinity age 4 and Acadia age2.

**Jill Renegar Porter** (2000) lives in Nashville with her husband and 2 girls, ages 3 and 14 months. She has enjoyed home health P for about 7 years and works for Vanderbilt Home Care.

**Monica Thompson Shea** (1999) works as a school PT in Jacksonville, NC. She earned her DPT from Boston University in 2005. She and her husband (a Marine) have three children: Morgan (6), Brennan (3), and Connor (1). See some cute Halloween pictures of the kids on her Facebook page.

**Brian Strawbridge** (2005) and his wife Mary will be equipping a double nursery. They found out they will have IDENTICAL TWIN GIRLS with due date of June 19th.


**Katy Shrauner Thompson** (1998) and her husband have lived in Phoenix for about 6 years (in Chicago for 4 years before that). She took 2 years off when she had the twins!! Having worked as a PT for over 10 years, she has worked now for 2 years in an Emergency Department - she really likes it.
Jessica Tranchina (1999) reconnected with Dr Fell through the Facebook alumni group. After initially practicing in the SE she has worked in San Diego, San Fran, Austin, Tulsa, Seattle and now in Hawaii. In Austin, she worked on her doctorate from BU and met my hubby. She says she had an "adventurous wedding" in Tahoe and honeymoon in Costa Rica. Jessica says “I just love the versatility of the field of PT and the ability it gives one to move about the country and even the world!!”

Lauren Muller Ventura (1998) lives with husband Brock in Madisonville, LA with two kids Camden (6) and Anna (3 1/2). After years in an OP clinic she is now full time with a non-profit called Med Job Louisiana to help place health care professionals in the rural and underserved areas of our state with emphasis on the hurricane-impacted parishes.

Digby Watt (2002) has enjoyed his job in Georgia. He just found out he will be working full time as a therapist on the PGA Tour this year. He is “looking forward to the challenge.”

Claudia Velez White (1999) and her husband Kevin live in Madison and work in Hattiesburg, MS. For almost 10 years, she has loved her work as a pediatric PT. Their daughter Isabelle, will be 4 years old in May and is “bright and beautiful.”

USA Physical Therapy Alumni "Facebook" Group

In Fall 2008, Dr. Fell started a Facebook group for "USA Physical Therapy Alumni" as an opportunity to enhance social networking (in this Web 2.0 world) among USA PT graduates. Amazingly, in just four short months, there are now over 130 of the 800 PT alumni who are part of the online social networking group, including one person from the very first PT class (Thank You Sandra! ;-) ). More and more, people our age are participating and connecting and social networking online. It is NOT just for teenagers anymore! If you have a Facebook account and he hasn't located you yet, please sign up and request to join the group. It'll be a fun way to keep in touch with your classmates and share photos! Please join us in this new interactive venue. When you log into Facebook (www.facebook.com), and open your account, click on "Groups" and search for "USA Physical Therapy Alumni". Then you can request to join the group and Dr Fell will approve your request so you can see who has already joined. Help us find other USA alumni and invite them to join the group. For example, Monica and Katy from the Class of 1999 have recently reconnected there. Who knows who you might find there? Group photos from the recent alumni events have been added to the site as well.

USA PT Alumni Society Meetings

If you would like to be part of an Alumni Advisory Group to facilitate alumni activities and advise the department, and also plan several regional alumni reunions, contact Dr Fell at dfell@jaguar1.usouthal.edu to become a part of the fun. Also, you might have the address or phone for an alumnus with whom we have lost contact. Call (251)434-3575 or email ptdept@jaguar1.usouthal.edu . We encourage each of you to join the USA Alumni Association http://www.southalabama.edu/alumni and specify your request to become a member of the PT Alumni Society (no extra fee). This will help to support our alumni events. Help us plan an alumni event in your area!!

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 2009-2010 academic year. Due to the number of applicants, the Departmental Admissions Committee will again conduct interview sessions on Saturdays. Several former graduates volunteered to act as interviewers last year and if you are interested in serving as an interviewer, please contact Ms. Kathy Kymbal at (251) 434-3456. The Admissions Committee serves an important function, and we will certainly appreciate any assistance you may lend. The number of qualified applicants continues to be strong, and information concerning the program is available on our web site at www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/radiologicsciences. You are cordially invited to visit our web site.

The University Annual Scholarship Fund campaign for 2009 is underway. With this in mind, alumni are encouraged to consider donating to the Department of Radiologic Science Scholarship Fund. The Department of Radiologic Sciences Scholarship fund continues to receive donations from departmental faculty and alumni. Currently this fund has accumulated $24,500. As a result, we were able to award one scholarship in the amount of $1000.00 to a second-year student for the Spring Semester, 2009. The projected amount to be awarded in 2010 is likely to be the same as in 2009. Please remember that it has taken twenty-plus years to accumulate $24,500 in this fund, and thus your continued support is needed if we are to see an increase in the amount awarded each year.

The Alabama Society of Radiation Oncology (ASRO) and the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO) has once again donated $5000 to the department, which will be made available to students enrolled in our Radiation Therapy program. Alumni of the radiation therapy program are also encouraged to contribute to the Radiation Therapy Scholarship fund.

Charles Newell
cnewell@jaguar1.usouthal.edu
Like so many graduating classes in recent years, the Class of 1992 has produced a number of graduates who have made substantial professional gains in our profession by advancing in areas such as radiologic equipment sales, and assuming leadership roles in a variety of ways. The graduate highlighted in this edition of the Crucible, Tessie Keevan, exemplifies such an individual.

Tessie entered our radiography program in 1990 following graduation from Shaw High School in Mobile. Like so many other students, Tessie worked part-time as a student radiographer at USAMC. During Tessie’s last semester in radiography, she selected CT as her specialty rotation, which proved beneficial to her when she entered the job market in 1992 where she performed CT and radiography exams. While at USAMC, Tessie received training in MRI, and performed MRI exams from 1995 to 2002. She is now registered in CT and MRI.

Although Tessie became a night supervisor in 2002 at USAMC, she later decided to see if the grass were truly greener elsewhere, and sought employment at Gulfport Memorial Hospital as the Clinical Coordinator in the radiology department. Tessie enjoyed her new adventure at Memorial, particularly since she had never worked outside of the USAMC system. While at Memorial, Tessie was actively involved in implementing a PACS system, which was an experience she would later call upon to assist another institution in their implementation of a PACS system. Despite her enjoyment of the Memorial experience and life along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Tessie became a bit homesick, and returned to Mobile a year later where she was employed as a CT, MRI and diagnostic radiographer at Thomas Hospital in Fairhope. However, Tessie’s employment at Thomas was rather brief as she eventually accepted a position at USAMC, and assumed her “old” position as the evening diagnostic supervisor.

In 2005 Tessie decided to return to school and enrolled in our BS program. She graduated in 2007 with concentrations in management and MRI. Not satisfied with this accomplishment, Tessie enrolled in USA’s MPA program, and is slated to receive her master’s degree at the conclusion of the Fall Semester, 2010. According to Tessie, her level of concentration is far superior from that same young student who entered the radiography program back in 1990. Well, perhaps maturation has played a role in this increased level of concentration as Tessie’s grades in the BS and MPA programs are near the summa cum laude level. I haste to add that through all of her continuing education activities, Tessie has also been promoted to the position of Assistant Technical Director of Radiology at USAMC. Concentration!
### Message from the Chair, Dr. Robert Moore

In May the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology will graduate a total of 20 graduate students in speech pathology and audiology. All of our students in both majors have passed the Praxis exam for certification. We will also graduate approximately 29 undergraduate students in speech and hearing science. Also in May, we will begin the transition from our familiar facilities in University Commons to our new facilities in the new Health Sciences Division Building at the corner of University Blvd. and USA North Dr. on main campus. The new space will allow growth in our department. The USA Speech and Hearing Center will grow with additional therapy and diagnostic space available for speech pathology and the addition of one sound booth and more space for hearing aid related work for audiology. There will also be increased capacity for research with the addition of three sound booths dedicated primarily to audiology and hearing science research. There is also increased space for speech pathology and speech science research. We are very excited about our new home and look forward to showing off our new spaces to our alumni as soon as we are settled.

Robert Moore  
rmooresouthal.edu

### Recent Faculty Publications/Presentations

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<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Journal/Conference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ramkissoon, I. and Chambers, R.</td>
<td>Effects of chronic and acute smoking on AMLRs in older and younger listeners.</td>
<td>Int. J. of Audiology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean-Claytor, A., Estis, J., and Moore, R.</td>
<td>Impact of noise and musical interference on pitch-matching accuracy.</td>
<td>Poster presentation for the annual American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention, Chicago, IL.</td>
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### Department News

Dr. Ishara Ramkissoon has been appointed to the Board of Trustees for Mercy Medical. In Mobile and Baldwin counties, Mercy Medical facilities include an acute rehabilitation hospital, long-term care, skilled nursing, assisted living for the elderly, memory clinic, home health, and hospice services.

On March 28, 2008 our audiology student organization, the National Association of Future Doctors in Audiology (NAFDA), sponsored our fourth White Coat Ceremony for our third-year Doctor of Audiology students. The following students received their white coats: Rocio Aleman-Hilpert, Kristen Belyeu, Sommer Brock, Ashley Dockens, Constance Forsythe-Tomberlin, Melanie Friend, Ashley Gaal, Jennifer Koczor, Holly Morlas, Felicia Owens, Rebecca Ratliff, and Blair Snow.

At the Speech and Hearing Association of Alabama’s annual convention in Birmingham, AL from March 4 through March 6, 2008, the association recognized the “Outstanding Student” from each of the five speech pathology/audiology programs in the state. Each student was selected by faculty at their institution and submitted for the honor. The honoree from our Department was Sommer Brock, a Doctor of Audiology student from Mobile, AL. Sommer maintained a 4.0 GPA during her graduate work and has excelled both clinically and academically.