



THE CRUCIBLE



“A Place..... In which concentrated forces interact to cause or influence change or development”

Newsletter from the College of Allied Health Professions, University of South Alabama

<http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/>

THE CRUCIBLE

Issue 2, Spring 2005

Inside this issue:

Department of Biomedical Sciences.....	4
Department of Cardiorespiratory Care.....	4
Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences.....	4
Department of Occupational Therapy.....	6
Department of Physician Assistant Studies.....	7
Department of Physical Therapy.....	8
Department of Radiological Sciences.....	10
Department of Speech Pathology And Audiology.....	10

Message from the Dean, Dr. Rick Talbott



One nice thing about the position of Dean is that you get to carry the message to our alumni and supporters about the excellent work of the faculty and students in the College. As one example, this has been an outstanding year in terms of the successes of our students on their national credentialing examinations. For the last full year reported, all of the departments reported over 95% first time pass rate with five department's students achieving 100%. The success of our students on these credentialing examinations is testimony to the outstanding work of our faculty and the quality of our students.

The College is proud to announce the inauguration of a new award to recognize the accomplishments of our graduates. The College of Allied Health Profession's Hall of Fame Award will be presented each year to one of our graduates who has distinguished herself or himself in their profession, service to the community, or other service. Last year's University of South Alabama's distinguished alumni award winner, Dr. Laurie Beth Owen was the first recipient of the award and the external advisory board of the College is in the process of selecting this years award winner. Nominations for this award are solicited from the faculty and alumni in the Fall of each year. Hall of Fame awardees will be featured in future editions of the Crucible.

A second exciting initiative of the College launched this year was the establishment of the College of Allied Health's Division for Health Consultation. This Division will be organized under the Dean's office and serve as a mechanism for providing state of the art allied health related consultation services for the Mobile community and the region. A faculty committee, let by Dr. Marjorie Scaffa, Chair of Occupational Therapy, is currently developing the marketing program for the Division that should be available for distribution to the community early in the new year. Faculty with expertise in areas from the disciplines represented in the College will participate in the new Division.

Finally, the University is moving ahead with plans for the new College of Allied Health and College of Nursing Building and ground breaking should occur early next year. As indicated in previous editions of this newsletter, we are excited about the potential for all the departments to be on the main campus and the opportunities for both research and clinical collaboration that this will bring.

The faculty and I urge you to keep in touch with us and please offer any suggestions for items you would like to have included in future editions of the Crucible.

Richard E. Talbott, Dean

Message from the Associate Dean Dr. Julio Turrens



Future online surveys

One of the mechanisms to improve the quality of our programs in the College of Allied Health Professions, is to get feedback from our graduates. In the past we mailed a survey to all our graduates a few months after graduation, asking them to complete them and mail them back. Unfortunately, we had a low response rate, making it difficult to improve our programs based on this type of feedback. Starting in the Spring 2006, the College of Allied Health Professions will implement an on-line survey which will be easy to answer and will require no mailing back from our graduates. We will give you more details and a link to this website in the next issue of the Crucible, and we will ask all of you to go through it once to help us compile as much information as possible.

Sends us feedback!

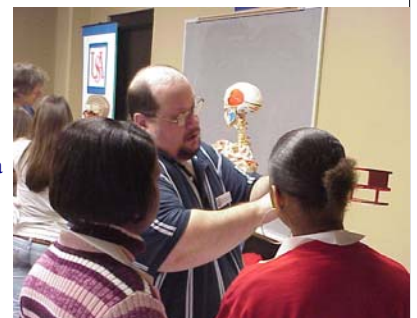
In future issues of the Crucible we would like to add a section for our graduates. Feel free to email information that you would like to share with to colleagues and students in your discipline or to send us news and feedback you may deem relevant. My email address is jturrens@usouthal.edu.

Expanding Your Horizons Conference



The annual Expanding Your Horizons Conference for middle school girls was held Saturday, October 22, with the help of many College of Allied Health faculty and students. Dr. Cindy Stanfield (Biomedical Sciences) and Vicki Barrett (Clinical Laboratory Sciences) were on the organizing committee. Faculty from the departments of Biomedical Sciences, Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Physician Assistants, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech and Hearing held various workshops to describe their disciplines to the girls. Students from Biomedical Sciences, Clinical Laboratory Sciences, and Physician Assistants also gave workshops and helped out in a

variety of ways. Attendance at the conference was the largest yet with 255 middle school girls participating in 39 different workshops.



Department of Biomedical Sciences

BMD Students and Graduate News:

Several BMD students are quite busy interviewing at various medical for admission to the class entering in the Fall 2006. Some of those who interviewed as "Early Decision" have already been accepted. They are **Jamie Caudill**, **Chris Bailey** and **Daniel Robinson** (accepted to USA) and **Jumin Sunde** (accepted to UAB).

Bobby Kakati, who graduated in Spring of this year and is currently attending medical school at USA was awarded the very competitive National AED Scholarship (\$5,000).

Research News From BMD Students:

Kristy Nicholson, a BMD senior, was awarded the student grant award from the Southeastern Branch of the American Society for Microbiology.

Andres Zuleta, also a BMD senior, will present a study for the American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology meeting in San Francisco.

Karla McInnis who graduated in 1998, has completed her Ph.D. in Basic Medical Sciences (Microbiology).

Interviews to students for admission to medical school in the Fall 2006

Department of Cardiorespiratory Care

Message from the Chair, Dr. William Wojciechowski

Hello Alumni,

As the holidays quickly approach, the faculty, staff, and I would like to extend to you and to your family greetings for a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

The Cardiorespiratory Care faculty have been busy. Tim Opt Holt and Bill Pruitt, who serve as board members for the Association of Asthma Educators, have been active with program planning and working on the education committee. They also both have been providing care to asthma and COPD patients in the "Breath of Life" program at the Victory Healthcare Partners clinic in Mobile.

Tim spent 10 days in October in China, lecturing on a variety of topics related to mechanical ventilation. He has also completed articles about Problem-Based Learning and asthma education in Respiratory Therapy education programs.

Faculty and students performed spirometry, and distributed smoking cessation materials to persons at the Colonial Mall Bell Air during respiratory therapy week, October 24th to 28th.

I have completed the fourth edition of my Respiratory Care Sciences book. I currently am revising both the Entry-Level and Written Registry review books. I have has also been contributing articles to Focus, a respiratory therapy publication, each quarter.

Fred Hill and Bill Pruitt have worked diligently on the passage of the Alabama Licensure Bill. In fact, Fred has been appointed to serve on the Alabama State Board of Respiratory Therapy.

Deanna continues pointing us in the correct direction each day, and keeps the Department operating smoothly. Let us know where you are and what you are doing. We would like to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Bill Wojciechowski



Teaching Tour in China

Tim Op't Holt, Ed.D., R.R.T., AE-C, FAARC



Professor, Cardiorespiratory Care

I recently returned from a teaching tour to the People's Republic of China. In Beijing, I presented lectures on COPD and management of patients receiving mechanical ventilation. Since there are few Respiratory Therapists in China, this role is one of many assumed by physicians and nurses, so lectures that impart a practical bedside use message are most helpful. At the 1800 bed Qingdao Medical University hospital, I went on rounds, seeing a 30-year-old policeman who had been bitten by a Taiwanese banded krait, a very venomous snake. This man had prolonged muscle weakness, and we discussed ventilatory alternatives. In Jinan, following rounds in the ICU, we had a discussion on airways, ARDS, and COPD, with translation provided by a nurse who had spent a year in an emergency department in the U.S. We also went to 1700 bed Shandong Provincial hospital, where ARDS was discussed we met with Dr. Jiang, the director of respiratory medicine who had recently returned from a year at Johns Hopkins and Mayo Clinic. In Nanjing, crowded into a very small conference room, artificial airways were discussed. In the ICU, a patient with a high spinal cord injury was presented. Unfortunately, the patient was unresponsive and unweanable. Since the Chinese system apparently has no equivalent of our DNR or terminal weaning protocol, patients like this are ventilated until they have some other cause of death, such as sepsis or pneumonia. At the bedside of other patients, we discussed airway care, spontaneous breathing trials, ARDS, and CPT. We also visited Nanjing General Hospital, operated by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). I should point out that most hospitals are either run by the Ministry of Health, the PLA, or by foreign/private concerns. Topics included waveform monitoring, artificial airways, and ARDS. I also had a discussion with Dr. Li, who is interested in establishing a respiratory therapy program. In Shanghai, we went to the 1500 bed Xinhua Hospital, where I presented airway care and waveform lectures as part of a two-week course in mechanical ventilation and critical care medicine led by Dr. Song, who has written a text on mechanical ventilation (Xiandai Huxiji Zhilixue). A highlight of the visit to Shanghai was a reunion with Dr. Irwin Ziment, a pulmonologist from UCLA, who was with a tour group. We had a long talk while on a boat tour of the harbor. In Guangzhou, we went to the 1600 bed Southern Hospital and did rounds in the ICU, where an elderly woman with COPD had extubated herself, so we discussed options for her continued care, and then I presented a lecture on ARDS, despite two power failures in the auditorium! We had a brief visit to Shenzhen and rounds at the Red Cross hospital. In nearby Foshan, we visited the 1500 bed People's Hospital. We had a brief visit to the 25 bed combined ICU, which was very busy. Most patients were being mechanically ventilated and the director had only a few minutes, since what I presumed to be the equivalent of JCAHO was visiting. Our final stop was the First Affiliated Hospital of the Sun Yat Sen University in Guangzhou. There, I presented a lecture on ARDS. In each location, I was well received and the audiences were always courteous. Western medicine is the standard in China and Chinese physicians are eager to learn the practical aspects of respiratory care while remaining mindful of Traditional Chinese Medicine and how it can be used in conjunction with Western methods.

Since all the cities I visited are large (3-13 million), the hospitals are large as well, and there are several medical schools in each city. The food is great, usually served family style from plates and bowls arranged on a large lazy susan. Dishes consist of hot and cold appetizers (vegetables and meat), followed by a number of main dishes in styles (tsai) consistent with the province. Dessert is fruit. Utensils consist of a spoon for soup and chopsticks. China, while having a Communist central government, is increasingly a capitalist society. City skylines are a forest of huge apartment buildings, banks, and foreign and domestic businesses. I was told the 20% of the world's construction cranes are in

Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences

Message from the Chair, Dr. Holly Hall

This Fall Semester we welcomed 12 new junior students who eagerly entered the program and are busy with their first semester classes. With this entering class the CLS program began its 30th year as an excellent clinical laboratory science program. The program has been fully and continuously accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science (NAACLS) for the maximum 7 year period since the original accreditation in 1976. During this time 271 graduates have successfully completed the program. While many have chosen to practice in Alabama, our alumni are practicing throughout the United States and in several foreign countries. One of our departmental goals



is to locate as many of our alumni as possible. We are happy that we can contact you through *The Crucible*, and hope that you enjoy reading it. We ask that if you know USA colleagues who are not yet receiving this newsletter, urge them to contact us at 251-434-3461 or hhall@southal.edu. If you are not already a member, I encourage you to join the USA National Alumni Association www.southalabama.edu/alumni.html. It is not expensive, and it supports some of our activities. Another one of our goals is to increase student recruitment and retention.

Visit our brand new website www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/cls to find program information that you can share with prospective students. With *The Crucible* in its second year, one great benefit is that we have received letters, e-mails and pictures from quite a few of you. It is always fun hear from you, even better is a visit. We invite you to keep in touch. Let us know what you are doing. We are proud of each of you. Happy holidays and have a great new year 2006.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

On Oct 22nd the faculty participated “Expanding Your Horizons (in math and science)”, a one-day conference at USA to provide middle school girls the opportunity to interact with scientists. The aim is to encourage a sustained interest in math and science in these students. This year’s conference hosted 300 students in 40 different workshops. Our faculty presented a workshop in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Forensic Science entitled “Solving Medical Mysteries”. Fifty students in small groups typed blood, ran hematocrits, read urinalysis reagent strips, worked with agar plates and biochemical slide tests, manipulated a model skeleton, and analyzed crime scene data. It is amazing to see the curiosity and enthusiasm of these young girls. We gave door prizes to the girls and everyone enjoyed the experience.

“This year’s conference hosted 300 students in 40 different workshops. Our faculty presented a workshop entitled “Solving Medical Mysteries” “

FACULTY NEWS

Ms. Vicki Barrett received the 2005 College of Allied Health Professions Award for Excellence in Service. Our congratulations go to her. Ms. Barrett has recently been appointed to the Education Advisory Accreditation Subcommittee of the American Association of Blood Banks. The committee makes recommendations for and coordinates training activities for AABB assessors who conduct accreditation inspections of transfusion services and blood centers.

Ms. Angelia Cale is serving her third term as President of the Alabama State Society for Clinical Laboratory Science. A member since 1980, Ms. Cale has served on the state Board of Directors for 20 years, received numerous state and national service awards including member of the year. As President, she represents the membership on regional and national councils. She participated in a design group that created the new logo and slogan “VOICE, VALUE, VISION” for the national society.

Besides his teaching skills, **Dr. Rick Carliss is an accomplished artist.** Rick designed the logo for this year’s Expanding Your Horizons Conference. The logo was based on Leonardo Da Vinci’s drawing, Vitruvian Man. “Vitruvian Woman” is emblematic of the significant role women have come to play in different areas of science.

Ms. Diane Engels was chosen as a member of the Women’s World Sky Diving Team. She was selected to compete in Paris Valley, California at the “Jump for the Cause” to benefit breast cancer. Although Hurricane Katrina delayed Diane’s arrival at the competition, it was a big success raising over \$500,000 for breast cancer research.

Dr. Holly Hall has been consulting with the USA Gastroenterology physicians group to design a study of the effect of hand hygiene in controlling the spread of antimicrobial-associated diarrhea caused by *Clostridium difficile*. The aim is to examine the efficacy of alcohol-based hand rubs versus simple hand washing in controlling spread of this life-threatening disease caused by spore-forming bacteria.

In addition to his teaching, **Dr. Terry Ravine** is investigating potential pathogenic mechanisms of certain amoebae living freely in the environment. Dr. Ravine and his co-investigator, **Dr. Jacek Polski**, a hematopathologist at the USA Medical Center, are using cytofluorometric analysis to examine cell surface proteins that may help amoebae evade a primary immune defense mechanism. Preliminary results are promising but require further testing.

ALUMNI NEWS

Brian Casleton (Class of 1987) has recently been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the US Air Force. After assignment as the Joint Blood Program Officer in the Office of the Command Surgeon, MacDill AFB, Florida. Brian became the Chief of the Core Laboratory Element at Lackland AFB, Texas. His labs provide services to over 1.1 million beneficiaries.

John Dugan (Class of 1993) is Blood Bank Supervisor at Singing River Hospital, Pascagoula, MS.

Katie Hunter (Class of 1997) is stationed at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. She recently returned from service in Kuwait to accept a specialty fellowship in Blood Banking at Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington D.C.

Brenda Miller (Class of 1982) is Clinical Instructor for Microbiology at USA Medical Center.

Teresa Savage (Class of 1984) has recently been promoted to Microbiology Supervisor at USA Medical Center.

Weather (Partridge) Stallings (Class of 1979) has been promoted to Education Supervisor at Vanderbilt Medical Center in Nashville, TN.

NEW FACULTY MEMBER

Wesley B. Denny, Ph.D. received his **B.S. in Medical Technology** from the University of South Alabama in 1996 and his Ph.D. in Basic Medical Sciences from the College of Medicine at this university in 2004.



Department of Occupational Therapy

OT/SPEECH/PT COLLABORATE TO RECEIVE GRANT

The occupational, speech and physical therapy departments were awarded a grant for e-health training. Donna Wooster, OTR/L, Kendra Hudson, SPL-CCC and John Jefferson, PT went to Philadelphia to Thomas Jefferson University for training on the development of an e-health website. This project involves conducting a needs assessment of young CVA clients in Mobile and Baldwin counties and developing a website to meet their identified needs. Therapists treating these clients are invited to participate in the needs assessment. If you are willing to assist with this project, please call one of the faculty members listed above. Students from each department will be participating in the data collection and analysis and making contributions to the website. Young adults with CVA are an underserved population with complex and long term needs. We are excited to be addressing these needs through the use of innovative technology.

“Donna Wooster went to Philadelphia to Thomas Jefferson University for training on the development of an e-health website.”

Focus First Comes to USA

The Project Impact- Focus First Initiative has arrived on campus at USA. Focus First will train our university students to conduct vision screenings on preschoolers in our area. The project uses state-of-the-art photo-screening technology that was developed in Huntsville, Alabama. Over forty occupational therapy students were trained and began conducting screenings in October. The next training session will be held in January with other student groups joining in the initiative. Students will identify children who fail the screening and refer them for follow-up services, which may include a full vision evaluation, glasses, surgery or other corrective devices as needed. This process will enhance the educational development of children through early detection and early correction of visual deficits. USA Occupational Therapy Students are excited to provide this much needed community service.

Occupational Therapy Students Assess Children's Handwriting Skills

Submitted by: Vanessa Piggott, OTS and Melissa Robillard, OTS

In September, occupational therapy students, in collaboration with the occupational therapy department of Thomas Hospital, completed complimentary handwriting screenings of 50 children in preschool through second grade at Bayside Academy in Fairhope. The handwriting screenings assessed cognitive, visual-perceptual and motor aspects of handwriting as appropriate for the child's age. The assessment included letter identification, copying simple shapes, cutting accuracy with scissors, grasping objects of different shapes and sizes and observing handwriting performance. Early identification of handwriting deficits is important because occupational therapy intervention can increase handwriting legibility and speed, build accuracy in spelling and copying from the blackboard, and help the child to be more successful in school. According to Casey Van Huysen, an occupational therapist at Thomas Hospital and a graduate of the USA OT program, "the purpose of the screenings was to identify the fine motor, prewriting, or handwriting delays that children in private school systems may have, because they are not offered the services that children in the public school systems receive."



Department of Physician Assistant Studies

PA Student Overcomes Cystic Fibrosis with Transplant (from AAPA News, September 15, 2005)

By Hillel Kuttler

Before receiving a double lung transplant, Mary Beth Helms had a life expectancy of 35 years due to cystic fibrosis. She was short of breath, constantly coughed, and often was hospitalized for infections in her lungs.

Members of the faculty at the University of South Alabama PA Program, where Helms enrolled in 2003, had "grave concerns" about how the stress of her studies and the exposure to patients would affect her health, said Rich Nenstiel, the program's director.

Cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease that has no cure, clogs vital organs with thick mucus. The build-up on the lungs causes the person to exert great effort to take each breath. Helms' breathing became so difficult last year that she needed to be on oxygen and she was put on a waiting list for a transplant. She had the life-saving surgery in December. Now, at 25, Helms said she is "doing really well" and "feeling great." Next summer she will graduate. "It's fabulous," Helms said of her new life. "I'm back doing a pediatric rotation this summer, and I love it. I'm so happy to be back. I have no coughing, no shortness of breath, no rejection of my new lungs.

"Rejection will always be a concern, but they tell me that everything is excellent. The most exciting part is that my lungs are free of any cystic fibrosis genes." The outlook was less cheerful when Helms began PA studies. She started getting sicker, had an IV line inserted, and needed a home health agency to supply antibiotics so that she could schedule treatments around study commitments. She'd been coughing a lot more, the shortness of breath became more problematic, and her energy dipped. A low point occurred when Helms' walk from the school parking lot to class became so strenuous that she requested a disabled parking sticker.

During a break after the summer 2003 semester, Helms returned to her family's home in Tuscaloosa to be close to her specialist and to the University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital adult cystic fibrosis program. Because of the infections, Helms' lung capacity had decreased, and she missed the last three weeks of the autumn semester. PA faculty arranged with their counterparts at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) PA Program to administer Helms' final examinations during her hospitalization. PA Doris Rapp, the UAB program director, went several times to Helms' hospital room and stayed as she completed the exams. "I thought, 'Here's someone who has will power and determination far above that of most students. Here's a woman who's been chronically ill since birth, far along with her cystic fibrosis, determined to have a life'," said Rapp.

Helms received IV antibiotics at the hospital, and a respiratory therapist came three times a day to give her therapy to shake loose the mucus that Helms could cough up. Helms' parents had done that when she was a child, but as an adult, she wore a vest twice a day, 30 minutes at a time. The vest expanded with air to simulate the chest percussion.

Because the regimen had been all she knew, Helms did not mind such intrusions. “It was my life, and that’s what I did,” she said. “I never felt that cystic fibrosis has impeded my life — until PA school, anyway.”

In March 2004, Helms was placed on a waiting list for a double lung transplant. A month later, with breathing more difficult, she began carrying a small oxygen tank everywhere, taking it off only for a few minutes for quick showers. “Other than that, I was tethered to it at all times. It’s not fun, at 24, to be connected to an oxygen tank all day every day,” she said. “People would look at me funny. Walking around in a mall, people would do a double take, seeing someone young walking around with oxygen. Little kids would ask, “What’s in your nose?” I would say, “This is my oxygen, and it helps me breathe like your lungs do.”

By the end of the summer 2004 semester, Helms and the faculty agreed that she would benefit from a leave of absence, Nienstiel said. Last December, Helms underwent the transplant. She recuperated for six months before returning to her studies — both to regain strength and to allow her immune system to recover. Helms still must stay away from those with very infectious diseases, especially respiratory infections. She is careful to wash her hands often to prevent infections.

Helms is excited over resuming her PA studies, even though she has fallen a year behind and had to watch her class graduate. But Helms said that she has never despaired about her fate. “I never truly felt that this was the end of my life,” she said of her pre-transplant existence. “I had faith that God would take care of it and that things would work out, no matter what.” In advance of the transplant, Helms was heartened by support from family, friends, and those in the PA program.

“There was a lot of prayer; I did a lot, and many people prayed on my behalf,” she said. “A lot of people sent me cards, notes, and e-mails, or made phone calls to wish me well and tell me they were thinking about me and praying for me.”

Nienstiel seems in awe of Helms’ determination to become a PA while dealing with so many health challenges. “I’ve never seen a student like her—not many people like her. She has such a positive outlook on life,” he said. “This is a young woman who has a disease that is fatal to many people before they’re 30. But she wants to do something with her life. A PA program is very hard on you. There are lots of other things she could have done, but she chose to do this. She’s such an impressive person in her drive to succeed in spite of her physical limitations.” In July, Helms surprised her classmates by appearing at the lectern to address the graduates. “It wasn’t exactly the life I had imagined after college,” she told the stunned audience. “I was living with my parents, tethered to an oxygen machine. I wanted to be going to school, going out, living with friends. It was hard for me to hear my friends talk about all the exciting events taking place in their lives — rotations, engagements, babies, new homes, new jobs — while my biggest excitement was what was happening on *Desperate Housewives*.”

Rather than projecting anger, Helms launched into her pitch. “*I encourage you now, as health care providers, to please counsel and encourage your patients to consider being organ donors. And if you are in the situation to counsel a grieving family, please share my story and encourage them to share their loved one’s life with someone,*” Helms said.

What could be a greater tribute to someone’s life than to have others alive because of them? I also ask that each of you consider being an organ donor and remember to talk to your family about your choice. They are the ones who will make the ultimate decision.

“Every day I thank God for my new lungs, my donor, and my donor’s family. I have not gotten to meet them yet, but I hope they find some comfort in the fact they have given me an amazing future to look forward to.”

“What the session showed is the power of associations to move issues,” Crane said. “When we talked about degrees of separation, it’s clear that in most associations someone is affected by organ donation either as a donor or as a recipient or both. And that provides the engine for making this issue real for members.

“What impressed me about this meeting,” Crane noted, “was the level of enthusiasm of the group, the seeming level of commitment, and the truly new ideas that were shared, even though the Secretary’s Workplace Initiative has been around for some time.”

Department of Physical Therapy

Message from the Chair, Dr. Fell

As you might expect, things have been quite hectic here with all the tropical weather this season. The DPT Class of 2008 had just started their first semester one week before Hurricane Katrina struck. Mobile caught the fringes of hurricane force winds, but enough to cause significant wind damage to trees and utility lines across the county, especially coastal areas. Most of the area was without electricity for almost a full week and therefore the second week of classes were cancelled. Consequently, we have adjusted our semester schedule and the usually hectic pace is complicated by the reorganization. But as always the resourceful PT students are up to the challenge and achieving their goals. The University had very minimal damage and the only problems in our department were some leaks that damaged some ceilings and some equipment. The homes of several of our students from along the Mississippi gulf coast were destroyed by the wind and flood as was the Bay St. Louis, MS home of Dr. Fell's mother-in-law.



On a positive note, department alumni have strongly encouraged us to develop a web-based DPT program for licensed physical therapists. With the support and keen interest from our alumni another departmental milestone was achieved this semester with the approval of this program as described in the next paragraph.

Request to Alumni from DPT class of 2008

Dear PT Alumni,

The DPT class of 2008 would like to take this opportunity to express our congratulations and gratitude to you. In your studies here at the University of South Alabama, you paved the way toward a brighter future for the profession of physical therapy.

The professional DPT curriculum is now eight semesters after completing all prerequisites. Clinical internships comprise a total of 33 full-time weeks.

Our class is starting a fund-raiser for our class operations and to contribute to the department’s scholarship fund. With a minimum donation of \$25.00 to the Class of 2008 you will receive a high quality, 3-button, embroidered polo style navy shirt with the University of South Alabama PT Alumni logo as a gift for your generosity. Sizes range from Small to XXLarge. We hope you will take this opportunity to assist our class in continuing the excellent traditions of the physical therapy program and providing scholarships for future PT students at the University of South Alabama.

Please mail your order (specify size) to:

USA DPT Class of 2008

1504 Springhill Ave. Rm 1214

Mobile, AL 36604

Or email your order to *Jake McKenzie* (jakemac14@aol.com), or *Brittany Boyte* (bab307@jaguar1.usouthal.edu). Make checks payable to USA DPT Class of 2008.

Sincerely

DPT class of 2008

Web-based DPT Program for Licensed Physical Therapists

The good news is that the Web-based DPT program for Licensed Physical Therapists (the APTA refers to such programs as transitional DPT – "tDPT" programs) has been approved after a year-long process of development and revisions. The first courses will begin in January. The 20-29 semester credit, fully online, take-at-your-own pace program will allow clinicians to advance their professional degree to the doctoral degree (DPT). Dr. Jean Irion will serve as the program coordinator for this web-based program. Detailed information and forms needed for the admissions process are available on the new webpage for this program: <http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/pt/onlinedpt.html>. *Contact Dr. Jean Irion with specific questions.*

Dr. Fell Receives National Advising Award

Dr. Dennis Fell was selected to receive the National Advisor Award from Mortar Board Inc, a national honor society. He was nominated by the Gold Key Chapter of Mortar Board at USA. Dr. Fell was a member of Mortar Board during his undergraduate education at South and served as local Chapter President in 1981-82. He has served as one of the faculty advisors for the chapter since 1994.

Faculty News

Dr. Wall Presents at International Conference

Dr. Jim Wall was invited to give two scholarly presentations, accepted by peer review, for The European Society of Movement Analysis in Adults and Children (ESMAC) in Barcelona, Spain, September 2005.

Janice Sellers-15 years of University Service

Department Secretary Janice Sellers recently completed her 15th year of service to the University. She has been the PT department secretary since December 1994

Dr. Jim Wall-Gait Research in Norway

On a recent scholarly visit and research project at both the Norwegian University of Science and Technology and St. Olavs Hospital in Trondheim, our **Dr. Jim Wall** completed a research project with Dr. Jorunn Helbostad. The study examined the reliability and validity of a computer program Dr. Wall wrote to measure the expanded timed up and go test. They have also started to develop a battery of functional mobility tests that will be used to assess fall risk in the elderly.

New Faculty

Howie Tapley, PT, OCS, (USA PT Class of 1991) joined the PT department faculty in August 2005 as Instructor of Physical Therapy. Howie has his certification as an Orthopedic Clinical Specialist (OCS) through the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties and is completing his dissertation, on schedule to receive his PhD in Health Promotion from UAB in December. Following completion of his degree, an automatic promotion to Assistant Professor will take place. Howie will teach the neuroscience, health promotion and wellness, and parts of the therapeutic exercise in the DPT curriculum. Howie and his wife Stasia (also PT class of 1991) have a 10 year old son, Ryan, who is a very active soccer player.

Recent Faculty Publications

Glenn Irion - Advances in Wound and Skin Care

Dennis Fell – Journal of Physical Therapy Education

Alumni News

Erich Rudolph, PT (class of 1995) recently stopped by the department to inform us of his intended license transfer to Florida following his hurricane Katrina-related displacement. Erich actually stayed at his New Orleans home (11 feet above sea level) during the storm, sustaining very little home damage and no flooding in his home. With all the civil unrest that started he evacuated three days later to the safety of his parent's home in Mobile. His job had been home-health PT in the 9th Ward area, one of the most devastated areas of New Orleans. Regarding his work, he commented "I just love old people." But with the evacuation of the entire city, there are no patients and no job. We are certainly thankful that Erich is safe and well. Great success to you in your new venture!

THE CRUCIBLE

Department of Radiological Science

Greetings From the Chair, Dr. Charles Newell

The 2005-06 academic year is well underway. Forty-five first-year students were admitted, and will join the thirty-five second-year students who, like you, are already looking forward to graduation. Our B.S. program continues to grow each year. Our current enrollment in the B.S. program is as follows: MRI (18), Ultrasound (5), Radiation Therapy (15), CT (7) and Mammography (1). For the first time since the inception of the B.S. program, there were no applicants for Cardio-Vascular/Interventional.



Hurricane Katrina had an impact on some of our students this year. However, the University has assisted these students through tuition deferrals, and Springhill Memorial Hospital has donated uniforms and shoes to students in need. The faculty has also contributed through monetary and textbook donations. Our thoughts are with all of the graduates along the gulf coast, and we wish you a speedy recovery from what has been a disastrous hurricane season.

On a brighter note, we recently heard from Scott Griffin (Class of 2000) who is now the PACS Administrator at Southeast Alabama Medical Center in Dothan. Scott has been appointed to serve on a committee, which will establish a national PACS Administration Certification Exam. The committee is sponsored by the Society for Computer Applications in Radiology (SACR). The committee is composed of six members who have been charged with the responsibility of developing testing criteria, independent governance, program development, program administration, marketing, eligibility requirements, evaluation and assessment measures and post credentialing procedures. If all goes well, we will have yet another advanced certification exam leading to licensure for PACS administrators. Scott and Kelly (Barrentine) are the proud parents of two children.

Remember, You are cordially invited to visit our web site at www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/radiologicsciences. As always, we encourage you to consider assisting other students in our program through donations to our scholarship program. Arrangements to make donations to the Department of Radiological Sciences Scholarship Fund can be made by contacting Ms. Ginny Turner, Associate Director of Development, at (251) 460-7032. Regardless of the amount, your support will be sincerely appreciated.

Best wishes to all.

Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology



Message from the Chair, Dr. Paul A. Dagenais

This fall we welcomed Dr. Ishara Ramkissoon as an assistant professor in Audiology. Dr. Ramkissoon comes to us from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. We bid farewell to Dr. Nancy Aarts who left USA to join the faculty at the College of Wooster in Ohio.

We are anticipating graduating four students with their Ph.D. degrees this December. These graduates include Debra Blanton, Joe Klein, Kacia McCaghren and Fawen Zhang. We wish them success. With this group, we will have produced 18 graduates since 1996. For those of you who might be considering further studies, I encourage you to consider pursuing a Ph.D. degree. Our fields of speech-language pathology and audiology are both experiencing huge declines in the number of professionals who wish to teach at a university or to do research. For anyone who has been working in clinical settings, we believe those experiences can often be used to develop new and novel research and the experiences are always useful when dealing with students.

Our Doctor of Audiology program admitted its third group of students this fall. We are preparing our students to undertake their fourth year externships soon and anticipate our first graduating class in May 2007. Our Masters Speech-Language Pathology program had 19 new students this year, a strong increase in admissions. We are also happy to report that the number of undergraduate students entering and completing our program has been increasing.

This fall the Department was in preparation for the first Azalea Conference to held in many years. Unfortunately, the conference had to be cancelled as a result of hurricane Katrina. The Department plans to offer the conference again in the future and we hope that many of you will plan to attend. Other than the cancellation of the conference, we were minimally impacted by the hurricane although some of our students have had to deal with various losses. To their credit, they have been more than admirable in their responses.

We are in the early stages of starting a departmental alumni association.

Paul Dagenais

ASHA 2005 CONVENTION

Eight faculty members from Speech Pathology and Audiology will present at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) 2005 Convention, "Using Evidence to Support Clinical Practice" in San Diego, California the third week of November. This is the first time that ASHA is holding its Convention in San Diego, and despite the distance, the University of South Alabama will be well represented. Drs. Jacqueline Guendouzi and Mandy Williams will present the results of a survey given to University of South Alabama (USA) students majoring in health/medical professions. The survey assessed students' awareness of communicative problems and successful treatment outcomes for people with moderate dementia. Responses from students in the early stages of their studies will be compared with responses from students nearing completion of their courses. Dr. Guendouzi says, "Results will help provide knowledge of how well students perceive the efficacy of other health professions given the current interest in multi-disciplinary clinics and treatment teams." Dr. Williams is also presenting a technical session with Dr. Kerry Lewis from the University of Nevada. They will lead participants in an exploration of temperaments (e.g., mood, activity level, etc.) of children who do and do not stutter. Their presentation will include a discussion of their recent research findings that temperament scores were not successful in classifying children into stuttering and non stuttering groups.

Dr. Brenda Beverly is one member of a Saturday panel session sponsored by the ASHA Language in Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers Planning Committee. Panel members will review current research evidence available to guide practitioners in developing language intervention goals and objectives in the areas of syntax/morphology, semantics, and emergent literacy. Dr. Beverly's focus will be on intervention targeting the morpheme omissions and limited sentence constructions of children with language impairment. In addition to covering techniques supported by research, she will stress the use of meaningful contexts. Dr. Paul Dagenais and master's student, Gidget Brown, will present the results of Gidget's thesis. Gidget recorded dysarthric speakers using varied speech rates, and then had listeners rate the speakers' intelligibility and indicate their listening preferences. Contrary to some clinical practices, individuals with mild dysarthria may be more intelligible at relatively faster rates.

Drs. Bob Moore and Julie Estis, in collaboration with Dr. Chris Watts (now at James Madison University) and two USA students, Fawen Zhang and Elizabeth Marble, will present a poster summarizing a recent investigation of the relationship between pitch matching ability, pitch discrimination ability, and otoacoustic emission (OAE) suppression. Surprisingly, they found no significant relationship between OAE suppression and the ability to match and discriminate pitch, suggesting that the known increased OAE suppression of musicians may be the result of sound conditioning. The newest member of the faculty, Dr. Ishara Ramkissoon will present a research poster session entitled "Advanced Age & Long-Term Smoking Effects on Auditory Middle Latency Responses (AMLR)." Dr. Ramkissoon's research utilized evoked potential techniques to study aging effects in older and younger smokers and nonsmokers. Advanced age and smoking did not produce an additive effect on the AMLR, suggesting that long-term smoking produces unique effects in younger individuals. Last (but not least) Dr. Mike Carpenter will present a research poster on the effects of monaural and binaural interstimulus interval (ISI) on the late auditory evoked potentials in normal adults. He found that significant increases in N1 and P2 peak amplitudes occurred as a function of increasing ISI, new evidence of a refractory period effect for nontemporally overlapping binaural stimuli.

In addition to sharing research findings, department members are actively engaged serving the professional association. Dr. Rick Talbott, Dean of the College of Allied Health Professions and Audiology faculty, will attend the San Diego conference as member of the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA). CAA is the ASHA division responsible for establishing, defining, monitoring, and implementing accreditation of graduate education. Dr. Williams will cap off her year of serving as a member of the 2005 Convention Program Committee in Fluency by attending a roundtable session, "Clinical Office Hours." Having been involved in the coordination of this session, she said participants can look forward to posing questions from their clinical caseloads to fluency experts.

New Student Organizations, NAFDA and NSSLHA

The USA Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology founded a chapter of the National Association of Future Doctors of Audiology (NAFDA) Fall Semester, 2005. NAFDA is a professional student organization dedicated to the advancement of education and technological training in the profession of Audiology. Membership consists of USA graduate students working to earn the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) degree. The USA chapter, with Susan Gordon (current Au.D./Ph.D. student) as President and Dr. Mike Carpenter, Faculty Advisor, aims to provide service activities to the Mobile Community and the USA Speech and Hearing Clinic.

Likewise, the USA chapter of the National Student Speech, Language, and Hearing Association (NSSLHA) has been at work encouraging interest in the fields of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology among undergraduate and graduate students. Activities such as volunteering at Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB) Preschool for the Sensory Impaired family activities (see photo), providing food for new graduate student orientation, fundraising for victims of Hurricane Katrina, and participating in seasonal activities for clients of the USA Speech and Hearing Center have been led by newly elected officers, Jenna Stevens (President), Karen Smith (Vice-President), Jill Newberry (Secretary), and Tasha DeMouy (Treasurer). This year's local membership has increased significantly, and active student participation is at an all time high. Upcoming events include Grad School Information Night, Exam Week Survival Kits, and our Annual Christmas Party.



New Faculty Member



The Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology welcomed Ishara Ramkissoon, a new faculty member in Audiology. Dr. Ramkissoon received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. She is a certified audiologist (CCC-A) and has extensive clinical experience in medical and community audiology practice. Dr. Ramkissoon teaches both graduate and undergraduate audiology classes. She has two current lines of research. One project investigates the effects of advanced age and smoking on the cortical auditory evoked potentials. The second involves multicultural factors that influence audiological practice, especially the effects of multilingualism on speech audiometry. She has published on this topic in leading journals. Dr. Ramkissoon has presented her research at national and international conferences.

Student Award

Susan Gordon-Hickey, AuD/PhD student in the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, has received a Students Preparing for Academic & Research Careers (SPARC) Award for 2005-2006 from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association. The award will allow her to receive enhanced educational mentorship at the University of South Alabama, both in her department and from faculty from other departments. It will also allow her to travel to another university and national meetings to enhance her teaching and research exposure. Her primary mentor for the award is Dr. Robert Moore.