As with every Fall, we welcomed yet another, and record setting, class of students to our programs in the College of Allied Health Professions. Both the University and the College set new enrollment records with over 14,000 students entering the University. The College contributed significantly to that growth with a 9.28% increase in overall enrollment and, more importantly, an increase in the average overall admission examination scores as well. The faculty and I look forward to the successful progress of our students and their ultimate contributions to the health care of our citizens.

We have successfully completed our search for the new Vice President for Health Sciences and Dr. Ron Franks, a psychiatrist with extensive health sciences administrative experience, has been appointed to the position. Dr. Franks and the Deans from the three health related colleges of Allied Health, Medicine, and Nursing have been busy engaging in strategic planning for the future of the Division of Health Sciences and looking for ways to take advantage of the collaborative potential for our clinical, educational and research mission across the units. Issues such as health disparities, professionalism, technology enhancement of teaching, and the potential for collaborative research and clinical initiatives not only within but across universities in the State of Alabama are among the initiatives currently under study. In short, under Dr. Franks’ leadership the Health Sciences Division is moving ahead with a clear vision of being recognized as a national leader in the health sciences arena in the broadest sense.

In addition to the administrative and planning activities, we are excited with the progress on our new Health Sciences Building that will house the College of Allied Health Professions and the College of Nursing. The project is progressing a little ahead of schedule at this time and should be ready for us to move in the Summer of 2009. The building will not only provide state of the art classrooms and laboratories but will be located in close proximity to the College of Medicine and serve as a signature building for the northeast corner of the University. All of the department chairs and their faculty have worked hard in collaboration with the architects to make this a premier facility for our students and faculty that will serve us well long into the future.

We will keep you posted as the project moves along and, as always, invite you to visit whenever you are in the Mobile area.

Dr. Richard E. Talbott, Dean

Kristyn Sifford, a graduate of USA’s College of Arts and Sciences, began her new position as Development Specialist in February after serving as the interim Campaign Coordinator. She will support alumni and development activities in the College of Allied Health Professions and the College of Nursing. Kristyn accepts her new challenge after working for the College of Nursing as a student assistant while obtaining her bachelor’s degree. She can be reached at (251) 460-7032 or by e-mail at kcsifford@usouthal.edu.
Message from the Chair, William B. Davis

The year 2006 - 2007 has been another year for BMD during which the major emphasis continues to be on growth. A search is underway for an additional faculty position, bringing the full time resident faculty in the department to eight.

Included in the program's growth is that we currently have enrolled over 30 students in the University's Honors Program. In addition, the total number of registered BMD majors is a robust 360, a 25% increase from this time last year.

We continue our campaign to obtain data about our alumni base. It would be most helpful if you could log onto http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/survey.html and complete the information form for both the College and the BMD Department. It is short and should not take but a few minutes to do.

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

William B. Davis, wbdavis@usouthal.edu

Department of Biomedical Sciences

Message from the Associate Dean

Online surveys, PDFs and other topics

As the year approaches its end and the new Health Sciences building keeps growing, here is some news from our office. Ms. Kimberly Davis, one of the two advisors in the College of Allied Health Professions, has taken a new position as Manager of the Assessment Center in the College of Continuing Education and Special Programs.

Ms. Lamonia Mitchell, our secretary in the Advising Office, also took a new position as a Placement Coordinator in the College of Education. We wish the best to both of them in their new jobs.

We would like to hear from you, our alumni. Send us information about job openings and stories you would like to share with other graduates. If you wish to receive The Crucible in PDF format, e-mail us your request. Have a great new year!

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

PRESENTATIONS


STUDENTS IN THE NEWS

Sobia Ozair and Amy Freeman, BMD honor students, attended the annual meeting of the Southeastern branch of the American Society for Microbiology held in Auburn, Ala. Sobia received the first place award for undergraduate research. Sobia is a senior and Amy is a junior.

Maria Eugenia Balzaretti, BMD Senior, achieved the honor of publication in The Ivy Journal of Ethics with her paper titled “The Ethics of Wrongful Birth Lawsuits” this fall 2007. The Bioethics Society of Cornell University publishes the online journal once a semester and specifically prints undergraduate students’ work.

NEW FACULTY IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Robin Mockett has joined the faculty as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Mockett comes to us from the University of Southern California School of Pharmacy. He will be teaching the physiology component of the curriculum and conducting research on the biochemical basis of the aging process.

AWARDS AND HONORS

William B. Davis, Cindy Stanfield, and Julio F. Turrens were honored by the Mortar Board Honor Society with the “Top Prof” award.
Message from the Chair, Mr. William Wojciechowski

Well, a number of developments have occurred since our last newsletter. On August 1st, after 27 years of dedicated and reliable service, Fred Hill retired from his full-time faculty position in this Department. All of you reading this message certainly realize how instrumental and valuable Fred has been to the success of this Department and program. Fred's commitment to the students remains unparalleled. He was a strong advocate of the students, and was devoted to providing them with opportunities to succeed and with challenges to help them achieve their potentials. What an impossibility it is to articulate in a few lines here what Fred has meant to this Department. Fred's retirement places me in an ambivalent position. On one hand, I am saddened by his leaving. However, on the other, I am presented with an opportunity to bestow him with well-deserved superlatives.

Despite Fred's retirement from his full-time teaching position, Fred has agreed to teach in the program part-time. Each fall semester he will remain the course master for the neonatal/pediatric problem-based learning course and the neonatal/pediatric clinical practicum course. Therefore, he will continue to teach and interact with the program's students. We can only hope that he chooses to do so for another 27 years.

In the wake of Fred's retirement, I am proud and honored to announce the hiring of Dr. David Chang. Dr. Chang is an experienced respiratory therapy educator with an impressive national reputation. Dr. Chang served as Professor and Chair for the respiratory therapy program at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia for 13 years. Additionally, Dr. Chang served as Director of Clinical Education at Athens Technical College in Athens, Georgia. Currently, Dr. Chang serves as the Chair of the Committee for the Accreditation of Respiratory Care (CoARC), the body that oversees the accreditation of respiratory therapy programs. Again, we are privileged to have Dr. Chang join our full-time faculty. Welcome aboard, Dr. Chang.

Finally, I am grateful to announce that Dr. Ron Allison, Medical Director for the Cardiorespiratory Care Program, has been appointed by the American Thoracic Society to a four-year term on the CoARC. Dr. Allison will function as a program referee, and will be involved with site-visits of respiratory therapy programs.

As you can ascertain from the personnel activities just described, this summer has been unusually busy. However, before I conclude, the faculty and I hope that this newsletter finds you well and successful in your careers. Who knows, now that USA is strongly contemplating establishing football, we may have a departmental reunion at a homecoming in the future. For alumni who are so inclined, perhaps this idea may be a worthwhile endeavor. Good luck, continued success, and stay in touch.

Bill Wojciechowski, MS, RRT, wwojciec@usouthal.edu
STUDENT NEWS

Thirteen enthusiastic students were admitted to the Class of 2009 in August. Our seniors started their Clinical Practica in September at USAMC and at Singing River Hospital (a new affiliate) in Pascagoula, Miss. We have had many facilities request consideration to become clinical affiliates. We recently added Shands Teaching Hospitals and Clinics in Gainesville and Jacksonville, Fla. and will soon be adding Providence Hospital in Mobile. We have had additional inquiries from facilities in the Mobile Area and Birmingham, Ala. It seems everyone wants our students and graduates.

Jamie Takemoto, a senior, is now a member of the College of Allied Health Leadership Group. Joseph Peoples, a junior Honors student, is currently working with Dr. Terry Ravine on his Senior Honors Thesis involving amebic aggregation.

RECENT EQUIPMENT DONATIONS TO CLS

Donation of a re-furbished Cell Dyn 1600 Hematology analyzer. Donated by Mr. Ken LaCour, LaCour Services of Fairhope, Ala. Mr. LaCour installed the instrument and conducted instructional sessions for the CLS students and faculty in the Summer 2007 semester.

Faculty News

Prof. Vicki Barrett: Prof. Barrett recently attended a meeting of the Blood Banking Examination Committee at ASCP in Chicago. She is one of eight members, from different regions of the U.S., who write and/or edit ASCP national certification examination questions for blood bank specialist and transfusion medicine. Vicki also worked with Dr. Cindy Stanfield and other members of the GEMS (Girls Exploring Math and Science) Organizing Committee to host the 7th annual conference held on Saturday, October 13, at USA. This conference was previously known as EYH (Expanding Your Horizons). This year 430 sixth through eighth grade girls registered for the event. Prof. Barrett applied for and received grant funding for this year’s conference from the J.L. Bedsole Foundation and Mary Josephine Larkins Foundation.

Dr. Rick Carliss: Dr. Carliss continues to investigate the physiochemical properties of different ionic liquids. Ionic liquid technologies are currently being used to provide strategies for the production of novel chemical materials. Ionic liquids maintain a liquid phase over a broad range of temperatures, and so, consequently, do not contain polymorphs. Ionic liquids can also be designed to produce new and predictable pharmacological performance and delivery options. Dr. Carliss is expanding his earlier work to specify the cellular mechanisms associated with the pharmacology of lidocaine docusate. Lidocaine docusate is a form of lidocaine designed for topical delivery and has been demonstrated to produce unique analgesic effects in mice.

Dr. Wesley Denny: As the age of molecular medicine dawns in the clinical laboratory, the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences is taking steps to make sure that our graduates will have the knowledge and skills to utilize molecular diagnostic techniques. We will soon be adding a Clinical Genetics course to the curriculum that will focus on nucleic acid techniques used for the diagnosis and treatment of genetic and infectious diseases. In addition, students will have the opportunity to apply their knowledge of molecular techniques by participating in basic research projects carried out by the faculty. One such project is being conducted by Vicki Barrett and Wesley Denny to investigate genetic relationships among Selasphorus rufus hummingbirds that winter along the Gulf Coast. Recently, Barrett and Denny deposited in GenBank the DNA sequence for the mitochondrial DNA control region of the common ruby-throat hummingbird, Archilochus colubris. This was the first mitochondrial DNA control region sequence for a hummingbird species to be deposited in the Gen-Bank public database. Barrett and Denny have already received requests from international researchers for the unique primers they designed to amplify the control region sequence. An analysis of the control region sequence has confirmed a close genetic relationship between hummingbirds and swifts, a relationship which evolutionary biologists had proposed based on shared morphological features.

Dr. George Harwell: Dr. Harwell recently traveled to Myrtle Beach, S.C. for the ASCLS Region III Triennial Meeting. At this meeting, he attended workshops on hematology automation, diagnosis of thrombophilia, and aspirin therapy in hemostasis.

Dr. Terry Ravine: Currently initiating cultures of free-living amebae Dictyostelium discoideum and Naegleria gruberi to be used in either amebic aggregation and/or attachment studies. D. discoideum is an unusual ameba, which upon nutrient exhaustion signals others of its type to come together, or aggregate, forming a multicellular organism called a cellular slime mold. N. gruberi is a close cousin of Naegleria fowleri, causative agent of lethal human brain disease called primary amebic meningencephalitis. Although not considered a human pathogen N. gruberi displays many similar N. fowleri characteristics making it a desirable study model. Amebic aggregation study is supported by USA Research Council (USARC) grant. Attachment study is supported in part by Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences.
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Clinical Laboratory Sciences continued...

RECENT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

Also in Chemical Science:
http://pubs.rsc.org/en/content/articlelanding/2007/nj/b706677p/unauth#divAbstract

Department of Occupational Therapy

Message from the Chair, Dr. Rebecca I. Estes
This fall the Department of Occupational Therapy welcomed the 24 members of the new incoming Class of 2009! They are acclimating to the change to graduate classes and look to be a great group! Applications for Fall 2008 are due by January 15, 2008; they are available on request through the mail or to download online from the USA OT departmental page: http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/ot/. You will see from the list of activities below that the students and faculty have been very actively involved in department, university, and community activities and services!

Dr. Rebecca I. Estes, riestes@usouthal.edu

PI THETA EPSILON OF USA UPDATE
PTE of University of South Alabama has been very active within the OT department and along with associated organizations on campus. The PTE members continue to act as mentors for the undergraduate level Pre-Occupational Therapy Association. PTE has co-sponsored backpack awareness activities on the USA campus, participated in the annual JagFest event to help promote the occupational therapy profession, and participated in community service by creating communication boards for a local hospice organization. Lastly, the PTE organization is assisting their peers by offering tutoring assistance. PTE hosted a canned food drive for Thanksgiving to give to area individuals in need.

PRE-OT CLUB UPDATE
The Pre-OT club of South Alabama has also been very active in the past few months. They have participated in the annual JagFest event and Get on Board Day at USA to help promote the occupational therapy profession and participation in the Pre-OT club. The Pre-OT club also co-sponsored backpack awareness activities on the USA campus. The Pre-OT club in planning a bake sale later this month and will be participating in the annual OktSoberfest.

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

Tracy O’Connor received her OTD from the University of St. Augustine on April 13, 2007. She was recently promoted to assistant clinical professor.

Dr. Marjorie Scaffa was the keynote speaker at the South Dakota Occupational Therapy Association conference in September. The theme of the conference was the role of occupational therapy in disaster planning, response, and recovery. Dr. Scaffa spoke about the needs of special populations during disasters and the mental health consequences of trauma.

Dr. Scaffa recently served as an expert grant proposal reviewer for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s announcement CD07-005 Improving Public Health Practice through Translation Research. The purpose of the funding was for the translation of research findings into public health practice through implementation, dissemination, and diffusion of evidence-based intervention or policy. The peer review panel met in Atlanta for two days and evaluated approximately 200 proposals.

SOUTH ALABAMA STUDENT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION (SASOTA) UPDATE:
SASOTA members have attended several OT conferences in the past year including the Alabama Occupational Therapy Association (ALOTA) Spring Conference in Fairhope, Ala. in February, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) National Conference in St. Louis, Mo. in April, and the ALOTA Fall Conference in Orange Beach, Fla. in September. At the ALOTA 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. This spring, SASOTA hosted a potluck in the OT Department for the physical therapy students in an effort to increase interdisciplinary interaction. The meal was a great success and is being reciprocated by the physical therapy students this fall. We hosted a three day event on USA’s main campus during the week of September 16th- 20th to promote National Backpack Awareness Day. 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. We will again be selecting a child from the Giving Tree to sponsor during this upcoming holiday season. Ms. Kathy Lemcool continues as the faculty liaison for this group.
ON-GOING COMMUNITY SERVICE: FOCUS FIRST

The Department of Occupational Therapy is pleased to announce that for the third year in a row we are organizing the Focus First Vision Screenings. Focus First is an Alabama Student Initiative. The mission is to provide cost-effective vision screening to underprivileged children who live in urban and rural poverty. Our target population is ages 2-5 years. We target the younger children with hopes of identifying the vision problems early and providing corrective measures well before the start of school. The early identification and treatment of vision problems helps improve a child’s readiness for distinguishing shapes, colors, and letters and prepares them for school readiness and reading. These screenings can also help prevent irreversible vision loss and help children achieve developmental milestones.

The program utilizes college students to conduct vision screenings with specialized photography to determine if a child is at risk for vision problems.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE: BACKPACK AWARENESS

Can you believe over 60% of students report chronic back pain related to heavy backpacks? On September 18th, 20th, and 21st students from the University of South Alabama’s student occupational therapy association (SASOTA) held a national backpack awareness event on main campus at the student center. SASOTA members spent the days educating students on the proper way to pack and wear their book bags; this included weighing the students and their backpacks to make sure they were not over 15% of their body weight. Some of the backpack strategies shared by the students included:

- Both shoulder straps should always be worn! Wearing a pack slung over one shoulder can cause you to lean to one side, curving the spine and causing pain or discomfort
- Load heaviest items closest to your back
- Make sure you only pack the items necessary for the day’s activities

The event was a huge success reaching and educating over 300 students! For more information on National Backpack Awareness day or Occupational therapy visit www.aota.org.

Department of Physician Assistant Studies

Message from the Interim Chair, Mrs. Cheryl Vrettos

As most of you already know from the last issue of The Crucible, Rich Nenstiel retired as Department Chair of the PA Program June 1, 2007. It has been a challenge for us, but Mrs. Abercrombie, Mr. Vetosky, Dr. Henderson, and I have pulled together to keep the department moving forward while the search continues for his replacement. To that end, we will continue to send out job opportunities via e-mail as was done previously. If you are not receiving these emails and would like to, please send me your current email address, and I will up-date our records. Likewise, if you know of a job opportunity, please send it to me at: cvrettos@usouthal.edu so that I can forward it out to all of our alumni.

In other department news, this October we celebrated National PA Week with our first Open House.

We invited potential applicants and current USA students and faculty to attend. The event was held on Wednesday, October 10th and we had over 70 people in attendance. While most attendees were potential applicants, we were honored to have several USA faculty present, including: Dr. Ron Franks, Senior Vice President of Health Sciences, Dr. Sherri Owens, Dr. Frank Bodie, Dr. James Hanley, Dr. Brad Davis, Dr. Rebecca Estes, Dr. Judy Burnham, Dr. George Harwell, Larry Ezell, PA-C, Tonya Cauley, PA-C, Cassie Bullock, PA-C, and Sharon Pelekanos, PA-C. To end PA Week, the didactic class and I traveled to Pine Apple, Ala. for a work day at the Rural Health and Community Center. The students did a phenomenal job of collecting clothing and canned foods for the thrift store and pantry. Dr. Cook and Sister Jane asked the students to check blood pressures and blood sugars at the adult day care. Finally, we planted a fall garden for the residents and employees. We made arrangements to return in the spring semester for a “fun day” during spring break for the children.

Finally, the admissions cycle is in full swing, and so far, our applicant numbers appear to have increased. The application deadline is November 1, 2007, and interview day is January 12, 2008. As in previous years, we will be asking for volunteers for interviews. Please mark you calendars, I will be in touch soon! Our guest writer is Tonya Cauley-Pippen, PA-C, Class of 2005. She has been employed at USA Department of Pediatrics since her graduation. I would like to personally thank her for taking time to write this editorial.

Cheryl Vrettos, cvrettos@usouthal.edu
THE CRUCIBLE

Message from the Chair, Dr. Dennis Fell

The Department of Physical Therapy admitted the fourth class to the Doctor of Physical Therapy program in Fall 2007 (36 students were admitted from an applicant pool of 181). The entry-level DPT program currently has an enrollment of 107 students among all three classes. The first DPT class graduated May 2007 bringing the total number of PT graduates from the program to 790 during the 31 year history of the program. The web-based DPT program for licensed physical therapists (tDPT) is now fully implemented with over 70 students currently enrolled from across the country. The first tDPT students are scheduled to graduate in December 2007. We’re sad to report the departure of Dr. Barry Dale to join the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. We just couldn’t compete with the grandparents and are glad that they will now have little Jackson nearby. The department will miss Barry sincerely! See the article about the great new addition to the PT faculty. Please come see us soon and join us for one of our alumni events. It would be great to visit!

Dr. Dennis Fell, dfell@jaguar1.usouthal.edu
http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/pt/

BREATHEMOBILE

Currently in its second year, the USA Department of Pediatrics BreathMobile continues to be a success with its asthma outreach program. The BreathMobile is a RV that has been converted to a modern day clinic on wheels. Last year the BreathMobile staff cared for over 200 children with asthma and allergies in 12 schools. This year the BreathMobile will visit 17 schools, including elementary, middle, and high schools. Visits are scheduled every eight to ten weeks at each school. The full-time BreathMobile staff consists of Jennifer Cole, MD, director, Tonya Cauley, PA-C, Jennifer Koch, MA, and Janel Lowman, administrator and asthma educator. The full-time staff is frequently joined by Allison Chung, PharmD, and her pharmacy students, pediatric residents, and respiratory therapy students. A week prior to the BreathMobile visiting the schools the school nurse sends out flyers to parents of children who have or may have asthma and/or allergies. Upon visiting the BreathMobile clinic, each parent and child goes through a series of events that usually takes close to an hour to complete:

- Comprehensive history with a focus on asthma and allergy symptoms
- Allergy assessment which will soon include allergy skin testing
- Review disease process and rationale for each medication prescribed
- Asthma assessment based on guidelines classifying patients as mild intermittent, mild persistent, moderate persistent, and severe persistent
- Instruction regarding proper usage of medications prescribed with the patient demonstrating proficiency.
- Scheduling a follow-up appointment for the next BreathMobile visit to the school
- Phone call from BreathMobile staff member approximately two weeks after the visit inquiring about asthma symptoms as well as understanding and usage of medications prescribed
- Phone number to contact BreathMobile staff for any acute problems given to families

Working as a physician assistant with the BreathMobile program is quite rewarding. Some of these children are really sick and with appropriate treatment they can lead a normal active life. Watching this transformation is amazing. I had a particular child at an elementary school who had to leave school literally every other day due to persistent coughing associated with her asthma. After appropriate therapy and daily phone calls to follow the patient’s progress, the patient quit coughing. Seeing the delight on the faces of the mother and child at the follow-up visit was one of my rewarding experiences as a PA. It is quite exciting to know that I have the opportunity to really explain the disease process and the rationale behind choosing specific therapies and even more exciting to see the families really understand what I am explaining.

Any questions regarding the BreathMobile, including how to refer a patient, can be directed to the administrator, Janel Lowman, administrator at (251) 442-5001.

Tonya Cauley-Pippen, PA-C
NEW PT FACULTY MEMBER

The Department is very pleased to announce a new faculty member joining the department this past August. Coral Gubler MPT, MS, ATC, Ph.D.(ABD) has her BS degree from Stony Brook University, MS in Sports Medicine from the United States Sports Academy, MPT from University of Delaware, and she successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation, related to Cardiovascular responses to exercise, this October at University of Montana. She has over 15 years of experience in physical therapy with a focus on sports medicine. Her teaching areas will include Exercise Physiology and Therapeutic Exercise. In addition to her PT education and experience, she is an athletic trainer and interestingly serves as a State Coordinator, Grade 6 Soccer Referee and Region IV Referee for the U.S. Soccer Federation. She is active in the APTA. We are very glad to have her join our PT team!

FACULTY NEWS

Three faculty members gave invited presentations at the World Confederation for Physical Therapy 15th International Congress in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, June 2-6, 2007. Dr. Barry Dale, gave two presentations; Dr. Dennis Fell gave two presentations, and Prof. John Jefferson gave one presentation. Dr. Fell was also invited by APTA to present a course on literature searching and evidence-based practice with Judy Burnham, Director of the Biomedical Library, at the Annual Conference in Denver, Colo., June 27-30, 2007. Dr. Glenn Irion gave an invited presentation at the Clinical Symposium for Advances in Skin and Wound Care, Oct 12-14. Congratulations to Dr. Barry Dale and Dr. Dennis Fell who were both selected as “Top Profs” for the University by this year’s Mortar Board chapter at USA.

ALUMNI UPDATES:

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

Alexis Clarkson (2005) has taken a new job as a pediatric Physical Therapist at Tampa General in her home town of Tampa, Fla. She had an article about her with one of her patients in the Tampa Newspaper in March!

Barry Dale PT, Ph.D., SCS, OCS, ATC, SCSC (1994) has taken a new faculty position at University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, bringing he, Tracy, and Jackson closer to their hometown of Gadsden and Jackson’s grandparents! Notice he also recently passed the Orthopedic Clinical Specialist exam.

Lucinda Davis (2005) has now taken a job at the DCH Spine Care Center in Tuscaloosa. She is preparing to start a doctoral program and is engaged to marry Justin in May 2008.

Jennifer Farris (2001) has been working as a PT and ATC in the Enterprise area since graduation and bought a house four years ago. She is now starting a stint as a traveling PT starting in Ocala, Fla.

Mai Fee-Vazquez (1997) Mai is practicing part-time at an outpatient clinic in Hillsboro, Oregon (a suburb of Portland, Oregon). She is working on her transitional DPT at Pacific University and hopes to complete an ortho-manual therapy mentorship at Kaiser Hayward’s program.

Eric Garrard (1995) has been in Richmond, Va., but has relocated and was recently named Vice President of Outreach and Sub-AcuteServices at Hutcheson Medical Center in Oglethorpe, Ga.

Mason Reid (2003) practices in inpatient rehab at Northport Medical Center. She has completed her NDTA training and is now the Regional Chair for the NeuroDevelopmental Treatment Association.

Jaime Rhodes Loeffel (2000) and her husband live in Kennesaw, Ga. She works Saturdays at a nursing home but mostly devotes her days to two-year old son Liam. They are expecting their second child in January.

Justin Rich (2004) has been manager of five outpatient clinics in the Atlanta area. In May, he opened his own clinic, “Accel Physical Therapy, Inc.”, in Villa Rica, Ga. (25 miles west of Atlanta) and has had a great response with weekly visits far exceeding his current goals. Son, Christian, just started kindergarten, and daughter, Sunny, has started pre-K.

Karl von Tiesenhausen (1999) lives in San Francisco and works in the Center for Outpatient Physical Therapy at St. Mary’s Medical Center.

ALUMNI MEMORIAL

James Spence (1978) of the first PT graduating class departed this life in April 2007. James had worked in Mississippi with Mike Rogers. Our heart-felt condolences go to the family.
The 2007-08 academic year is well underway. Forty-one first-year students were admitted to the Certificate program, and will join thirty-two second-year students who are already looking forward to graduation. Our B.S. program continues to prosper with a current enrollment of: MRI (4), Ultrasound (6), Radiation Therapy (15), CT (16), Mammography (0) and Cardio-Vascular (7).

The pass rate for program graduates on the ARRT exam continues to be very good. The Class of 2006 and the Class of 2007 received a 100% first-time pass rate, and we are certainly proud of these graduates. Graduation for the Class of 2007 was held at the Laidlaw Performing Arts Center on July 26, 2007. Twenty-nine students graduated, and the Center was filled to capacity. Mr Greg House, Class of 1993, was the guest speaker. Those graduates recognized for academic and clinical achievement were Katherine Gaviria, Graduate Student Award, and the Mallinckrodt Award. Erin McClellan received the Dean’s Award. Ms. Cathleen Sanford, R.T. (R) received the Clinical Adjunct Instructor of the Year Award. A special thanks goes to the 2007 Class officers who made significant contributions via support for their fellow class members and the Department. The 2007 class officers were: Amanda Daniels, President, Daniel Classman, Vice-President, Melissa Harrison, Secretary, and Julie Pfaff, Treasurer.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Jean Irion, the Web-Based DPT Program Coordinator at: jirion@jaguar1.usouthal.edu or (251)434-3577.

Our Doctor of Physical Therapy Program for licensed physical therapists (tDPT) program is really growing. We now have over 70 PTs enrolled in this fully web-based program with the first group graduating in December 2007. You can advance your PT degree to the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) under the guidance of experienced and encouraging faculty at South. The fully web-based program consists of a minimum 20 semester credits of online courses, completed at your own pace while you work. More specific information including the application can be found at the website: http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/pt/onlinedpt.html.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Jean Irion, the Web-Based DPT Program Coordinator at: jirion@jaguar1.usouthal.edu or (251)434-3577.

We are now developing an Alumni Advisory Group to facilitate alumni activities and advise the department, and also planning several regional alumni reunions. Contact Dr. Gray at cgray@jaguar1.usouthal.edu to become 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.

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

Ms. Cherie Pohlmann gave two ultrasound presentations during the annual RADSYM meeting in Bay Saint Louis, Miss. Ms. Debra Durick was elected vice-president of the Alabama Society of Radiologic Technologists at the annual ALSRT meeting. Dr. Newell gave a radiation physics presentation to the annual student meeting of the ALSRT.

All faculty gave presentations during the Department’s Twenty-Ninth Annual Registry Review Seminar in March, 2007.
In June 2007, the radiography program was site visited by our accreditation agency, the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT). We recently received JRCERT’s preliminary findings, which found all aspects of the program to be in compliance with the Standards set forth by JRCERT. We expect to receive full accreditation status in 2008. In 2006, the Alabama Society of Radiation Oncologists (ASRO) recently voted to award an annual scholarship of $2,500 to the Department of Radiologic Sciences. ASRO has once again decided to give an additional $2,500 this year. Scholarships derived from this fund are awarded to a deserving student in the Radiation Therapy program. Radiography scholarship recipients for the 2006-2007 academic year were: Katherine Gaviria – Mary Lou Littleton Scholarship Fund ($2000), Tamara Brannon - General Electric Scholarship ($1000) and Kristin Duncan – Department of Radiologic Sciences Scholarship Fund ($800). Total donations derived from the Spring Semester 2007 annual fund drive for the Department of Radiologic Sciences Scholarship Program exceeded $2,000. A special thanks is extended to those providing contributions to our scholarship fund. We will continue to maintain our efforts in this regard in 2008, as we strive to provide financial assistance for deserving students.

Anyone currently employed in radiology is well aware of the tremendous technological changes, which have occurred in recent years. If you are thinking PACS, to name a few, you are absolutely right. There are few former graduates as involved in these changes as Scott Griffin (Class of 2000). While his interest in PACS was evident as a radiography student, his active participation began shortly after landing his first job at the Mobile Infirmary Medical Center (MIMC), where he was employed in MRI, and later as an assistant PACS administrator. Using experience gained via MIMC, Scott later implemented a PACS system at Gulfport Memorial Hospital in Gulfport, Miss., as well as several off-site facilities in that area.

Scott’s interest in information technology is further seen through his active participation in the Society for Imaging Informatics in Medicine (SIIM). He is currently a member of SIIM’s Board of Directors. As a board member, Scott was active in founding the American Board of Imaging Informatics (ABII). Established in 2007 in partnership with the ARRT, ABII created a new program that allows Imaging Informatics Professionals (PACS Administrators) to gain certification, and to earn the credential of CIIP (Certified Imaging Informatics Professional). Following a pilot exam in June 2007, the first computer-based exam was administered in September 2007. Like other certification exams, the CIIP exam is intended to define the standards necessary to demonstrate the knowledge and competence necessary for professionals in the field of Imaging Informatics.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Scott helped plan and organize the radiology and computer components of the first mobile cancer screening motor coach in the State. Along with Dr. Steve Stokes, radiation oncologist, Scott was involved early on in the decision to purchase a motor coach, and provided input relative to the interior layout and essential equipment. The motor coach is similar to a large RV and carries the logo, “Prevention, Early Detection, Saves Lives.”

With all of his commitments, one might well wonder if Scott has time for other interests. Well, he is currently pursuing an MBA at Troy State University. Along the way, he managed to find the time to marry the former Kelly Barrentine (Class of 2001). As many of you know, our radiography and baccalaureate programs have a history wherein students have often married their classmates. Although this propensity is not part of the established curriculum, it has nonetheless occurred at a rate, which defies ordinary statistical probability. Be that as it may, Scott and Kelly are, I am happy to report, happily married, and the proud parents of two children – William Elliot (3 years), and Reagan Elizabeth (2 years).

Alabama Gov. Bob Riley talks with Dr. Steve Stokes, radiation oncologist at Southeast Alabama Medical Center, and Debra Stringer, coordinator of SAMC’s Southeast Regional Screening Program. Gov. Riley toured SAMC’s new 40-foot mobile medical vehicle that is equipped with a mammography suite, lab area and education area. Mammograms, PSA blood tests, fecal occult blood screening, BRCA I and II testing, and health education programs will be conducted through the mobile vehicle. The van, which is the first of its kind in the state, travels to Houston, Henry, Geneva, Dale, Barbour, Covington, and Coffee counties providing screening to the underserved rural population.
This has been an eventful summer in our Department. In August, Dr. Paul Dagenais stepped down as Chair of the department, and I was appointed Interim Chair. Dr. Dagenais’s contributions to the Department as Chair are numerous. Foremost, was the leadership he showed in the development of the Doctor of Audiology program that began in 2003. Fortunately, Dr. Dagenais remains with the Department as a valued faculty member. We currently have a search underway for a new Chair. At the end of the Summer semester we graduated our first student to earn both a Doctor of Audiology degree and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from our Department. She is Dr. Susan Gordon-Hickey. In August, the Department admitted a Doctor of Audiology class of 12 students and a Masters Speech-Language Pathology class of 18 students. We also admitted one Ph.D. student. This brings our totals to 38 Speech-Language Pathology students, 32 Doctor of Audiology students, and seven Ph.D. students. Ms. Beth Hardaway and Dr. Tim Holston continue to work very hard to find off-campus clinical practicum sites for our students. We greatly appreciate the important role the off-campus supervisors play in making our Speech Pathology and Audiology programs stronger.

Robert Moore, rmoore@usouthal.edu

**Message from the Interim Chair, Dr. Robert Moore**

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**RECENT FACULTY/STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**


**NEW FACULTY**

In August, Dr. Susan Gordon-Hickey joined the Department as an Assistant Professor in Audiology. Dr. Gordon-Hickey is a native of Gainesville, Fla. She graduated with a Bachelors degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Florida. She then earned her Ph.D. and Au.D. at the University of South Alabama. She is currently teaching graduate level classes in the areas of anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, and research design. Her research lines include speech communication in noise and auditory scene analysis.
The Crucible

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Visit us online at http://www.usouthal.edu/alliedhealth.
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Send us your contact information so that we may add you to our mailing list.

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