

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
FACETS
SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND REHABILITATION SCIENCES

THIS ISSUE:
**OUR PLEDGE.
OUR RESPONSIBILITY.
OUR FUTURE.**
SHRS IN THE COMMUNITY

THE ADAPTATION
(AND **EVOLUTION**)
OF SPORTS FOR ALL

STUDENTS + JOHN COLTELLARO =
WIN-WIN FOR CLIENTS

ART MEETS LIFE:
SENSORY-FRIENDLY EVENTS
EMBRACE PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

FACETS SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND REHABILITATION SCIENCES

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FROM THE DEAN



Greetings,

SHRS is actively involved in engaging with its various communities, as you will see in this issue of *FACETS*. But what is "community engagement"? The CDC's Committee for Community Engagement defines it as "the process of working collaboratively with groups of people who are affiliated by geographic proximity, special interests, or similar situations with respect to issues affecting their well-being."

Under this definition, our School is no stranger to this concept. We've been engaging our many communities to benefit their well-being for decades. Perhaps there is no more telling evidence of the significance of what we teach and the relevance of our research than the examples of community engagement that are illustrated in this issue. SHRS is indeed a major player at the University of Pittsburgh and the Schools of the Health Sciences in connecting with and responding to the community.

Community engagement is taking on greater importance and new meaning, especially in light of efforts to expand access to quality care, prevent disease, and provide health care services more equitably. Community engagement, then, requires new paradigms for delivering effective, accessible, affordable care.

Part of our collective vision at SHRS is to help create and shape models of care delivery that will serve patient needs well into the future. Today, much of the health care provided in our rehabilitation and health professions occurs in medical environments—doctors' offices, hospitals, surgical suites, rehabilitation facilities—so we must continue providing cutting-edge educational opportunities for our students in these important settings.

Growing beyond the medical environment and expanding into the community offers exciting opportunities for all of our professions using innovative models of delivery.

We are extremely motivated to work inter-professionally and believe, by doing so, we can bring about increased access to quality care for the people we serve. In many instances, these innovative models of care will allow us to demonstrate practicing "at the top of one's license"; that is, practicing to the full extent of the education and training provided to today's health professions students.

We agree with advocates who state that community engagement improves health promotion and health research. And we also recognize that changes in processes and developing new skill sets can be costly. With the support of federal grants and philanthropic gifts from foundations, corporations, and individuals who are dedicated to improving the delivery of care and addressing the needs of the underserved, we believe the expected outcomes resulting from community engagement outweigh the challenges.

At SHRS, we know that in tomorrow's health care landscape, we must be part of the solution as we move to maximize the limited hours and dollars available to address the health care needs of those we serve. We also recognize that gaps exist in care delivery. We believe that our health professions, along with others such as nursing and pharmacy, offer a wealth of knowledge and skills that can help close the gaps as we contribute care delivery models that are accessible and affordable.

We look forward to this opportunity and trust you will appreciate reading about some of our efforts in the following pages.

Anthony Delitto

Anthony Delitto
Professor and Dean



Many changes have occurred since our last issue of *FACETS* magazine. First, in May, I was offered a wonderful opportunity to expand my role and tackle new challenges. Fortunately, I get to stay in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. My new position as executive director of Internal and External Relations finds me overseeing a variety of functions including marketing, communications, development, alumni/public relations, student recruitment, and events planning.

In order to carry out all of these functions, we're creating an amazing team of experts. Greta Daniels has replaced me as our new director of Development. Greta came to Pitt via Point Park University in Pittsburgh, where she served as director of Annual Giving for the past two years. Prior to that, she was the director of Alumni Relations at Sewickley Academy, Sewickley, Pa., after relocating to the area from New York City. Greta received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from New York University. You'll be learning a lot more about Greta as she authors future "Giving" columns and arranges visits with many of you across the country.

Natalie Baney transferred from director of Recruitment to director of Communications in our new team. Natalie has been with SHRS for nine years now—first as Dean's Office coordinator, then as assistant to the Dean, and most recently as Recruitment director, where she very capably assumed more and more communications responsibilities such as overseeing the School's website and managing our social media. Natalie received her bachelor's degree from Penn State University and her MBA from Pitt's Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business. She previously ran her own business and served as news producer at WTAE-TV, Pittsburgh, and WICU-TV, Erie, Pa.

Samantha Jakiel keeps us all moving in the right direction as our administrative assistant. She is a Pitt grad and a current SHRS student on track to complete the graduate program in Health Information Systems in December. Samantha provided exceptional service as Dean's Office coordinator and she's a whiz at planning events, managing details, and mastering technology.

At this writing, we are actively interviewing candidates for our Recruitment position and expect to enhance our team even more with this new addition.

In closing, I must tell you how much I enjoyed serving as your director of Development for the last 12 years. I often told my fundraising colleagues that SHRS has the best group of alumni, faculty, staff, and students—people who are devoted to caring for and about others. And I make that statement with the deepest sincerity. I am eager to continue my involvement with the School as I develop and direct SHRS's internal and external relations initiatives. I'll remain the executive editor of *FACETS* magazine and relish any opportunity to interact with you whether in person, via email, postal mail, or phone.

Patty Kummick
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Calendar of Events

OCTOBER

Friday– Saturday, October 14–15, 2016
Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference, Lancaster, Pa.

Sunday, October 16, 2016
Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Alumni Reception, Westin Boston Waterfront, Douglas Room, 425 Summer Street, Boston, Mass., 7–9:30 p.m. For details, contact Kate Gaunt at kate.gaunt@pitt.edu.

Monday, October 17, 2016
Health Information Management Alumni Reception, Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace, 202 East Pratt Street, Baltimore, Md., 6–8 p.m., held in conjunction with the AHIMA Conference. For details, contact Patti Grofic at pgrofic@pitt.edu.

NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 5, 2016
SHRS Fall Open House, Forbes Tower, Atwood Street, Pittsburgh, Pa., 10 a.m.–noon. Meet with SHRS faculty, staff, and students. Learn about our many programs and the variety of career opportunities they offer. Register at www.shrs.pitt.edu/openhouse.

Thursday, November 17, 2016
Communication Science and Disorders Alumni, Students, Faculty, and Friends Open House, Field House Restaurant & Sports Bar, 1150 Filbert Street, Philadelphia, Pa., 7–9 p.m., held in conjunction with the Annual Conference of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. For details, contact Kate Gaunt at kate.gaunt@pitt.edu.

Friday–Saturday, November 18–19, 2016
AOTA/NBCOT National Student Conclave, Dearborn, Mich.

FEBRUARY

Wednesday, February 15, 2017
2017 Winter Academy Palm Beach, Palm Beach, Fla. For details, contact Rachel Edman at 412-647-4241.

Friday, February 17, 2017.
2017 Winter Academy Naples, Naples, Fla. For details, contact Tashia Terry at 412-802-8281.

MARCH

Thursday–Sunday, March 30–April 2, 2017
2017 AOTA Annual Conference & Centennial Celebration, Philadelphia, Pa.

In Memoriam



Jenifer Rae Powers Fruit
(August 4, 1984–June 4, 2016)

Audiologist Jenifer Fruit was dedicated to the concept of interventional audiology—bringing audiology services to those who need them most and have the least ability to access standard clinics. She was particularly involved in the creation and implementation of the HearCARE quality improvement initiative, which is now nationally recognized and poised to impact how we view and implement communication accessibility in senior living facilities.

Fruit's dedication to expanding and improving clinical instruction by coordinating activities between the clinical and academic program permeated all that she did. It was clearly her passion.

With an undergraduate degree from the College of Wooster in 2006, Fruit received her clinical doctorate in Audiology at the University of Pittsburgh in 2011. She joined the group of audiologists at the UPMC Hearing and Balance Center as an extern, and then as an audiologist immediately after graduating. She provided patient care, and soon became the point person for special projects and expanding clinical services.

Each time clinical services were expanded at UPMC, Fruit strove to integrate Pitt students into these experiences to broaden and enhance their clinical education. Her absence is felt keenly by the Pitt and UPMC audiology community. We continue to acknowledge her work and focus on the many projects that she helped to initiate.

Alumni News



Dr. Noma Anderson (PhD '79) recently visited the Pitt campus to receive honors as a University of Pittsburgh Legacy Laureate. The Legacy Laureate program recognizes Pitt alumni who have excelled both professionally and personally and who exemplify the best in leadership qualities and commitment to the greater good for their professions, communities, and the world at large.

Dr. Anderson holds a PhD in speech-language pathology from the University of Pittsburgh, and an MS in speech pathology from Emerson College in Boston. She received her BA in speech pathology and audiology from Hampton Institute in Hampton, Va.

On July 1, 2016, Dr. Anderson became Special Adviser to University of Tennessee System President on Diversity and Inclusion. She has served as chair of the president's Diversity Advisory Council since 2012. Previous to this appointment, she served as dean at University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) College of Health Professions. She presided over a period of growth in the College of Health Professions which currently includes six departments: Audiology and Speech Pathology, Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Health Informatics and Information Management, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Physician Assistant Studies. She remains on the faculty of UTHSC in the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology in Knoxville, Tenn.

She also served as chair and professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami, and was dean of the School of

Health Sciences at FIU for five years. Prior to that, she was chair for 10 years and on faculty for 16 years in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Howard University, Washington, D.C. Named a Fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association in 1992, Dr. Anderson was on the board of directors for ASHA from 1998-2000 as vice president for academic affairs, and again from 2006-2008. She served as ASHA president in 2007. Last November, Dr. Anderson received the Honors of the Association Award from ASHA, the highest award given by the organization.

On hand to honor Dr. Anderson were Dr. Malcolm McNeil, distinguished service professor and chair, Department of Communication Science and Disorders, SHRS Dean Tony Delitto, and Dr. Herbert Rubin, professor emeritus, Department of Communication Science and Disorders.



▲ Recent Cigna hires, **Ali Krafft** (HIM '16) and **Kelly Boyle** (HIM '16) were welcomed aboard by fellow HIM alumni and Cigna employees **Natasha Hepburn** (HIM '10), **Claire Giblin** (HIM '15) and **Trish Hanrahan** (HIM '15). Pictured left to right are Hepburn, Krafft, Giblin, Hanrahan, and Boyle.

Communication Science and Disorders



◀ **Dr. Helen Sharp** (MS '92) has been named the new director of Pacific University's School of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Previously

Dr. Sharp served as associate professor of speech pathology and audiology at Western Michigan University. She has more than 25 years of clinical practice and has been involved in professional service in a number of capacities.

Stephen W. Hill (BA '12, MA '15, AuD '16) recently accepted a position as doctor of Audiology at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in Boston, Mass.

Health Information Management

Michael Ace (HIS '15) received The Order of Military Medical Merit. This award recognizes those individuals who have clearly demonstrated the highest standards of integrity and moral character, displayed an outstanding degree of professional competence, served in the Army Medical Department with selflessness, and have made a sustained contribution to the betterment of Army medicine.

Michael Hoerner (HIS '16) co-authored an article entitled "ICD-10 Coding Productivity Study Highlights Emerging Standards" published in the Journal of the American Health Information Management Association, August 2016.

Rehabilitation Science Undergraduate Program



▲ **Harinee Suthakar** (BS '16) is a recent recipient of a Fulbright-Sussex Award. She will pursue a Master of Arts in Gender and International Development to understand how policy, advocacy, and educational efforts can better support and address sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and women in South Asia. She will study at the University of Sussex, Brighton, UK.

Sports Medicine and Nutrition

Ann Marie Kuchera (CDN '96) received the Outstanding Dietetics Educator Award in the Coordinated Master's Program category from the Pennsylvania Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The award recognizes the excellence of educators in accredited and approved dietetic education programs. Kuchera is a project director for the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC and an adjunct faculty for SHRS's Nutrition program.

Lindsay Radzvin (MS '08) was recently hired to serve as the director of Food Services for North Hills School District, Pittsburgh. For the last 10 years, Radzvin worked as Food Service director for Deer Lakes School District.

Kira Paris Felker (CDN '08) won the Pennsylvania Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year award.

Jessica Shaffer (CDN '15) was the recipient of the Pennsylvania Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation General Scholarship.

Caitlin Bender (SM '12) was named Athletico Physical Therapy's Athletic Trainer of the Year. She was recognized at the 2016 Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament in Indianapolis.

Recent graduates **Michelle Varnell** (PhD '15), **Nicholas Heebner** (PhD '15), and **Valerie Williams** (PhD '16) accepted faculty positions at Salem State University, the University of Kentucky, and Brunel University of London, respectively.

Daveon Lee (BS '09, MS '14) accepted the position of an assistant athletic trainer for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Prior to receiving this position, Lee served a two-year internship with the Steelers organization.

Dale Thornton (BS '10, MS '12) serves as an assistant athletic trainer for the University of Pittsburgh football team and as a clinical instructor in the Athletic Training Education program.

Tim Dunlavey (BS '04), accepted a position with Physiofitness Associates where he will be working with the PGA Tour. Previously, Tim worked for eight years as the assistant athletic trainer for the Pitt Panthers football team.

Rick Burkholder (BS '87) and **Larry Cooper** (BS '83) each received the 2016 Most Distinguished Athletic Trainer Award from the National Athletic Trainers Association. Burkholder was also inducted into the 2016 Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers' Hall of Fame.

Jeff Shields (BS '83) received the 2016 Athletic Trainer Service Award from the National Athletic Trainers Association.

Alumni News *(continued)*



◀ **Christie Lee Miller** (MS '10) was named head athletic trainer for Team USA Track & Field for the 2016 U20 World Championships, Bydgoszcz, Poland.

▶ **Scott Frowen** (BS '96) competed in the San Francisco Super Spartan Obstacle Race in July 2016. He finished 14th overall (out of 1,696 finishers) and 3rd among his age group of 45–49-year-old males.



Faculty News

The School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences welcomes the following new faculty members: **Dr. Gustavo Almeida**, assistant professor, and **Dr. Adam Popchak**, research assistant professor, Department of Physical Therapy; **William Ankrom**, instructor, and **Drs. Shawn Flanagan** and **Samara Nielsen**, assistant professors, Department of Sports Medicine and Nutrition; **Dr. Dawna Duff**, assistant professor, Department of Communication Science and Disorders; and **Ann Marsico**, instructor, and **Dr. Alyson Stover**, assistant professor, Department of Occupational Therapy.

The School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences recognizes the following faculty who have received promotions: **Dr. Denise Chisholm**, professor, Department of Occupational Therapy; **Dr. Elaine Mormer**, associate professor, and **Dr. Barbara Vento**, associate professor, Department of Communication Science and Disorders; **Dr. Jonathan Pearlman**, associate professor, Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology, and **Dr. Thomas Platt**, associate professor, Emergency Medicine Program.

The School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences also congratulates **Dr. James Irrgang** on his appointment to chair, Department of Physical Therapy. See article on page 9.

Communication Science and Disorders

Dr. Dawna Duff joined the faculty as assistant professor in Communication Science and Disorders with expertise in child language and reading disorders. She completed her PhD at the University of Iowa. She will be teaching graduate students in the speech language pathology program, and researching vocabulary and reading development, especially the process of word learning while reading text.

Dr. Duff delivered a talk at the meeting of the Society for the Scientific Studies of Reading in Porto, Portugal, July 2016. Her topic was “Individual Differences in Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Relationships: A Quantile Regression Approach.”

Dr. Katya Hill has been appointed to a committee under the supervision of the National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine to address on the use of selected assistive products and technologies in eliminating and reducing the effects of impairment. She represents the field of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) assistive technology. She was also guest editor of a 2015 American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) *Perspectives* for the

Special Interest Division on AAC. The issue focused on speech-generating device funding practices and implications for speech language pathologists.



▲ CSD student and alumni volunteers joined **Dr. Hill** (second row, third from left), associate professor, at the 6th Annual ICAN Talk AAC Summer Camp in Pittsburgh. The camp of 25 participants supported children and families who use augmentative and alternative communications.

Dr. Elaine Mormer, associate professor, helped present “Communication, Hearing, and Audiometric Testing (CHAT) in Older Hospitalized Patients: A Quality Improvement Project” poster at the UPMC Aging Institute Annual Research Day, Pittsburgh, Pa. She also helped present two posters on hearing loss among hospitalized patients at the American Academy of Audiology annual conference in Phoenix, Ariz., April 2016.

Dr. Mormer also presented “Clinical Teaching through Evidence-Based Practices” at the University of Haifa Interdisciplinary Clinical Center’s Continuing Education Workshop, Haifa, Israel, July 2016.

Dr. Mormer and **Dr. Cheryl Messick**, associate professor, presented “Clinical Teaching Through Evidence Based Practice” at the annual Kopp Lecture/Workshop, Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich. They also presented “Sustainable Models of Clinical Education and Community Collaboration” and “Launching CAPCSD’s Clinical Educator Online Training Modules” at the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Science and Disorders annual conference, San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Messick served as a Visiting Erskine Fellow at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. She gave a presentation at the University in July 2016 titled “Providing Feedback in Clinical Teaching.”

Dr. Erin Lundblom, assistant professor, co-presented “Quantity vs. Quality: The Ethics of Caseload Management Across Practice Settings” at the annual convention of the Pennsylvania Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Pittsburgh, Pa. She also served as pediatric program chair for the event.

Dr. Ellen R. Cohn, professor, served as invited moderator for “Telemedicine in Education” at the American Telemedicine Association Annual Conference and Trade Show, Minneapolis, Minn., May 2016. She also presented “Telepractice 2016” at the Pennsylvania Speech-Language-Hearing Association conference, Pittsburgh, Pa., April 2016.

Associate Professor **Michael W. Dickey** has been appointed to the Language and Communication Study Section, NIH Center for Scientific Review, for a four-

year term. Members are selected based on their demonstrated competence and achievement in their scientific discipline.

Honors of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Speech-Language-Hearing Association were bestowed upon **Dr. Paula Leslie**, professor and director of CSD’s Doctor of Clinical Science in Medical Speech Language Pathology program. Her interests include the process of clinical decision making and nontraditional routes to advanced clinical training. Dr. Leslie is also the recipient of the Pennsylvania Speech-Language-Hearing Association 2016 Clinical Achievement Award based on her extensive and varied experience and contributions to the field of speech-language pathology.

Health Information Management

Dr. Mervat Abdelhak, associate professor and chair, was invited to present “Patient Engagement: Opportunities and Challenges for Nursing and Health Care Professionals,” at NI2016: 13th International Congress in Nursing Informatics, Geneva, Switzerland, June 2016, and “Achieving Global Learning Health System by Leveraging Innovative Data Management Policies, Practices, and Developing a Collaborative, Competent Workforce” panel presentation at HEC 2016 in Munich, Germany, September 2016.

Dr. Dilhari DeAlmeida, assistant professor, is chairing the AHIMA Council for Excellence in Education’s Graduate Resource Alliance workgroup. This workgroup focuses on the academic needs of graduate level students and educators. Dr. DeAlmeida, along with Dr. Suzanne Paone, adjunct assistant professor, presented “Transforming HIM Education to Align with Data Analytics Practice” at the PHIMA Annual Meeting in Lancaster, Pa., May 2016.

Dr. Valerie Watzlaf, associate professor, and colleague Patty Sheridan, CIOX Health, presented “Clinical Data Abstraction Takes a New Turn: Putting Efficiency into Extraction,” at the CIOX Health Educational Summit, July 2016. They also conducted a workshop on “Leadership Curriculum: Using Adaptive and Creative Techniques” at AHIMA’s Assembly on Education, Denver, Colo., July 2016.

In June 2016, **Dr. Watzlaf** attended a Case-in-Point Certification seminar at the Kansas Leadership Center to learn new methods to teach leadership to HIM students and professionals.

Dr. Leming Zhou, assistant professor, presented “Research-based Graduate Education in Health Informatics” at AMIA’s Inspire 2016 Academic Forum, Columbus, Ohio, June 2016. He also presented “The Genomics Education Partnership: Assessment of Key Elements of a Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE)” at the 57th Annual Drosophila Research Conference, Orlando, Fla., and “A New Security Assured Healthcare Information Track: One-Year Experience,” at AHIMA’s Assembly on Education Symposium, Denver, Colo., July 2016.

Occupational Therapy

Dr. Joanne Baird, assistant professor and **Dr. Mary Lou Liebold**, adjunct faculty, were invited to present at the American Occupational Therapy Association Fieldwork Educator Certification Program, Jamestown, N.Y., May 2016.

Dr. Baird and **Drs. Margo Holm** and **Joan Rogers**, professors emerita, and colleagues presented “Simulation to Teach Patient Handling: The Role of Self-Efficacy” at the 5th Annual Occupational Therapy Research Summit, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2016.



Faculty News *(continued)*



On May 5, 2016, **Dr. Elizabeth Skidmore**, associate professor and chair, Department

of Occupational Therapy, was welcomed to the White House, along with some 100 other leading scientists and engineers from across the country, by President Barack Obama. Dr. Skidmore joined the others as the latest recipients of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers.

President Obama congratulated the awardees on their achievements and urged them to continue to lead the way in driving discovery and innovation. He also noted that the recipients, all of whom are either employed or funded by the Federal government, underscored the importance of the nation's investments in research and development.

During her two-day visit in the nation's capital, Dr. Skidmore met with Administration leaders sharing the insights of her work. Dr. Skidmore's official citation recognized her "for studies to examine the influence of cognitive and affective impairments on neurorehabilitation outcomes" through the Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. Nancy Baker, associate professor, lectured on "The Research Application and Review Process: Reviewer's Perspective" and "Demystifying the Promotions Process and Renegotiating Your Position" at the Young Investigators Initiative, co-sponsored by the U.S. Bone and Joint Decade/Initiative and the Bone and Joint Decade Canada, Rosemont, Ill., May 2016.

Dr. Baker also presented "Bridging the Knowledge Gap: Design to Maximize Research Reach and Impact" and "Using Logic Model Methods to Design for Maximum Reach and Impact" at the 5th Annual Occupational Therapy Research Summit, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2016. She presented papers on "The Effectiveness of an 'Ergonomic' Keyboard for Reducing Musculoskeletal Symptoms" and "The Risk of Work-Related Carpal Tunnel Syndrome by Occupational Type in the U.S.: Controlling for Related Comorbidities" at the PREMUS 2016: 9th International Scientific Conference on the Prevention of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders, Toronto, Canada, June 2016.

Dr. Roxanna Bendixen, assistant professor, participated in three pediatric-related presentations at the American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference & Expo, Chicago, Ill., April 2016: "AJOT and OTJR editors share tips to get your manuscript published," "Impact of Children with Rare Diseases on the Family," "Strategies for Engaging the Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Community in Research," and "Does Therapy Dosage Matter? Applying Current Research to Enhance Pediatric Practice."

Dr. Bendixen was invited to present on "Developing and Measuring 'Real World' Concepts" at the 5th Annual Occupational Therapy Research Summit, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2016. She also joined others in presenting "Developing Digital Tools for Improving Patient and Family Engagement and Data Collection in Paediatric Clinical Research" at The European Conference on Rare Diseases & Orphan Products, Edinburgh, Scotland, May 2016. She was also selected as a scholar for the 2016 mHealth Training Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, Calif., August 2016.

Dr. Denise Chisholm, professor, presented "Boardroom to Classroom: Advocacy, Current Topics Affecting OT, and Articulating OT's Distinct Value" to the University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla., June 2016.

Drs. Chisholm, Pamela Toto, assistant professor, **Joan Rogers**, professor emerita, and colleagues presented "Evaluating Capacity to Live Independently and Safely in the Community" at the 5th Annual Occupational Therapy Research Summit, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2016.

Drs. Chisholm and Margo Holm, professor emerita, were invited to present "Performance Assessment of Self-care Skills (PASS)" to the University of Utah and the Utah Occupational Therapy Association, June 2016.

Dr. Juleen Rodakowski, assistant professor, presented "Depressive Symptoms and Daily Activities for Older Adults with Mild Cognitive Impairment" at the Translational Science Conference, Washington, D.C., April 2016, and she presented "Conducting Feasibility Studies: A Funded-Study Case Example" at the 5th Annual Occupational Therapy Research Summit, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2016. She co-presented "The Life and Times of a Scientist" at the Summer Institute for Future Scientists in Occupational Therapy, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2016. She also was awarded Excellence in Research in the Field of Aging by the University of Pittsburgh Aging Institute, April 2016.

Drs. Rodakowski and Elizabeth Skidmore, associate professor and chair, presented "Depression and Activities of Daily Living for Older Adults with Mild Cognitive Impairment" at the 5th Annual Occupational Therapy Research Summit, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2016.

Dr. Skidmore was also invited to present "Acute Cognitive Impairments and Disability after Brain Injury: Can We Achieve Better Outcomes?" and "Rehabilitation Research: What Can You Do to Move It Forward?" at the Mayo Clinic Neurorehabilitation Summit, Rochester, Minn., April 2016, and "Addressing Cognitive Impairments after Stroke: Strategies for Better Outcomes" to the Stroke Rehabilitation Program at Allina Health System, Minneapolis, Minn., April 2016. She was also invited to present "Building an Intervention Research Program: Soup to Nuts" at the 5th Annual Occupational Therapy Research Summit, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2016.

Dr. Alyson Stover, assistant professor, presented "Where Is our Occupational Therapy Profession Headed?" at the 2016 Midyear Workshop and Ethics session, Northeast District of Ohio Occupational Therapy Association, Youngstown, Ohio, May 2016. She also presented "Who Gets to Choose? The Medical Decision Transition for Children with Disabilities" to the Physician Assistant Program at Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pa., July 2016.

Dr. Lauren Terhorst, associate professor, presented "Bridging the Gap in Research Teams: A Methodologist's Perspective" at the 5th Annual Occupational Therapy Research Summit, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2016.

Dr. Pamela Toto, assistant professor, received the American Occupational Therapy Association Recognition of Achievement Award for her contributions to promoting occupational therapy for community-dwelling older adults at the AOTA Annual Awards and Recognitions Ceremony, Chicago, Ill., April 2016. She also developed a five-series course for UPMC Centers for Rehab Services' occupational therapy practitioners for promoting aging-in-place with older adults.

Physical Therapy



Dr. James J. Irrgang was appointed chair of the Department of Physical Therapy replacing Dr. Tony

Delitto, SHRS dean. Dr. Irrgang was previously professor and director of Clinical Research in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in Pitt's School of Medicine, with a secondary appointment as faculty in Physical Therapy (an appointment he held since 1986).

Dr. Irrgang received a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Therapy in 1977, a Master of Science degree in Health Related Professions with an emphasis in Sports Physical Therapy in 1991 and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Research Methodology with an emphasis in Educational and Psychological Measurement in 1999, all from the University of Pittsburgh.

His research has centered on clinical trials and clinical outcome studies related to surgery and rehabilitation of musculoskeletal injuries involving the knee and shoulder, and the development and validation of patient-reported outcome measures. As PT chair, Dr. Irrgang will continue to collaborate with faculty in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery to build upon and expand orthopaedic and rehabilitation research, and to uphold and strengthen the DPT program's long tradition of excellence in clinical education.

The Department of Physical Therapy hosted the Section on Health Policy and Administration (HPA) of the APTA Board of Directors meeting, July 2016. **Dr. Debora L. Miller**, associate professor, is a member of the HPA Board, LAMP Director, and the lead faculty for the LAMP Institute for Leadership in Physical Therapy.

Dr. Miller also facilitated discussions about health policy, practice management and leadership curricular themes, deployment methods, and resources during Arcadia University's Health Policy & Practice Management Faculty Institute, Glenside, Pa., August 2016.

The American Public Health Association/Chiropractic Health Care Section has named **Dr. Michael Schneider**, associate professor, as a 2016 Distinguished Service Award recipient for his efforts to advance the chiropractic profession through his research related to public health. He is one of the first recipients of a research grant from the new Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute to research the effectiveness of non-surgical treatments for lumbar spinal stenosis.

Dr. Schneider was also appointed to the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute's (PCORI) Advisory Panel on Assessment of Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment Options.

Rehabilitation Science and Technology

Rosemarie Cooper, assistant professor, was a recipient of the 2016 Health Care Heroes Award, presented by the *Pittsburgh Business Times*.

Dr. Rory Cooper, distinguished professor and FISA/PVA chair, was presented the inaugural Marlin Mickle Outstanding Innovator Award. The award recognizes a University of Pittsburgh faculty member who exemplifies the passion and commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship of the late Dr. Mickle of the Swanson School of Engineering.



Faculty News *(continued)*



▲ **Dr. Cooper** participated once again in the 2016 National Veterans Wheelchair Games. He came away with three gold medals (two in swimming and one in table tennis) and three silver medals (swimming).

Sports Medicine and Nutrition

William K. Ankrom joined the faculty of the Sports Medicine and Nutrition Department's Athletic Training Education program. He is acting clinical education coordinator and an instructor within the program. Ankrom previously worked with UPMC Sports Medicine overseeing the operations of the Athletic Training Department. He received his bachelor's degree in Athletic Training from California University of Pennsylvania and his master's degree in Sports Medicine from the University of Pittsburgh ('00).

Dr. Kevin Conley, associate professor and chair, was selected as one of 160 civilians nationwide to attend the U.S. Army War College National Security Seminar at Carlisle Barracks, Pa., in June 2016. The event provides a forum where distinguished speakers share their views on issues of importance to the nation's security and welfare. Students, international fellows, faculty, and invited members from across the country contribute to a free and candid dialogue on these issues. New members represent a diverse group of American citizens drawn from various fields of endeavor.

Dr. Conley delivered a presentation entitled "Pre-participation Examinations and Disqualifying Conditions: What Should We Be Doing and What Does the

Evidence Tell Us?" at the Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers' Society Annual Meeting and Clinical Symposium, Granville, Pa., June 2016.

Dr. Bradley Nindl, professor and director of the Neuromuscular Research Laboratory/Warrior Human Performance Research Center (NMRL/WHPRC), made several presentations in the United Kingdom at the invitation of the research director for the British Army Women Ground Close Combat Review. Dr. Nindl presented "Physiological and Optimized Physical Training Considerations for Integrating Women into Combat-Centric Military Occupations" at the Department of Army Headquarters and at the Royal Marine Commando Training Center. He also participated in roundtable discussions at the Royal Air Force Training Center and at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

While in the UK, **Dr. Nindl** also presented "Navigating the Demands of the Peer-reviewed Publication Process" to faculty and students at the University of Chichester Institute of Sport.

Dr. Nindl presented "Science and Strategies for Human Performance Optimization in Military Tactical Athletes" as the invited speaker for the Department of Health and Exercise Science, The College of New Jersey, Ewing, N.J., April 2016.

Dr. Nindl, Drs. Kim Beals, Takashi Nagai, and Christopher Connaboy, assistant professors, presented research at the 2016 American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting in Meeting, Boston, Mass., June 2016. Dr. Beals presented "Decreased Energy Availability during Cold Weather Mountain Training in Special Operators," Dr. Nagai presented "Heart Rate and Variability of Marine Special Operations Students during Close Quarter Battle Training," and Dr. Connaboy presented "The Effects of Additional Carried Load on Perception-action Coupling during a Discrete

Horizontal Jump Task." Dr. Nindl presented "Energy Requirements and Physiological Tissue Adaptations in Response to Military Training" as part of a symposium.

Dr. Mita Lovalekar, assistant professor, was selected to present at the Epidemiology Congress of the Americas, Miami, Fla., June 2016. She presented "Descriptive Epidemiology of Musculoskeletal Injuries among Air Force Special Operations Command Operators and the Impact of these Injuries on Healthcare Utilization."

Dr. Takashi Nagai, assistant professor, participated in an Australian International Fellowship Exchange with the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) on military human performance and injury prevention research. Dr. Nagai provided a number of presentations to Defence personnel and was the featured speaker for a Physical Performance Research Exchange Day Conference.

Dr. Katelyn Allison, assistant professor, was named director of the Master in Sports Medicine program.

Dr. Allison presented "Musculoskeletal, Biomechanical and Physiological Gender Differences in the U.S. Military" at the 15th Annual McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine Scientific Retreat, Nemaquin Woodlands Resort, Farmington, Pa., as part of the Military-Relevant Injury Research session.

Dr. Samara Joy Nielsen, assistant professor, presented "Association between CRP and Omega 3 Fatty Acids from Seafood: U.S. Adults, 2007-2010" at the 2016 Experimental Biology Conference in San Diego, Ca., April 2016.

Dr. Nielsen also presented "Yogurt: A Case Study in NHANES 2011-2012" at the 2016 National Nutrient Databank Conference, Alexandria, Va., May 2016.

Student News

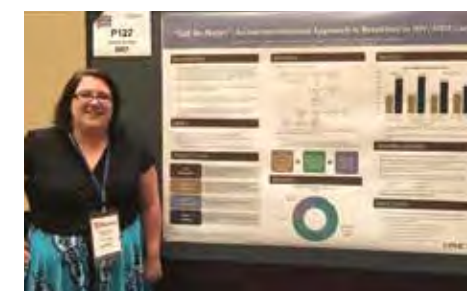
Communication Science and Disorders

CSD students **Adrienne Ammirati** and **Allison Smith** received member honors for their contributions to the University of Pittsburgh Chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association. They each received a waiver to attend the 2016 ASHA convention.

Health Information Management

Zahraa Alakrawi, doctoral candidate, received the AHIMA Foundation's Joel Nagorner Endowed Research Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to provide dissertation support and to honor those who inspire through research and education. Her article, "Clinical Terminology and Clinical Classification Systems: A Critique Using AHIMA's Data Quality Management Model," was published in the Summer 2016 issue of *Perspectives in Health Information Management*.

Alakrawi, Dr. Valerie Watzlaf, associate professor, and HIM undergraduate students **John Aborde, Carey Johnson, and Timothy Johnson** had their article entitled "Utilizing Open Source Government Data Sets in HIM Teaching" published in the Fall 2016 issue of *Perspectives in Health Information Management*.



▲ **Liza Caringi**, HIS graduate student, and alumna **Samantha Faulds** (HIS '16) presented their poster, "Call Me, Maybe: An Interprofessional Approach to Retention in HIV/AIDS Care," at the National Ryan White Conference on HIV Care and Treatment, Washington, D.C., August 2016.

Occupational Therapy

Angela Caldwell, PhD candidate, **Drs. Lauren Terhorst**, associate professor, **Joan Rogers**, professor emerita, and colleagues presented "Lessons Learned about Parent-led Data Collection and Feeding Intervention Provision in the Home: A Feasibility Study" at the American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference & Expo, Chicago, Ill., April 2016. Caldwell also moderated a Scientific Research Panel on topics related to pediatric sensory-based intervention at the AOTA Conference.

Emily Kringle, PhD student, received the 2016 American Occupational Therapy Foundation Meritorious Service Award for her leadership and service to the American Occupational Therapy Foundation and Pi Theta Epsilon conferred at the AOTA Annual Awards and Recognitions Ceremony, Chicago, Ill., April 2016. She and colleagues presented "Building your Leadership and Engagement toward the AOTA Centennial Vision (and Beyond)," and moderated a Scientific Research Panel on topics related to driving and balance at the AOTA conference. Kringle also served as a volunteer at the American Occupational Therapy Foundation State of the Science Symposium.

Kringle, Dr. Lauren Terhorst, associate professor, and **Dr. Elizabeth Skidmore**, associate professor and chair, presented "Disability and Cognition Predict Engagement in Inpatient Rehabilitation Following Stroke" and "Factors that Predict Engagement in Inpatient Rehabilitation Following Stroke" at various Research Days at the University of Pittsburgh in May 2016.

Chao Yi Wu, PhD student, **Dr. Skidmore**, and **Dr. Juleen Rodakowski**, assistant professor, presented "Predicting Disability after New Medical Diagnosis in Retirees: Depressive Symptoms and Cognitive Function" at the 5th



Annual Occupational Therapy Research Summit, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2016. They also helped present "Role of Depressive Symptoms in Predicting Disability after New Medical Diagnoses in Retirees" at the 16th Annual 2016 Department of Psychiatry Research Day, Pittsburgh, Pa., June 2016.

Robert Evans, MOT student, was selected as a fellow for The QIT Health Innovators Fellowship through the Jewish Healthcare Foundation.

Kristen Kowalski, MOT student, received the Stanley Prostrednik Award for Health Sciences scholarship to support working with an occupational therapist in Auckland, New Zealand, in an Inclusion Support Centre for children with physical and cognitive disabilities.

MOT students **Alice Li, Elise Pure, Sara Ellis, Josselyn Mackey, and Juliana Carlin** raised money for and participated in the Arthritis Foundation's Walk to Cure Arthritis, Pittsburgh, Pa., June 2016.

Stephanie Rouch, MOT student, mentored by **Dr. Nancy Baker**, associate professor, and **Dr. Juleen Rodakowski**, assistant professor, developed and implemented the research project "Changes in Balance, Grip Strength and Well-being in Adults with Developmental Disabilities after a 6-week Partner Dance program." Rouch partnered with community-based Yes You Can Dance! Program to assess the effect of this program on its participants. She was assisted by MOT students **Samantha Bowen, Alyssa Campisi, Samantha Chamberlin, Kristen Kowalski, Alice Li, Leah McCarthy, Elise Pure, and Stacey Sabu**, among others.



Student News *(continued)*

Kristen Bianco, Samantha Chamberlin, Serafina Congeni, Brianna Garcia, Kasey Gehlhaus, Alexandra Gruner, Madeline Iannamorelli, Amy Katz, Catherine Leece, Stephanie Lewis, Leah McCarthy, Steven Paciga, Elise Pure, Kaitlyn Rankin, Jordan Shoup, Hannah Simko, Amelia Szabat, Lauren White, and Cameron Williams, MOT students, were inducted into the Beta Tau Chapter of Pi Theta Epsilon, the national honor society for occupational therapy students.

Leah McCarthy, MOT student, planned and organized an interprofessional learning event with students from Pitt's School of Pharmacy on the topic of medication management.

Temitope Akanbi, MOT student, with **Dr. Amit Sethi**, assistant professor, and colleagues presented "Combining Hand and Brain Electrical Stimulation in Individuals with Severe Stroke: A Case Study" at the 12th Annual UPMC Rehabilitation Institute Research Day, May 2016.

MOT students **Leah McCarthy, Kristen Kowalski, Brianna Garcia, Kristy Guthrie, Luree Miller, and Robert Evans**, and **Dr. Roxanna Bendixen**, assistant professor, participated in the second and third Warhol Sensory-Friendly Events.

MOT student presentations made at the American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference & Expo in Chicago, Ill., in April 2016 included **Elizabeth Bondarenko** along with **Dr. Denise Chisholm**, professor, and **Dr. Pamela Toto**, assistant professor, presenting "Fostering Health through Occupation: Wellness Groups for Marginalized Populations," and **Kelly Dickson** and **Dr. Toto** presenting "The Prevalence and Outcomes of Frailty in SNFs."

Amanda Becker, MOT student, and **Dr. Juleen Rodakowski**, assistant professor, presented "Self-selected, Activity-based Goals Chosen by Older Adults with Mild Cognitive Impairment" at the 12th Annual UPMC Rehabilitation Institute Research Day, May 2016.

Samantha Chamberlin, Catherine Leece, and Elise Pure, MOT students, were awarded Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association scholarships.

Anne Chen and **Hannah Pecyna**, MOT students, mentored by **Dr. Nancy Baker**, associate professor, developed and presented a talk on body mechanics titled "Take Back your Back" for patients at the Musculoskeletal Medical Home, Pittsburgh, Pa., June 2016.

MOT students **Jamie Crisman, Robert Evans, Brianna Garcia, Kasey Gehlhaus, Kristen Kowalski, Alice Li, Hanna Morris, and Casey Reitz** and Assistant Professor **Roxanna Bendixen** represented the Department of Occupational Therapy at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Sensory-Friendly Performance for individuals with a variety of intellectual and developmental disabilities (children and adults) and their families at Heinz Hall, Pittsburgh, Pa., June 2016.

Elise Pure, MOT student, with **Dr. Nancy Baker**, associate professor, serving as preceptor, received a Medical and Graduate Student Preceptorship from the Rheumatology Research Foundation.

MOT students **Temitope Akanbi, Sarah Arndt, Anne Chen, Elise Pure, and Stephanie Rouch** assisted with the Summer Health Career Academy's Hands on Science Workshop program for ninth and 10th graders, Pittsburgh, Pa., July 2016.

Maddie Iannamorelli and **Taylor Hoffay**, MOT students, with **Drs. Joanne Baird** and **Alyson Stover**, assistant professors, and alumnus **Julie Schubert** (MOT '16) represented the Department of Occupational Therapy at Camp Inspire at the Woodlands for children who are ventilator-dependent during their Carnival event, Pittsburgh, Pa., July 2016.

Physical Therapy

DPT students were recognized during APTA's NEXT Conference & Exposition in Nashville for raising \$30,840 for the Foundation for Physical Therapy in the 2015–2016 Pittsburgh-Marquette Challenge. The students earned third place and raised the money by hosting continuing education courses during the past year. Pittsburgh-Marquette student representatives from the DPT Class of 2017 are **Margaret Acton, David Pastrana, Bethany Trotter, and Ryan Vietmeier** and Class of 2018 student representatives are **Devin Craig, Katie Dreger, Samantha Gladnick, and Kayleigh Tony**.

The DPT Class of 2018 participated in the Walk to Cure Arthritis, Pittsburgh, Pa., June 2016. It is the fifth year the PT program was represented at the Arthritis Foundation's nationwide event.

The DPT students presented to 105 high school students attending a month-long University Health Career Scholars Academy during the summer. Interactive and informative sessions were created to interest the high school students in a physical therapy career. The effort to promote the physical therapy profession is one of the goals of the department.

DPT students **Maggie Anzalone** and **Katie Dreger** are the winners of two APTA memberships donated by alumnus **Michael Gans** (DPT '06) in an effort to promote professionalism within the PT academic community.

The students were selected based on their participation in community and professional development activities such as the APTA Combined Sections Meeting, Pittsburgh-Marquette Challenge, Jingle Bell Run for Arthritis, Three Rivers Adaptive Sports, Special Olympics, senior bingo, and Wheelchair Wash, among others. Gans has donated two student memberships each year since presenting his keynote address for the Professional Pledge Ceremony.

Rehabilitation Science and Technology

Anhue Yohali Burrola Mendez, doctoral student, received a four-year fellowship from The National Council on Science and Technology (CONACYT) to develop a wheelchair service training project in Mexico. CONACYT promotes scientific and technological activities, sets government policies for these matters, and grants fellowships for postgraduate studies (similar to the U.S. National Science Foundation).

Mendez's project is being developed in conjunction with the International Society of Wheelchair Professionals (ISWP), a mission to professionalize wheelchair services worldwide. The organization is led by a group of wheelchair experts at the Human Engineering Research Laboratories, with strategic partnerships with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Health Organization (WHO). **Dr. Mary Goldberg**, RST assistant professor and HERL Education and Outreach project director, is Mendez's advisor.

Sports Medicine and Nutrition

Mallory Faherty, doctoral student, was awarded the 2016–2017 Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers' Society Research Award for her dissertation research examining the prospective relationship between modifiable risk factors and lower extremity injury incidence in intercollegiate athletes.

Shawn Eagle, doctoral student, was awarded a National Athletic Trainers' Association Foundation Doctoral Grant for his research project examining neuromuscular characteristics and concussion.

Doctoral students **Paul Whitehead** and **Shawn Eagle** presented research abstracts at the 2016 American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting in Boston, Mass. Whitehead's thematic poster presentation was titled "Better Dynamic Postural Stability While Wearing Minimalist Footwear in Physically Active Male Adults" and Eagle's poster presentation was titled "Task Description and Physiological Demand of Marine Special Operations Students during Amphibious Training."

Doctoral student **Erin Pletcher** presented research abstracts at the 2016 National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) Clinical Symposia & AT Expo in Baltimore, Md., and the 2016 National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) National Conference in New Orleans, La. Her NATA poster presentation was titled "The Effect of Load Carriage and Lower Extremity Strength on Plantar Pressures Obtained in the Barefoot Condition" and her NSCA poster presentation was titled "Decreased Percent Body Fat but not Body Mass Is Associated with Better Performance on Combat Fitness Test in Male and Female Marines."

James Bock, CMD student, presented "Sugar-sweetened Beverage Consumption and the Importance of Taste, Price and Nutrition" at the 2016 National Nutrient Databank Conference, Alexandria, Va., May 2016.

Samantha Pierce, undergraduate student in Nutrition and Dietetics, was awarded the Tom Ablauf Memorial Scholarship from the University of Pittsburgh Alumni Association.

Courtney Riedel, CMD student, was a Pennsylvania Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' General Scholarship winner and Best Creativity award recipient.

Erica Rabbin, CMD student, received the 2016 Outstanding Dietetic Student Award by the Pennsylvania Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Selena Hasircoglu, undergraduate student in Nutrition and Dietetics, received the Residence Life Platinum Award. This award honors resident assistants who excel in their roles.



▲ Athletic Training students **Cheyenne DeRaymond** and **Kevin Tam** were recipients of the 2016 PATS Athletic Training River Run Scholarship. They, along with other Pitt athletic training students joined alumnus **Daveon Lee** (BS '09, MS '14) at the race. Pictured left to right: Lee, Tam, **Lindsay Gately, Lorenzo Sellitto, DeRaymond, and Sean Crandell**.



RX FOR SUCCESS: MEAGAN SAMPOGNA WILLIAMS



▲ Attending the 2016 SHRS scholarship reception are (from left to right) Mark and Joyce Sampogna (Meagan's parents), SHRS Dean Tony Delitto, Meagan Williams, Kim Peterson (HIM doctoral student and recipient of the Meagan Sampogna Williams Student Resource Award), and Dr. Mervat Abdelhak, chair of the Department of Health Information Management.

As an undergraduate in the Department of Health Information Management (HIM), Meagan Sampogna Williams (BS '00) distinguished herself as a curious, energetic, and highly motivated student through classroom projects and clinical experiences.

“Meagan was one of the most talented students I have ever taught in my 30-plus years at Pitt.”

Today, as senior director of Customer Engagement and Implementation at McKesson Specialty Health in Scottsdale, Ariz., she is helping to bring new medicines for chronic illnesses to market, and breaking down barriers so patients can better access these drugs.

In the past five years, Williams has implemented more than 60 new programs with McKesson, a Fortune Five company, 15 of which were designated Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) initiatives.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, REMS is a safety strategy to manage a known or potential risk associated with a medication. The development of REMS programs enables patients to have access to that medicine by managing its safe use.

It is a huge responsibility, but one that Williams has been preparing for.

“Meagan was one of the most talented students I have ever taught in my 30-plus years at Pitt,” notes Associate Professor Valerie Watzlaf, who served as Williams’ advisor and professor. “She always wanted to learn more than was taught in class. I’m not surprised that as a professional, she has been instrumental in moving our field forward.”

Williams came to the HIM program after completing three years of pharmacy school at another university. “I had been diagnosed with a neurological condition that made it difficult for me to write for long periods of time,” recalls Williams. “It became clear that the pharmacy program was not a good fit under these special circumstances.”

“I was delighted to find the HIM program at Pitt,” she says. “Learning how to use technology and analyze health and patient data helps me in my current job every single day.”

Williams credits Pitt with providing her a great foundation. She recalls the work she put into her senior project, in which she combined her passion for pharmacy with HIM skills. “That project, along with outstanding clinical experiences including one at the Cancer Registry at Children’s Hospital of UPMC, exposed me to many different aspects of HIM, and helped me focus my energy on what I wanted to do with my life.”

“Meagan would always go above and beyond on any project or assignment,” adds Watzlaf. “Her work ethic has been rewarded at McKesson.”

In 2014 and 2015 she received the McKesson Peak Performance Award, which goes to a single team or team member who exceeded customer and McKesson expectations related to a program or project. This past year, she was identified as one of 30 senior leaders with high potential out of more than 60,000 employees to participate in a year-long Leaders Teaching Leaders program sponsored by the Global Institute for Leadership Development.

After Williams received her MBA in 2004, she returned to SHRS as an adjunct faculty member through 2007. She not only taught courses in health information systems, but took the time to mentor many students. “Meagan was one of the first of our graduates to do consulting work with pharmacy applications,” notes Watzlaf. “Because she worked in a non-traditional role, and not in a hospital or physician’s practice, she was able to offer our students a different perspective.”

But then Williams moved to Arizona, and her career took off. She missed interacting with students, so she began volunteering with Life Teen International, a group that was very active in her church. For the past eight years she has volunteered up to ten hours a week, helping 9th–12th graders build leadership skills and confidence.

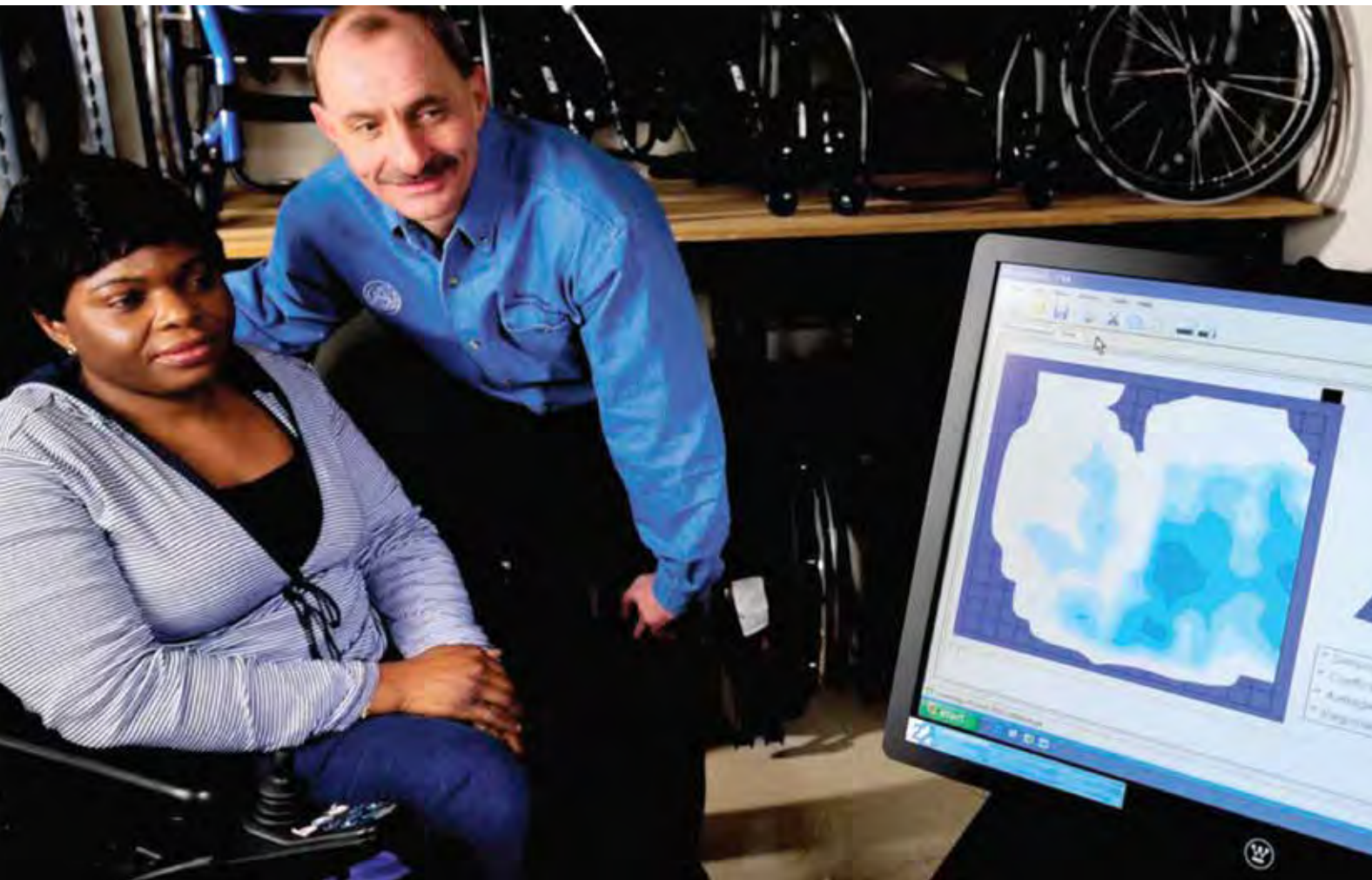
“We have a mutual respect for each other,” remarks Williams. “While I’m helping them prepare for their college experience and beyond, they’re helping me navigate the ever-changing world of social media and technology!”

This millennial guidance has come in handy as Williams, too, continues her education pursuing her PhD in health services leadership. Currently halfway through the writing of her dissertation, Williams stands to finish her degree this upcoming spring.

Williams also established an endowment to provide financial assistance for HIM students in need. It was fully funded this past December and awarded to a deserving HIM graduate student. “I am so grateful to the University of Pittsburgh and the outstanding faculty who helped to get me where I am today,” Williams remarks. “I firmly believe that it’s important to give back and to give a hand up to the next generation of great HIM professionals.” ■



STUDENTS + JOHN COLTELLARO = WIN-WIN FOR CLIENTS



▲ John Coltellaro works with a patient at the Center for Assistive Technology.

John Coltellaro has been a clinical educator in the field of assistive technology (AT) for more than 15 years. But the energy he brings to his job every day gives each student a fresh perspective on what it takes to impact client care.

"AT CAT WE ARE WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH REHAB. OUR JOB IS TO HELP THEM ACCESS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL MAKE THEM MORE SUCCESSFUL AT WORK, SCHOOL, OR IN THEIR HOME."

A rehabilitation engineer by training and an avid Pittsburgh sports fan by avocation, Coltellaro strives to lift spirits as well as remove physical limitations for people under his care.

At the UPMC Center for Assistive Technology (CAT) and the Rehabilitation Institute at UPMC Mercy, Coltellaro works with undergraduate Rehabilitation Science (RS) students during their AT field experiences. He also supervises graduate students who are pursuing their Master of Science in either Rehabilitation Counseling or Rehabilitation Science and Technology (RST) during their practicums and internships.

"When students are with me, they see a variety of clients at various stages of rehabilitation," notes Coltellaro. "At CAT we are working with individuals who have been through rehab. Our job is to help them access assistive technology that will make them more successful at work, school, or in their home."

"At Mercy Rehabilitation Institute, on the other hand, we interface with clients who have suffered recent spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, or burns," continues Coltellaro. "Their medical conditions are more fragile."

Known for his friendly demeanor and extensive knowledge, Coltellaro believes it's important to put the client at ease and help him or her understand how assistive technology can help.

Rob Flannery (MS '10) is a former student of Coltellaro's. Now a volunteer case manager at CAT, he works alongside Coltellaro, scheduling clients for assistive technology evaluations. Flannery says, "John taught me how to listen to clients and respect their needs."

Coltellaro also stresses the importance of learning how to work with a multi-disciplinary team of health care professionals. "In the world of clinical rehabilitation, we collaborate with physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists—whatever specialists the client needs to recover."

Susan Longley (BA '14, MS '16) says she has been able to carry this lesson into her role as a transition counselor at Pittsburgh Public Schools.

"Although John was the AT specialist at Mercy, he had close connections to the entire staff," recalls Longley. "The positive networks that John formed always had the client at the center. These connections directly benefited the client's success and outcome with his or her assistive technology."

Another former student-turned-colleague, CAT Rehabilitation Engineer Bob Mankowski (BS '88, MS '08) says, "John is very inclusive. He asks questions and considers the opinions of his students. He is very good-natured and as a result, both students and clients are comfortable with him."

"Wherever John goes, he creates an immediate connection with people and is able to actively engage them in learning," observes Beth Benton, clinical manager at CAT. "He is dynamic, and generates interest in assistive technology through his enthusiasm."

Longley recalls the confidence Coltellaro instilled in her during her assistive technology practicum.

"John was hands-on at first until I understood the concept," she says. "Then he gave me independence so I could complete the task. This teaching style gave me the necessary foundation to complete the task in a correct manner but also the freedom to learn in a real-world environment."

"You get a lot of theory in the classroom, but real patients make a difference," explains Coltellaro.

Real patients—and students—are fortunate to have John Coltellaro looking out for them. According to RST Assistant Professor and CAT Director Rosemarie Cooper, "John is one of the most sought-after subject matter experts and high-energy clinical instructors we have. Both our clients and students love working with him! And students gladly accept the fact that in order to pass any of John's clinical internships, they have to demonstrate loyalty to all Pittsburgh sports teams!"

"John is not only proud of the successes of the Pittsburgh sports teams," adds Benton; "he is equally proud of his students' successes." ■



OUR PLEDGE. OUR RESPONSIBILITY. OUR FUTURE.

SHRS IN THE COMMUNITY

At the University of Pittsburgh, community engagement is not a buzzword. It is a commitment deeply engrained in our strategic thinking. In *The Plan for Pitt: Making a Difference Together, Academic Years 2016–2020*, the University is given a charge to “strengthen our communities—from the Pitt community to our region and the world around us—by expanding engagements, supporting collaborations, and embracing a global perspective.”

Kathy Humphrey, the University’s senior vice chancellor for Engagement, notes the great value in that mission.

“Community engagement gives our students, faculty, and staff an endless string of opportunities to make a positive difference in this world,” says Humphrey. “Local communities benefit, our students gain an opportunity to apply their learning, and our faculty and staff have a chance to share their expertise and give back in a meaningful way.”

At SHRS, we recognize the importance of community engagement. “As a school that educates health care providers from a variety of disciplines, we have the capacity and the expertise to support and complement health care institutions in the area by coordinating wellness and outreach activities for targeted populations of people,” notes Anthony Delitto, SHRS professor and dean.

“People with chronic disabling conditions typically receive a great deal of attention when they are hospitalized,” Delitto continues. “But once rehabilitation and home health services end, how will they stay healthy? There is a big gap between the expertise they need and the community resources that can address those needs really well.

“Faculty in our Departments of Occupational and Physical Therapy, for example, understand neurodegenerative disorders,” explains Delitto. “It’s in their sphere of knowledge to plot out wellness programs for people with conditions such as multiple sclerosis (MS) or Parkinson’s disease.”

Delitto says that all departments within SHRS have already embraced the idea of community engagement, using their strengths to plan and develop community-related initiatives. For example, students and faculty in the Emergency Medicine program plan to provide blood pressure screenings in underserved neighborhoods, the Prosthetics and Orthotics team performs routine foot examinations for people with diabetes, while Nutrition and Dietetics students conduct grocery store tours to help other Pitt students learn how to prepare healthy, affordable meals in their rooms or apartments.

Reaching our student community.

During the spring of 2016, the Department of Communication Science and Disorders (CSD) with support from UPMC Audiology launched a Hearing Conservation program for Pitt students. Alicia Hutchison, doctor of Audiology student, developed the protocol for the service as an independent study project and marketed it to students. She focused her efforts on students from SHRS and those in the Pitt Department of Music and the School of Dentistry who may be at a higher risk for hearing loss. She also received referrals from Student Health Service.

Hutchison collected data not only to track who was being seen and what types of results were achieved but also to support the need for such a service.

Among the students who took advantage of the free monthly clinics that first semester, Hutchison says nearly 80 percent came to see if their hearing was normal. But others had questions about ringing in their ears, or wondered if their music was too loud.

“We received an average of 6.64 out of 7 satisfaction rating, with 64 percent of students saying they are extremely likely to refer their friends to the clinic,” she says.

As part of the project, Hutchison submitted a poster, *A Collaborative Model of Clinical Education & Healthy Hearing Services on a College Campus*, to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), which earned her a Meritorious Poster Award and recognition as “the highest-rated, student-authored paper” in its topic area. She also received a Student Research Travel Award to attend the 2016 ASHA Convention in Philadelphia in November.

“The poster was submitted not as a research poster, but as a model of community collaboration in expanding educational experiences for audiology students,” explains Elaine Mormer, CSD associate professor.

Mormer and Hutchison report that the Hearing Conservation clinic is a sustainable model that supports hearing wellness, provides clinical experience for audiology students, and benefits all parties.

**Giving to those who gave so much.**

“Engaging the veteran community is something we have always done and will continue to do because it is the right thing,” comments Rory Cooper, distinguished professor and FISA-Paralyzed Veterans of America chair, Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology (RST).

Cooper praises Mark Schmeler, RST assistant professor, for his national contract to develop assistive technology (AT) clinics within the Veterans Administration’s (VA) four regional Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers.

Schmeler says the clinics have helped tens of thousands of veterans since their inception in 2009. “One of the benefits of the contract was to incorporate outcomes measures and management systems right from the beginning,” remarks Schmeler. “Based on the data, I feel confident saying veterans are being served with good AT interventions that allow them opportunities to engage in society.”

Furthermore, Schmeler reports that more than 100 VA clinicians and professionals have passed and obtained their AT professional certification as a result of Pitt’s learning resources.

“Veterans highly value life in general and the lives of others,” says Alicia Koontz, RST associate professor. “They have a unique set of experiences and a different way of thinking that they bring to our research.” Koontz works with veterans regularly in her role as a research biomedical engineer at the Human Engineering Research Laboratories (HERL). Since 2013 she has been researching a simple, interactive coaching tool that can be used by individuals and their therapists to assess and provide guided feedback on wheelchair transfer techniques in order to reduce pain and injuries that often accompany improper transfers.

In July, Koontz’s research took her to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games where she studied whether a markerless motion sensor known as Microsoft Kinect could discern proper from improper transfer motions. Through research such as this, Koontz believes she can impact the quality of life for veterans. “I want to give back to them what they sacrifice for us in serving our country,” she adds.



James Joseph, who will complete his Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling in December 2016, came to Pitt as a retired gunnery sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps. His understanding of veterans and his willingness to serve, even as a civilian, propelled him to become a mentor to other veterans at HERL. Now Joseph is helping others like himself make a strong transition to a meaningful civilian life by sharing his personal experiences with them.

“Veterans come from a work-hard, play-hard mentality,” says Joseph. “We know that by adding education to our personal toolboxes, we often have a better ability to shape our life’s direction.”

“Without guidance and encouragement from Pitt professors and staff or the availability of veterans’ services, I would never have completed a degree from one of the finest universities in the United States,” he adds.

Joseph is an excellent example of how the University’s push for community engagement will radiate out into the world around us.

Humphrey reminds us that as a University, a School, a department, and as individuals, “learning by doing and doing well by doing good” is at the heart of our community engagement effort.

She concludes, “I believe that this culture of engagement will continue to thrive at the University of Pittsburgh and that our students and faculty will come to view community engagement and service as an integral part of their academic experience.”

▼ AuD student Alicia Hutchison uses video otoscopy to examine a patient’s eardrum as part of the Pitt Hearing Conservation program.

**Making a difference through dance.**

More than five years ago, faculty from the Department of Physical Therapy (PT) began a collaboration with Yes, You Can Dance!, a nonprofit organization that brings the joys and benefits of ballroom dancing to the elderly and cognitively impaired populations. Ronna Delitto, adjunct assistant professor, Department of Physical Therapy, has served as dance mentor and board member of the organization since its inception. Over time, she recruited more than 20 physical therapy, occupational therapy, and medicine students to volunteer as dance mentors.

“I think it is particularly beneficial that we have students in health care act as dance mentors for the physically impaired,” says Delitto. “Many of these students already have the training to provide the appropriate support that might be needed when dancing with people who have weakness and problems with their balance.”

DPT student Emily Perrott, who holds an undergraduate degree in Dance Studies, says the program allows her to combine two things she’s passionate about—dance and physical therapy. “Watching participants laugh as they learn new movements and marvel at themselves as they accomplish things they never thought were possible is an incredible thing to witness,” observes Perrott.

To date, Yes, You Can Dance! has delighted young adults with special needs, residents of nursing homes, as well as healthy and active older adults. More recently, it collaborated with the Keystone Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society to reach and support participants with MS.

Delitto notes, “During any of our dance sessions, all you need to do is look around the room, and you won’t find one person—participant or mentor—who isn’t smiling.” ■





INVITING THE NATION OUT TO *PLAY*

“One day, all Americans will be physically active, and they will live, work, and play in environments that encourage and support regular physical activity.”

That’s the vision behind the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) and the hope of Kim Beals, assistant professor, Department of Sports Medicine and Nutrition (SMN).

The NPAP, which is a comprehensive set of policies, programs, and initiatives, was developed by a coalition of like-minded organizations including the American Heart Association, the American Medical Association, the YMCA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and many others.

Together they form the National Physical Activity Plan Alliance, which promotes physical activity in all facets of life and across all sectors of society such as age, gender, race, socioeconomic status, cognitive and sensory ability, and location.

The alliance collaborates with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on a regular basis to foster a national culture that supports physically active lifestyles.

The work is not all fun and games. A dedicated group of scientists and health care professionals comes together with the goal of developing strategies that can be used by school administrators, corporations, health care providers, and community planners all across the country to increase participation in physical activity.

In 2009, the president of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics invited Beals to serve as a member of the coordinating committee of NPAP. She eagerly accepted.

“As a dietitian, we recognize that physical activity is an important part of overall wellness. Just like nutrition, it is vital to maintaining optimal health and preventing chronic disease,” comments Beals.

She notes that while many people are familiar with the recommended dietary guidelines, they might not be aware that the U.S. also adopted official guidelines for physical activity in 2008. “Through the NPAP, I can share evidence-based knowledge to help shape national policy on this important topic.”

In her role as committee member, Beals helped to compile the 2016 edition of the NPAP. “Although it has not changed significantly since the original plan in 2010, the new plan shows refined strategies for achieving our goal,” explains Beals. “We are using scientific data and looking at ways different stakeholders can help make Americans active and safe in every environment.” ■



HEARCARE. IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT HEARING.



Hearing impacts more than just the ability to carry on a conversation. It allows individuals to participate in their favorite activities, connect with friends and family, and follow instructions from health care providers.

Because hearing loss is the third most common chronic health condition affecting individuals over the age of 65, the Department of Communication Science and Disorders (CSD) teamed up with the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine Department of Otolaryngology's audiology division and started the Hearing and Communication Assistance for Residents' Engagement (HearCARE) initiative in 2014.

The original program was funded by a generous grant from the Hearst Foundations, which comprise organizations that are committed to communication. This program helps residents in assisted living facilities hear and communicate more effectively so they are able to enjoy a better quality of life.

According to CSD Associate Professor Catherine Palmer, the majority of residents in senior living facilities cannot fully access various activities because of communication challenges. "HearCARE ensures that all residents can communicate all day long," notes Palmer.

Reem Mulla (MA '10, AuD '11), a PhD student in CSD, explains further. "One of the reasons individuals move to these communities is to ensure that they have access to social activities and interactions with others," says Mulla. "These are all things that contribute to healthy aging and prevent isolation and depression."

Mulla draws a parallel between physical accessibility and the ability to hear.

"Most people would not consider a senior living facility that was not physically accessible. In fact, that is one thing families look for when helping to choose a residence for loved ones," she adds. "The HearCARE program makes communication accessible as well."

Using the interventional model of audiology, HearCARE brings an audiologist to the facility once a month, instead of relying on patients to schedule a visit. It also establishes an on-site communications facilitator who is supervised by the audiologist. The communications facilitator provides day-to-day services and creates an increased overall awareness about communication.

Through HearCARE, residents have access to simple TV amplifiers and telephones, as well as staff trained in strategies to help improve communication.

"We remind staff and family members to face the resident when talking, to use a clear voice, and to turn the background noise level down before starting a conversation," explains Mulla.

The communications facilitator also encourages residents who own hearing aids to wear them more consistently. "The facilitators are right there to answer questions, show residents and staff how to handle devices, and even perform routine care and maintenance," says Mulla. "This makes the residents more likely to be compliant, and reduces the burden of someone having to take time off of work to bring their loved one to a clinic for a simple device repair."

Mulla reports that family members and residents both have expressed appreciation for the HearCARE program. Furthermore, after monitoring attendance at social activities in one of the facilities for three months, the staff found that more residents attend the activities and report increased enjoyment.

Palmer and Mulla agree that it's important for older citizens to keep their communication abilities as long as possible in order to interact with health care providers and loved ones.

"They should not just live with hearing loss because it's part of the aging process. We as hearing health care professionals should expand ourselves and reach out to them," claims Mulla.

She continues, "Delivering hearing and communication assistance to senior communities enhances the communication abilities of residents, which in turn increases their social engagement, improves their quality of life, and reduces staff and family burden." ■



"DOCTOR, THE PATIENT WILL SEE YOU NOW."

The role of the patient in the health care process is changing.

"Finally," says Mervat Abdelhak, associate professor and chair, Department of Health Information Management (HIM). "After everything we've been doing to improve the quality of care, our industry has finally realized that we can't do it alone. We must engage the patient and family."

"The patient is the most untapped resource in health care today," she continues.

A strong advocate for patient engagement, Abdelhak participated in the Medical Informatics Europe conference last year and the 13th International Congress in Nursing Informatics in 2016, discussing why it is important for HIM professionals to lead the patient engagement initiative. "We have the ability to design the infrastructure and develop the health data management policies to facilitate patient engagement," she notes.

Why is patient engagement so critical?

Abdelhak cites several reasons, including the fact that consumers themselves are changing. In 2015, the United States Census Bureau projected that Millennials, those born between 1981 and 2000, will surpass Baby Boomers as the nation's largest living generation. Millennials are characterized as tech-savvy individuals who leverage technology to help make decisions. Their habits are influencing other generations.

"We all are growing more comfortable with making decisions based on digital data," says Abdelhak. "We have instant access to information that helps us decide which car to buy or what airline offers the best fare to our vacation destination. It only makes sense that we, as patients, have opportunities to use data to improve our health and well-being."

A second motive for increasing patient engagement relates to the physical health of today's population. People are living longer, with more diagnoses of chronic diseases. Back in 2010, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 86 percent of all health care spending went to treating patients with one or more chronic conditions.

"If we can convince patients to become more engaged in their own treatment and care, to follow their doctors' instructions and be compliant with things like medications and lifestyle changes, there's a much greater chance the patient will have a better quality of life and fewer hospital admissions," Abdelhak explains.

The increased use of health-related technology is also driving patient engagement. Popular wearable devices on the market today monitor heart rate, fitness regimens, and diet. Abdelhak foresees a time when these devices will not only remind patients to take their medication and track their compliance, but also evaluate if a patient can get to the pharmacy to pick up their prescription or if they have the means to pay for that medication.

"Right now, information such as a patient's exercise habits or financial limitations may or may not be communicated to physicians," she continues. "If HIM professionals could collect more patient-centered data for the EHR [(electronic health record)], we would be closing a gap that currently exists in the health care system."

According to Abdelhak, there is much discussion among HIM professionals regarding the legal and ethical implications of adding patient-provided data to an EHR. Are patients ready to share their personal information? Will all providers choose to use the data or will they ignore it? How will this data impact the cost of health care services?

Large research entities have been involved in seeking answers to these and other related questions for several years.

For example, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS), an international organization focused on better health through information technology, has been gathering research on patient engagement to develop a framework for health care institutions to follow.

"Technology platforms such as IBM Watson are using data analytics to extract meaningful information that may one day be part of a patient's EHR," states Abdelhak. "The more continued reliance on data, the more possibilities there will be for HIM involvement."

"The future of health care is no longer just about patient satisfaction surveys," she continues. "We are approaching a paradigm shift in the delivery of care. The patient is becoming an equal and important partner in the process, right alongside health care providers and institutions."

With this shift comes new roles and responsibilities for HIM professionals. "There's still a lot to learn," admits Abdelhak. "But we're working on it because, in the end, it will empower patients." ■



▲ *Thelma Hetherington passes the green ball while listening to instructions from her exercise leader.*

UNDERGRADUATES MEET OLDER ADULTS **"ON THE MOVE"**

When Jennifer Brach, associate professor in the Department of Physical Therapy (PT), was awarded a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) grant in 2013, she had no idea that her On the Move exercise program would end up benefiting not just older adults, but undergraduate students as well.

Using the foundational principles of PT, Brach originally designed On the Move as an alternative to typical senior-center exercise routines. She trained physical therapists to deliver a fun and upbeat exercise regimen that focused on walking and balance, and compared the results to the same exercise programs delivered by activity directors at senior living facilities.

The PT-led On the Move program was so well received that in 2015, Brach decided to expand the program to reach a greater number of older adults in diverse Pittsburgh area locations including the North Hills, Homestead, Knoxville, and the Hill District.

This time, she invited undergraduate Rehabilitation Science (RS) students to train to lead the exercises as part of a unique field experience.

"It's a win-win scenario," explains Brach. "We can now serve more adults, thanks to the participation of the students. But in addition, the students are learning valuable lessons."

Brach notes that in most undergraduate field experiences, students simply observe other health care professionals. In this case, they are trained to lead the exercise program and to interact with patients.

"In my previous experiences of volunteering and shadowing, patients would normally look to the professional for guidance," says Jacklyn Berry, a senior in the RS program. "This hands-on experience let me be the 'professional.'"

"The number one thing I learned was to be patient and to adapt to the different participants' needs," adds RS student Jill Rooney. "Some adults were more advanced so they needed more difficult exercise plans. Others needed a slower, more paced plan in order to benefit. It's all about paying attention to individual needs."

According to Brach, the older adults enjoyed interacting with the students. "They loved to hear about their lives—how they were up late studying in the library, or how they did on their exams. In return, the participants told stories about what times were like when they were young. The two groups related to each other almost instantly."

Thelma Hetherington, an 89-year-old resident of Cumberland Woods Village in the North Hills, has participated in the On the Move program since its inception. She has taken classes led by physical therapists, the activity director at her living facility, as well as the undergraduate students.

"The students are very kind and they really know what they're doing," Hetherington says. "They are especially good with the people who rely on canes or walkers. You can see a big improvement in their walking in a very short period of time."



▲ *Improved walking and balance keep older adults On the Move.*

"It's important to form a trust with the people you are working with," reflects Berry. "In order to do so, you have to be open and honest."

"I previously had an opportunity to work with older adults in a physical therapy clinic," explains Rooney. "I saw them at a low point, coming to therapy due to pain or injury. At the time, I wished I could have helped them prevent it. But through On the Move, I have the chance to be part of injury prevention and also improve the participants' gait and mobility."

Brach plans to expand the program to more senior living facilities, and to continue the field experience with the RS students. "The undergraduates really represent us well!" she says.

"On a personal note, I would just like to mention how happy this class made me," says Berry. "No matter what kind of day I was having, I knew that every Friday morning I would get to see a bunch of smiling faces."

"It's a really wonderful program," continues Hetherington. "The more older people we get doing these programs, the better it is for our whole community." ■



▲ Students and Assistant Professor Roxanna Bendixen helped young people with autism enjoy new experiences at The Andy Warhol Museum and the Pittsburgh Symphony.

ART MEETS LIFE: SENSORY-FRIENDLY EVENTS EMBRACE PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

There were smiling faces, and sometimes rather loud interruptions. There were quiet places to escape the stimulation, and opportunities to dance to the beat of a different drummer.

It was all part of recent sensory-friendly events sponsored by The Andy Warhol Museum and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and sensory sensitivities.

Students in the Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program volunteered to accompany the special guests through various programs and assist them with activities that they often don't have the opportunity to enjoy. They toured The Warhol together, participated in art projects, took in a symphony concert with a lively superhero theme, and danced through an obstacle course carrying colorful streamers.

Roxanna Bendixen, assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy (OT), remarks on the unique opportunity these programs provided for everyone involved.

"Families and caregivers of individuals with special needs experience social and environmental barriers that interfere with their ability to participate in community activities," says Bendixen. "Stimuli such as bright lights, loud or unusual sounds, or even unfamiliar people may trigger undesirable reactions that aren't typically socially acceptable in these types of settings. At the Warhol and symphony events, our students helped to reduce anxiety by providing fidget toys and other calming devices to create environments that reduced stressful triggers. Participants were able to have a positive experience in these venues—which most people take for granted."

"I was impressed with the students' knowledge of how to work with individuals who have autism or sensory sensitivities," notes Leah Morelli, School Programs coordinator, The Andy Warhol Museum. "Their roles were to engage, support, and welcome the participants. They did an excellent job at redirecting participants' behavior when needed."

The one-on-one interaction gave the students insight into the importance of occupational therapy in a community setting. As MOT student Brianna Garcia points out, "Most public venues don't try to make their experiences non-inclusive; they simply don't realize that they are."

"Occupational therapists have the knowledge of how people may think or behave in different environments, and why," she continues. "As OTs, we can address these unique qualities to make experiences better for all individuals."

Fellow student Robert Evans adds, "Working with this group taught me that there is a strong need for an expert in community situations (such as an occupational therapist) who can consider how the participants affect and are affected by the environment, and are able to not only solve problems, but prevent them from happening in the first place."

Kristen Kowalski, who will complete the MOT program in 2017, escorted her brother, Charlie, through the Warhol event. Charlie, who is 18 and has been diagnosed with autism, attends a public high school in Ohio and participates in a graphic design vocational program half of the school day.

"I really do think the experience was a remarkable one for Charlie," explains Kowalski. "He certainly went out of his comfort zone and tried hard to engage with the tour and other participants as best as he could. And the sensory break spots were a perfect place for him to relax if he was becoming overwhelmed."

Every year, more and more children are diagnosed with ASD and related disorders. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in 150 eight-year-olds now has an autism-related diagnosis, compared with only about one in 2,000 children in the 1970s and 1980s.

Bendixen says this statistic calls for increased involvement from occupational therapists. "An OT is trained to understand sensory dysfunction in both children and adults," she explains.

"It's our job to evaluate and modify the environment to help reduce overwhelming stimuli and to develop strategies that will allow people with ASD and other sensory sensitivities to participate more fully in their community and in life," Bendixen continues. "The events at The Warhol and the Symphony have opened the door for families to participate in the community, and for individuals with ASD to relate to each other."



▲ MOT student Kristen Kowalski and her brother Charlie.

"Reaching a wider audience is exactly our goal at The Warhol, particularly reaching people who do not typically visit museums," states Morelli. "As a world-class museum, it is imperative that we use our resources to be a model of acceptance and welcome people from all different backgrounds and abilities."

Having an occupational therapist available to facilitate the experience is a giant step in the right direction. ■



THE ADAPTATION (AND EVOLUTION) OF SPORTS FOR ALL



▲ Jim Yauger (left), captain of the Pittsburgh chapter of Team Red, White and Blue tries to block a shot from Jeremy Bittner of the Pittsburgh Steelwheelers.

More than 70 years ago, wheelchair basketball rolled into U.S. hospitals to lift the spirits of paralyzed post–World War II veterans. About the same time, Professor Ludwig Guttman, a German neurosurgeon living in Great Britain, organized veterans at Stoke Mandeville Hospital to compete in archery contests and wheelchair races. These activities eventually evolved into the Paralympic Games.

Today, adaptive sports have expanded across the globe, and include the full gamut of activities, from skiing and cycling to hockey, rugby, soccer, water sports, and more.

A team of researchers, scientists, students, and alumni from SHRS are leading the charge to make adaptive sports more widely accepted and more commonly enjoyed by members of the Pittsburgh community.

Doctoral student Jonathan Duvall (BS '10, MS '13) is a graduate researcher at the Human Engineering Research Laboratories (HERL) and was the founding president of the Students for Disability Advocacy (SDA) on Pitt's campus. Last spring, Duvall started talking to fellow PhD student and current SDA President Brandon Daveler (MS '14) about the possibility of creating a Pitt intermural wheelchair basketball program.

Only a few months after their initial conversation, the intermural team is on its way. Through collaboration with the Pittsburgh Steelwheelers and a donation from Azalea Charities and Allegheny Shredders, a generous supporter of Azalea Charities, SDA was able to secure five basketball wheelchairs. Daveler and Duvall say they are currently involved in a fundraising campaign to buy five additional basketball wheelchairs, and are looking for involvement from veterans' groups and other student organizations.



▲ (Left) Participants line up for the start of the Hand-Cycle Division of the Pittsburgh Marathon, May 2016.

(Right) Pitt was well represented at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio. From left to right: alumnus John Sikora, coach for USA Men's Wheelchair Basketball, Dr. Gloria Biem, head physician for Team USA, and Rory Cooper, FISA-Paralyzed Veterans of America Chair, Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology.

According to Duvall, there has been a lot of interest from students with and without disabilities. "One student who came to play was involved with CrossFit and said it was a way to play a sport that was cardio-intensive, but didn't require using your legs, which most other cardio activity requires," says Duvall. "I also expect we will have a good response from the Greek organizations on campus that want to put teams together."

"As an individual with a disability, participating in adaptive sports gives me a sense of 'belonging to something,' whether I'm actually participating or on the sidelines cheering for my teammates," adds Daveler. "Just getting out into the community and talking with people is beneficial both physically and mentally."

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Bryan McCormick (MS '08) agrees. As a member of Achilles International, he helps individuals with various types of disabilities participate in adaptive sports in order to meet their personal goals.

"Showing people equipment and inviting them to adaptive sports events is probably the best way to get people excited about adaptive sports," remarks McCormick. "I often tell people that sports have physical, psychological, and social benefits. If I had to boil it down, I would say that adaptive sports just make life more enjoyable."

Dan Fisher, assistant chair for Administration and Operations, Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology (RST), first got involved with adaptive sports in 2006 while planning medical support for the Army Ten-Miler in Washington, D.C. Since coming to Pittsburgh in 2009, he has used his military medical planning skills to support hand-cyclists who participate in the Great Race, the EQT Pittsburgh Ten Miler, and the Pittsburgh Marathon.

"Hand-cycling provides a great opportunity for folks to use their athletic skills and put their competitive nature to work," states Fisher. "Just like runners, hand-cyclists have to train extensively and enjoy the company and the competitive nature of the event. It is great to see the hand-cyclists enjoy themselves, push their limits, and successfully finish the race like the other runners participating in these great events."

For RST Distinguished Professor and Director of HERL Rory Cooper, adaptive sports is both a professional and a personal passion. An avid swimmer and hand-cyclist, Cooper has participated in countless national and international races and the Paralympic Games.

In September at the Paralympic Games in Rio, Cooper delivered the keynote address to the 2016 International Convention on Science, Education and Medicine in Sport, where he stressed the importance of participating in adaptive sports and the need for appropriate equipment.

"Through our work at HERL and the Center for Assistive Technology, we are constantly improving the devices used by athletes with disabilities," notes Cooper. "To be able to take new devices to these games, and to talk to the athletes about their specific needs expands our research and opens the doors to even more inclusion." ■



INCREASING THE ODDS OF SURVIVAL

The fatality rate for out-of-hospital cardiac arrests is staggering.

According to a 2015 Institute of Medicine study, out of 395,000 cases of cardiac arrest that occur outside of a hospital setting every year in the U.S., less than six percent survive.

Ben Ellis (BS '13), instructor in the Emergency Medicine (EM) program and clinical education coordinator at the Center for Emergency Medicine (CEM), notes that Pittsburgh statistics are better than the national average, with a 16 percent survival rate.

But Ellis as well as Professor and EM Program Director Walt Stoy agree the survival rate is not good enough. They have combined their resources to initiate an aggressive cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training program designed to put lifesaving skills in the hands of more people in more locations in the community.

“We know that 70 percent of the time, CPR is not started until the EMS team arrives,” says Ellis. “If a family member or bystander had the knowledge to perform chest compressions prior to the EMS arrival, the chance of patient survival would increase 300 percent!”

Although EM and CEM staff members have offered CPR training to many individuals and businesses in the Pittsburgh area over the years, Ellis and Stoy wanted to focus on educating the Pitt community. During the past year, they facilitated CPR training for approximately 1,000 Pitt faculty, staff, and students, including those in the School of Medicine, School of Nursing, and graduate programs in SHRS.

Because CPR is the first skill students in the EM program learn, many are quick to offer to train others.

Suinn Kim is one such student. A certified paramedic and senior in the EM program, Kim began teaching CPR as soon as she received her National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians certification. She understands the importance of having more community members trained in CPR.

“What it all boils down to is that, in an emergency like cardiac arrest when time is truly essential, treatment can be given the moment it happens,” notes Kim. “Regardless of who you are and your relationship with that person or patient, you have the ability to give that individual a chance to live.”

The value of learning CPR is recognized around the world. Countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom, as well as many states in the U.S., teach CPR to high school students. Pennsylvania, however, does not. Faculty from the EM program have appeared before state representatives to support making CPR training part of the high school curriculum.

Going one step further to increase the chances of survival, Stoy recommends the use of a bystander notification system called PulsePoint. This free application, which can be downloaded to any iOS or Android smartphone, is used by more than 1,300 municipalities across the U.S. and Canada. This past July, it was adopted by both the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County EMS.

Through a combination of 911 dispatch information and GPS technology, PulsePoint alerts bystanders who are trained in CPR to the public location of someone who meets the criteria for cardiac arrest.

David D. Salcido, research assistant professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine (DEM) in the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, recommends that everyone who learns CPR downloads the app. “It changes the dynamic of care.”

“We know for a fact that early CPR and the use of AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) are the only two pre-hospital interventions that improve the odds for patients in cardiac arrest,” Salcido continues. “PulsePoint is a way to shortcut the system and get people within walking distance to start hands-on compressions.”

DEM’s Clinical Instructor Leonard Weiss points out the importance of quick response. “Four to six minutes after cardiac arrest, brain damage and organ failure can begin,” he reports.

“PulsePoint is a tool that can empower anyone who knows CPR—especially students here in Oakland,” Weiss says. “It gives them more opportunities to use their skills, and more chances to make a real difference.”

Stoy adds, “The great thing about PulsePoint is when I leave campus and go home, or if I am traveling in another city, my phone will notify me if someone nearby needs CPR. It is, without a doubt, a game changer.” ■



▲ AuD student Rachel Fryatt creates a custom hearing aid earpiece while her supervisor, Dr. Kathleen Coyan looks on.

THE REAL WORLD

Doctor of Audiology (AuD) student Rachel Fryatt recognized a need and took action. The lives of many patients in the Pittsburgh area are now better as a result of her hard work.

It started nearly a year ago when Fryatt attended an information session hosted by the Pittsburgh Schweitzer Fellows Program. She took a keen interest in the Schweitzer mission, which challenges graduate students to address health-related disparities in underserved populations.

Fryatt immediately approached Elaine Morner, associate professor and clinical education coordinator in the Department of Communication Science and Disorders (CSD), with an idea for a community service project that would provide audiology services to underserved children and adults who have hearing loss. After some research into possible clinical sites, they decided on the Birmingham Free Clinic, a walk-in facility sponsored by the Program for Health Care to Underserved Populations and The Salvation Army.

Fryatt also contacted the UPMC Center for Audiology and Hearing Aids to see what resources might be available to her. As it turned out, the otolaryngology residents who donate medical services at the Birmingham Free Clinic were in great need of an onsite audiologist to support their care.

Meanwhile, Fryatt also began the rigorous process of applying for a Schweitzer fellowship.

Executive Director Joan Haley says the Pittsburgh Schweitzer Fellows Program never had an applicant from the field of audiology before. “We were delighted that Rachel applied,” remarks Haley. “She clearly has a passion for her work and for helping others.

“From day one Rachel has been educating all of us on the importance of hearing loss and how it impacts so many other aspects of a person’s health and well-being,” Haley continues.

In April, Fryatt officially became a Schweitzer Fellow and started the Hearing Education and Resources for Underserved Populations (HEAR-UP) project at the Birmingham Free Clinic.

Fryatt visits the clinic once a month to perform hearing tests, counsel patients on hearing loss, and fit them for a hearing device if necessary. The results have been gratifying.

“All of the patients are uninsured,” reports Fryatt. “Many are immigrants who need interpreters to translate their health care concerns. By providing them with hearing devices, they have a much greater chance of understanding their health care providers and being compliant with their instructions for care.”

“Hearing issues are something that many of our patients likely don’t or can’t prioritize over other medical or psycho-social issues in their lives,” says Mary Herbert, clinical director of the Birmingham Free Clinic. “To be able to offer this service so comprehensively has given us another way to improve our patients’ quality of life.”

When Fryatt first came to the clinic, she created a flyer to let patients know that audiology services were available. A few months later, she was booked every 15 minutes of her day.

UPMC Audiologist Dr. Kathleen Coyan supervises Fryatt at the Birmingham Free Clinic. “We often work in the same room, but have started to split up because our patient volume has increased,” says Coyan. “I have confidence in her because she is a wonderful clinician.”

“Rachel is very kind, professional, and empathetic to our patients,” adds Herbert.

Although she is only at the clinic one day a month, Fryatt is gaining an appreciation for the interdisciplinary nature of health care. “This experience has opened my eyes to the bigger issues that exist for patients,” explains Fryatt. “It puts everything into perspective.”

“Through Rachel’s dogged determination, resources have been donated so that diagnostic hearing testing and hearing aid services are now provided at no charge to patients at the Birmingham clinic,” Morner reports. Fryatt received support in these efforts from CSD Associate Professor Catherine Palmer, who also directs audiology services across UPMC facilities. “Additionally, Rachel’s plan will provide new service learning and clinical practicum experiences for graduate students in our program. In this way, the program will remain sustainable long after Rachel has graduated.”

“Bringing audiology services to Birmingham has been one of those wonderfully seamless transitions and quick startups for our clinic. This is absolutely due to Rachel and the leadership and faculty from Pitt and UPMC. They were so excited to collaborate and serve the community. It was a great fit and we look forward to evolving this collaboration further,” concludes Herbert. ■



▲ Fryatt administers a hearing test to a patient at the Birmingham Free Clinic.

Change Service Requested

PANTHER FOLKLORE

There is an Oakland urban legend that on the way to a final exam, a student rubbed the nose of the panther statue for good luck and aced the test. You can help to give good luck to School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHRS) students by making a contribution to the school's annual fund. Your donation can support scholarships, student research, and related academic endeavors. Everyone can use a little luck—and, through your donation, you can become a legend in the minds of future SHRS students.

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