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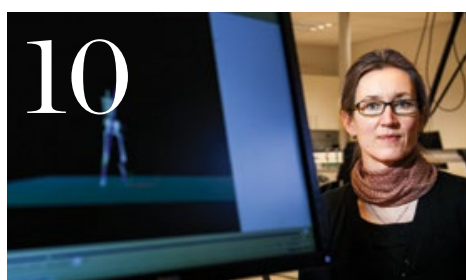
The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences has been accredited as an Accredited Provider by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET).



The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences is recognized by the Board of Certification, Inc. to offer continuing education for Certified Athletic Trainers.

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ON THE COVER PAGE: Miami DPT Program Director Dr. Kevin Kunkel teaches a course on the new Miami campus.

Dear University Community,



As we mark the 40th anniversary of the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences this year, there is much to celebrate. A significant milestone in 2019 was the transfer of the University's ownership, which was finalized on February 1 following all necessary regulatory and accreditor approvals. USAHS has moved from being part of Laureate Education to a private, independent university under the portfolio of Altas Partners, a firm that focuses on long-term strategic investments in high-quality organizations. With Altas we have gained a partner who supports our mission and vision, and aligns with our values of excellence, integrity and collaboration.

We have developed a strategic plan that builds on our strong foundation of academic excellence while continuing the exciting trajectory to achieving our vision of becoming the nation's leading comprehensive health sciences university.

As you will read in this issue of Accolades, our progress towards that vision achieved a number of recent milestones, including the expansion of academic programs and the addition of new technology and occupational therapy ADL labs in the Centers for Innovative Clinical Practice (CICP).

USAHS continues to expand our national reach with the new permanent Miami campus, which opened its doors in the fall, and the fifth USAHS campus which is scheduled to open in the Dallas-Fort Worth area this summer. Earlier this year, we also broke ground on a new, fourth building at the San Marcos campus to be finished in early 2020 and there are several other enhancements being made in San Marcos. We are expanding at the Austin campus as well, with additional space for faculty offices and a new lab dedicated to faculty research projects.

Faculty and academic administrators have been busy with several recent accreditation pursuits, including the reaffirmation of our regional accreditation from the WASC Senior College and University Commission and ACOTE accreditation for the occupational therapy program launching at the new Dallas campus.

We are proud of the University's rich legacy, now with more than 8,000 graduates who are making a difference in communities across the nation with your dedication to excellence as health care practitioners.

Sincerely,

Dr. Divina G. Grossman
 University President & Chief Academic Officer
PresidentUSA@usa.edu

SHARE YOUR STORY!

Our students, alumni, and faculty—you—are extraordinarily talented practitioners. Tell us what you've accomplished recently: Have you opened a new practice? Published or presented? Are you an active volunteer? No detail is too small. Email us today at media@usa.edu.

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 for Health Sciences



On the Move

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POSITIVE IMPACT

Celebrating 40 Years of Excellence

In 1979, Jimmy Carter was President of the United States, the song “My Sharona” by The Knack topped the Billboard charts, the average price of gas was 86 cents, and the exoskeleton was a primitive prototype that scientists dreamed would help paralyzed people walk. It was also the year that Dr. Stanley Paris was granted authority by the state of Georgia to offer a clinically-based, post-professional **Master of Health Science (MHSc)** degree in **Orthopaedic Physical Therapy**. He founded the Institute for Physical Therapy, later renamed the Institute for Graduate Health Sciences, in Atlanta. The Institute was the first independent school to confer a graduate degree in physical therapy and the precursor to what would become the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences.

“With the Institute, we wanted to

make a difference in PT education. We had an obligation to elevate our skills so that we could safely lead in the musculoskeletal area, both as gatekeepers and as the practitioner of choice,” Dr. Paris said.

The Institute evolved over the next decade and eventually relocated to the historic city of St. Augustine, Florida in 1985. By 1994, it launched the **Master of Physical Therapy (MPT)**, the first professional degree in physical therapy to be offered by an independent school of physical therapy. On March 4, 1997, the organization formally became the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS). Along with its formal name change, the University purchased the former Flagler psychiatric hospital building and an adjoining 26 acres of land in St. Augustine, establishing the newly-named university’s first

campus location. Dr. Paris would serve as the University President until his retirement in 2007.

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences has grown to become the nation’s largest graduate-level, physical and occupational therapy institution. While the academic focus of the University has evolved and expanded from PT and OT to other health and rehabilitative science programs, the commitment to graduate-level programs continues to be a significant differentiator for the University. USAHS now has additional campus locations in San Marcos, California; Miami, Florida; and Austin, Texas, with a fifth location in Dallas slated to open in May of 2019.

Today, USAHS serves thousands of students annually through this network of campus locations, and nationally through the online programs offered through the University’s virtual campus.

“We are very proud of our history, as well as what we are doing today with interprofessional education, simulation and technology, and our unique faculty mentoring model,” said University President Dr. Divina Grossman.

“Dr. Paris’s visionary leadership created a university designed to fill a very specific need in health care, and we carry that vision of meeting the needs of the community with us today,” said University Chief Executive Officer Vivian Sanchez. “We are building upon that solid foundation and moving the University forward with the vision of becoming the nation’s leading, comprehensive health sciences university.”

“Dr. Paris strove to create education that was more accessible. His early vision included delivering education by distance and to what he used to call the ‘married with kids’ professional who would not otherwise be able to pursue a



RECOGNIZING AN OUTSTANDING ALUMNUS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In 2018, USAHS awarded OT alumnus Dr. Jon Edenfield '00 with the Trish King Alumni Award for outstanding commitment to professional development and advancement of clinical practice.

He was featured in The Florida Times-Union in November of 2018 because of the expansion of his rehab facility, Great Strides Rehabilitation Center.

His center is well-known in Northeast Florida for people with children on the autism spectrum, cerebral palsy or a host of other developmental disabilities.

"In only 14 years, Great Strides has grown from a one-room space to 14,500-square-feet of building space employing more than 100 specialists and assistants, helping children with disabilities from birth to age 21. Along with offering occupational, physical and speech therapies, applied behavior analysis, psychological services and autism evaluations at one location, it also has specialized programs like social skills groups, community integration, vocational skills training and music therapy," the article said.

USAHS is proud to recognize Dr. Edenfield for his continued dedication to practice and research that helps increase the quality of patient lives.

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degree," said Dr. Cindy Mathena, who joined USAHS as a faculty member in 1997 and today serves as the Dean of Post Professional Studies and Campus Director in St. Augustine.

"Providing access to excellent health care education remains an organizational focus for us," Dr. Grossman said. "There is a very specific strategy for our expansion into other cities beyond St. Augustine, and it is in those areas where the needs are the greatest: Florida, Texas and California."

USAHS now offers more than a dozen graduate-level degree programs in health and rehabilitative science disciplines where there is a critical need for well-prepared clinical

providers.

"While just about everything has evolved and changed over the years, one thing has not: we were as passionate then as we are now about education and health sciences," Dr. Mathena said.

It has been a phenomenal 40 years. Today, robotic exoskeletons are being used throughout the world, and the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences has more than 8,000 alumni who are positively impacting communities across the nation through improved health care.

If you would like to update your contact information or share a story about your experience at the University, we invite you to email us at media@usa.edu.

CLINICAL ADVANCE

A Total Team Approach

USAHS Doctor of Physical Therapy alumnus **Dr. Justin Stiver '15** was featured in Business Observer for his innovative approach to PT which he uses in his practice, Total Therapy Florida.

Dr. Stiver was a onetime minor league baseball pitcher and drafted in 2006 by the Houston Astros. After an arm injury ended his baseball career, he set his sights on physical therapy. Now, he's trying keep up with his growing practice that focuses on a "team rehab approach" rather than one patient to one therapist.

For this team approach, Dr. Stiver's



staff holds weekly tactical meetings where they discuss each patient individually and the best way to handle treatment. He also makes a point to stay in touch with patients after therapy has ended. He created a patient portal where patients can access videos and chat with therapists if they have questions.

Dr. Stiver's approach stands out and patients see success with it. Total Therapy Florida is currently opening its third clinic with two more in the works to meet its goal of five total clinics by the end of 2019.

PHOTO BY LORI SAX

ADVANCING THE PROFESSION

Research Accomplishments



Keith Gentry, EdD

Recent EdD graduate, **Dr. Keith Gentry '18** worked with Dr. Karen Snyder, Dr. Jordan Utley, and Dr. Beth Barstow to revise the Biopsychosocial Model to incorporate OT language as a guide to evaluation and treatment. This led to the publication titled "The Biopsychosocial Model: Application to Occupational Therapy Practice."



Danielle Mitterando Kanski, MHS

Danielle Mitterando Kanski '18 has been an Athletic Trainer for 22 years. For the past 16 years, she has worked at her alma mater, Middletown High School North in Monmouth County, New Jersey. She graduated in December 2018 from the **Master of Health Science** program at USAHS.

In 2018, she submitted an article to the *American Journal of Public Health* arguing that teachers, administrators and guidance counselors should be trained in concussion management in

the classroom. Athletic personnel and medical staff in schools complete annual training in concussion management, whereas administrators and guidance counselors do not.

"Return to Learn procedures aren't as well developed as Return to Play," Kanski said. "With all the issues a concussion can bring, I feel teachers need to be as educated on concussion management as the medical personnel."

Kanski feels that in a high school setting, it is beneficial for school staff to collaborate on students' recovery after concussion.



Megan Flores, PT

Assistant professor in the DPT program, **Megan Flores, PT, MPT, PCS**, was recently published in the *Journal of Developmental Neurorehabilitation*.

Her article is titled "Trunk control and gross motor outcomes after body weight supported treadmill training in young children with severe cerebral palsy: a non-experimental case series." It explores the impact of body weight supported treadmill training (BWSTT) on postural control and motor function in three young children with cerebral palsy.

While further research is needed, the study concluded that BWSTT is a viable intervention that may improve gross motor functions in children with severe cerebral palsy.

ADVANCING THE PROFESSION

DHSC ALUMNUS PAVES THE WAY FOR FUTURE ATHLETIC TRAINERS

Doctor of Health Sciences (DHSc) graduate **Brian Smith '18** presented his dissertation poster, Predictors for Obtaining a 10-year Continuing Accreditation in Professional Athletic Training Education, at the annual Eastern Athletic Trainers' Association Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in January 2019.

As the current Program Director at Charleston Southern University, Smith recently went through a two-year process for continuing accreditation for the Athletic Training program.

He couldn't find any studies on the subject pertaining to AT, but he did find such studies in the field of physical therapy dating back to the early 2000s. The physical therapy studies on continuing accreditation concluded that program directors with certain leadership characteristics were linked to success in the continuing accreditation process.

That's where Smith's dissertation was born. He took a similar approach and applied it to his field of athletic training.

"Smith's dissertation is really important because in addition to athletic training programs, other healthcare professional programs seeking continuing accreditation will find this study to be one of importance because it will insight programmatic and academic management across disciplines," EdD Program Director Dr. Sunddip Aguilar said.

FACULTY FOCUS

Dr. Edward Kane inspires students to full potential

After 26 years as a physical therapist in the U.S. Navy while holding positions as a PT and Athletic Trainer for various professional and collegiate sports teams, DPT program professor Dr. Edward Kane was far from finished when he decided to retire from active duty.

"I retired as a Captain in the Navy on July 31, 2007," Dr. Kane said. "My retirement lasted eight hours. Then I started August 1st at the San Marcos campus."

The Navy exposed Kane to what physical therapy has been striving to be for the rest of the country: He could see a patient without referral, and he could evaluate, treat and prescribe medication if necessary. The profession has been moving toward this model for treatment for about 10 years, which makes Dr. Kane's firsthand experience unique to students.

"Dr. Kane is a compassionate, lifelong

learner who is a fair, yet tough, professor," Dr. Cherie Peters-Brinkerhoff, Program Director of Physical Therapy at USAHS San Marcos, said. "He gives students problems to solve versus just answers to remember."

From Clinical Instructor at Chicago Medical School to Associate Professor at US Army Baylor University, Dr. Kane spent his career learning and teaching.

"Seventy percent passing is unacceptable to me," he said. "That means you don't know 30 percent of what you need to know."

Dr. Kane says he is always honest with his students. He shows his students that he is invested in them beyond the classroom – as successful physical therapists who will continue to advance the field.

"Students, in my opinion, don't care how much you know as much as how much you care," he said.

Dr. Kane himself exemplifies his "100 percent all the time" attitude in his research. His work with The Global Spine Care Initiative recently received recognition. He is on the editorial board for the project that brings public awareness and prevention intervention for common spine disorders in low- and middle-income communities. The 2018 August edition of the European Spine Journal focused solely on The Global Spine Care Initiative.

Dr. Kane also led a potentially groundbreaking sports research study. After traveling with the U.S. Olympic Committee and collegiate sports teams, Dr. Kane took an interest in sports-related injuries.

"The NCAA has a tremendous injury statistics database, however, there's nothing reported regarding female breast injury," he said.

He contacted two female researchers to help him bring this issue to light. They found that 50 percent of female athletes experience bruising or pain that affected their play, but less than ten percent reported it.

The study titled "Breast Injuries in Female Collegiate Basketball, Soccer, Softball and Volleyball Athletes: Prevalence, Type and Impact on Sports Participation" was published in the European Journal of Breast Health. Dr. Kane and his colleagues also won a research award from Michigan Physical Therapy Association. The more people he talks to – from high school to Olympic-level athletes – the more people realize that they've experienced this type of injury.

Dr. Kane is excited about his findings and continues to push for the study to gain traction. He has the potential to change the safety and prevention of breast injuries in women's sports for future generations.

"Dr. Kane has an extensive research history and continues to add to the body of knowledge for the physical therapy profession," Dr. Peters-Brinkerhoff said. "All while being a great asset to the University of St. Augustine."



"Dr. Kane is a compassionate, lifelong learner who is a fair, yet tough, professor."

— Dr. Cherie Peters-Brinkerhoff, Program Director of Physical Therapy at USAHS San Marcos



FEATURE Q&A

Q&A with Dr. Mary Shotwell

Dr. Mary Shotwell is the new Interim Occupational Therapy Program Director in St. Augustine.

Prior to working at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, Dr. Shotwell worked at three other universities while maintaining a community-based practice in mental health and pediatric settings. She brings 21 years of higher education experience in roles as faculty, graduate coordinator, program and curriculum coordinator, and department chair.

WHAT MADE YOU EXCITED TO JOIN THE OT PROGRAM?

There's a great faculty. Faculty care about quality teaching. They care about the students and they care about maintaining

credibility with students by still doing some degree of clinical practice. To me, that enhances their teaching.

Also, the fact that OTs and PTs in the entry level programs are essentially next-door neighbors is great. At other universities the PT and OT departments, if they have both, are very separate. In real life, when PTs and OTs are working with patients they work side by side. I think that rich history of interdisciplinary teaching is a good thing. It makes the USAHS graduates unique.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON BLENDED/HYBRID LEARNING PROGRAMS?

Blended learning is quickly becoming the norm at universities across the country. USAHS has been a national leader in

blended learning where the student can learn course content via multi-media pedagogues, but at the same time, interact with faculty and their peers via on-ground learning experiences such as "hands-on" labs, simulation experiences and community-based fieldwork. The blended format allows for student-centered learning enabling students to focus on specific topics for closer review. Because of the online portion of coursework being done ahead of time, the blended format makes the best use of on-ground time in addressing student questions/concerns and making the most of opportunities to practice evaluation and intervention techniques so vitally important in occupational therapy practice.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE PROGRAM?

To enhance the visibility of the program at state and national levels. Doing that through faculty and student mentoring. Our new doctoral program will help with that process. As students begin to do their capstone projects they have a faculty mentor, as well as a mentor in the community. In that regard, it will enhance the external view of the university.

Likewise, students will get to work with faculty in a different capacity than in the classroom or online learning. I think that the advance to a doctoral degree will enhance the educational experience both for the students and the faculty. My goal is to really mentor that process.

The faculty's willingness to help each other out hopefully serves as a role model for students, that's what you do in a clinical setting. When you have more patients, you must pitch in together, so hopefully that collegiality will translate to students.

USAHS is excited to have Dr. Mary Shotwell join our OT program. She values faculty collaboration and at USAHS, we take pride in providing quality education from some of the most passionate professors who want to secure a bright future for the OT profession.

AT YOUR SERVICE

In the Community

The university is a force for good through service learning and community engagement.



SAN MARCOS –
COMMUNITY
HEALTH FAIR



San Marcos SPTA students hosted a Physical Therapy Community Health Fair with Road Runner Sports on March 9, 2019. Students provided free advice, screenings, stretching exercises and information about physical therapy.



Dr. Cindy Chaconas is a 2007 DPT graduate. Shortly after graduation, she was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer. During chemotherapy she met fellow breast cancer patient Amy Kaelin and a new friendship blossomed. Then the two turned their friendship into advocacy. Together, they started “Pink Up the Pace,” which now funds more than 300 diagnostic imaging procedures annually for people who might not otherwise have access to cancer screening. The 10th Annual Pink Up the Pace 5K run/walk was held in October - it has grown to become the largest 5K event in St. Augustine and has raised more than \$250,000 over the past decade.

ST. AUGUSTINE-
PINK UP THE
PACE





In October 2018, Austin DPT students participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer's for a community outreach assignment for their Geriatric Physical Therapy course. So many students came out to participate that they won the plaque for the largest non-corporate group and raised money for a great cause.



MIAMI – SPECIAL OLYMPICS



Miami Campus Director Dr. Gabriel Somarriba is the PT Director for the Miami Dade Special Olympics in Florida. During the state Special Olympic Games in Orlando in November 2018, he took fourth term DPT students to participate in the event. They offered screenings through a program called Healthy Athletes, specifically the subprogram called Fun Fitness.



You can never go home again — that’s how the saying goes, referring to how a person grows and changes so much that a place that once felt like home can feel too small, too different, to return to. But **Kristin Briem MHSc ’03** disagrees with that old adage.

She spent almost her entire life in and around Reykjavik, studying physical therapy at the University of Iceland. There she took some courses from a visiting professor who opened her eyes to the opportunities that existed beyond her country’s borders. That professor, USAHS founder and retired Chancellor Dr. Stanley Paris, inspired Briem to come to the United States to pursue her advanced degree.

“I found his approach really inspiring,” she says. “I was curious to learn and develop as a PT, and this seemed like a move that made sense to me at the time.”

She could have stayed in the United States; the opportunities for employment and growth were vast. But she felt the pull of home. So, she returned to Iceland, working as a

clinical physical therapist. Briem went back to the United States for a PhD in Biomechanics and Human Movement Science. She once again returned Iceland, and in 2008 took a position as a professor at the University of Iceland, paying forward the inspiration and motivation imparted to her by Dr. Paris.

“The combination of taking courses, meeting different faculty members, interacting with all sorts of PTs and then spending quality time at St. Augustine was a fantastic experience,” Briem says. “I think, even now, all these years later, the experience has led me to encourage

my students to seek similar adventures.”

She now chairs the PT department at the University of Iceland and focuses her teaching on musculoskeletal PT and biomechanics. Briem also has secured funding to build a motion analysis lab and conduct research relating to ACL injury risk factors.

“Gaining experiences by moving away from what you know best will always be valuable,” she says. “Not following your dream and instinct will likely always leave you wondering, and possibly regretting. Opportunities are yours to seek.” —*Christine Van Dusen*





Future trips to Italy are already planned! For more information reach out to Karen Snyder at ksnyder@usa.edu or Amy Herrington at aherrington@usa.edu.

social injustices and inequalities exist,” PPOTD student Jillian Woods said. “This allows us, as students, to formulate ideas and plans to eradicate these inequalities and injustices in hopes of making positive changes in the future of healthcare.”

Participating students came from various healthcare professions and encouraged each other to broaden skills and look at healthcare issues from various points of view.

MHS student Matthew Blimline said he left for Italy alone, but returned with 29 new friends. Blimline is an Athletic Trainer and while on the trip, spoke with the former president of the Therapy and Sports Medicine Association about the role of sports medicine on international levels.

These personal and professional bonds motivate students beyond the classroom and can be beneficial for the future of U.S. healthcare.

The experience showed students what healthcare looks like in other countries and where there is room for improvement in global healthcare.

AROUND THE WORLD

USAHS Students Take the ‘Trip of a Lifetime’ to Italy

During a ten-day immersion trip to Italy in October 2018, USAHS students experienced Italian culture and learned about the workings of the Italian healthcare system and disaster relief efforts. They visited Rome, Pompeii, the Isle of Capri, the Amalfi Coast and the Republic of San Marino.

“We saw some of the most beautiful scenery in the world,” nursing student Richard Dempsey said. “The amazing Amalfi coastline, the most beautiful blue water surrounding the Island of Capri, houses built on the sides of mountains with vineyards and olive orchards covering the landscapes.”

The Italy immersion trip gives students the full experience in a foreign country personally and professionally. Students get to see the most-visited spots in Italy, make their own pasta, shop local vendors and attend conferences at local universities.

Students experienced Italy’s rich history visiting the oldest medical school in the world, the University of Salerno, an ancient pharmacy, and a medical museum.

Students’ focus was to compare the

differences between the American and Italian healthcare systems, then formulate strategies to improve their own healthcare provisions.

In exploring both the local culture and professional medical expertise of the area, students get to examine the Italian healthcare system from a patient to healthcare provider perspective.

“By talking with the experts, you get a better idea of how the community feels about their healthcare system and where



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

DPT Student Helps Slow the Progression of Memory Loss at IMEP

At the Integrative Memory Enhancement Program (IMEP) center in St. Johns County, Florida, one program participant with aphasia has a total vocabulary of about five words.

During a group sing-a-long activity, she sang every word to Jingle Bells. The emotional response to the song triggered cognitive activity, helped her remember the lyrics and expanded her vocabulary.

"I always tell this story," IMEP student worker Zachary Riley said. "That was one of my most eye-opening

moments of the program, like, wow, this really does work."

Riley is a Doctor of Physical Therapy student at University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences at the St. Augustine campus and a student worker through the federal student work study program.

IMEP is a research-based response to memory loss program designed for use in a classroom setting and created by the Council on Aging (COA). The program connects the mind, body and brain to boost cognitive reserve and slow the progression of memory loss.

Although Riley has a background in

athletic training, he enjoys the program and is interested in how physical activity affects neurological impairment.

A typical day at the IMEP center includes stretching, breathing exercises, brainteaser games, topic discussion, and physical exercise. Discussion topics and sing-a-long activities are meant to simulate an emotional response or trigger a memory that can spark cognitive ability.

"I could not make a full sentence, before I came here," one five-year IMEP participant said. "Now, I can say anything I want. I can write poetry, read out loud without stuttering or stopping to think of what I want to say."

Another important component of the IMEP program is the socialization. Many participants are thankful to have a community of people who understand what it's like to go through memory loss.

Riley is helping the program transition from a research-based program to an evidence-based program. He organized and implemented an evidence-based project where he administers assessments to participants and tracks their results for further analyses and study.

"Having Zack help at IMEP has been a tremendous benefit to both the participants and facilitators," COA IMEP Manager Michele Sanchez said. "We are deeply appreciative of his time, interest, and support."

Riley is working with USAHS faculty to figure out the next steps in his study and how to proceed with assessment results. He also wants to encourage other USAHS students to take part in the program.

"It really teaches you how to communicate better with future patients in your potential career," he said.

"Having Zack help at IMEP has been a tremendous benefit to both the participants and facilitators. We are deeply appreciative of his time, interest, and support." — Michele Sanchez, COA IMEP Manager



DPT student, Zach Riley, with a group of Integrative Memory Enhancement Program (IMEP) participants.



CONGRATULATIONS

to the First Cohort of MSN Graduates

On December 14, 2018, the inaugural cohort of the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program graduated from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS).

Seven of the eight MSN graduates attended the ceremony at the USAHS San Marcos campus. Amongst the graduating class was Subash Adhikari, Stephanie Carpenter, Marni Farr (not in attendance), Donielle Ferriman, Deborah Lewis, Patrick Mayorga, Allyson Roeda and Valera Wahlers.

The evening before the ceremony, students and their guests were invited to a celebratory dinner with USAHS staff to honor this great accomplishment.

Dr. Melanie Logue, Senior Family Nurse

Practitioner Program Coordinator, raised a toast to the graduates. She said as the first graduates of the program, they have paved the way for future students and she thanked them for their continued involvement with the university.

Students talked about their excitement and their futures in the profession. They also discussed their gratefulness for the USAHS program, its dedication to their success and their satisfaction about the recent Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation the MSN program received.

“I feel excited for the future and thankful for this rewarding experience” graduate Patrick Mayorga said. “It’s important because informatics touches every part of healthcare, so we’re striving to improve healthcare in every aspect.”

➡ Did you enjoy
your experience
at USAHS?
Refer a friend!
enroll@usa.edu



Several of the MSN graduates traveled to San Marcos to attend the commencement ceremony. Pictured left to right: Subash Adhikari, Stephanie Carpenter, Donielle Ferriman, Deborah Lewis, Patrick Mayorga, Allyson Roeda, and Valerie Wahlers.

→ **Stephanie Carpenter '18** has been a registered nurse for 20 years working in various specialties including medical/surgical nursing, oncology, pediatrics, neurosurgery, neuro critical care, obstetrics, and paraneesthesia. She currently works in outpatient surgery at Augusta Health in Mount Crawford, Virginia. Carpenter looks to change her career path with her MSN, Nursing Education from direct patient care to teaching future nurses.

→ **Marni Farr '18** is an experienced nurse skilled in emergency nursing at a Level-1 adult and pediatric trauma center, progressive care unit, telemetry, healthcare and healthcare management. Although she was unable to attend the ceremony, Farr completed her MSN with a focus on Executive Leadership.

→ **Donielle Ferriman '18** is a Certified Clinical Documentation and Certification Registered Nurse who has a history of working in the higher education industry. She is a strong administrative professional who graduated with an MSN focused in Nursing Administration.

→ **Subash Adhikari '18** has over five years of nursing experience and currently works at Oklahoma University Medicine, Inc. He has

specialty experience in intermediate care, medical/surgical nursing and geriatric psychiatric nursing, and pursued his MSN specializing in Nursing Informatics to blend his information technology knowledge in nursing.

"I am feeling great. I'm glad, even with all of the ups and downs of being the first cohort, that we graduated today, and I'd like to thank USAHS for the opportunity to be in the program," Adhikari said. "It's been a wonderful journey."

→ **Patrick Mayorga '18** has 14 years of Case Management experience in hospitals, medical centers and health organizations in the Los Angeles and San Diego areas. He graduated from USAHS with an MSN specializing in Nurse Informatics.

→ **Deborah Lewis '18** has 18 years of experience as a Registered Nurse in the Riverside, California area. She began as a Respiratory Care Practitioner for seven years in Los Angeles. Lewis also volunteers in the Riverside community as a mentor for children, a gardener and takes shelter animals on pet therapy visits to schools and hospitals.

"It just feels surreal that we did it as the inaugural class and we're done," Lewis said.



MSN-FNP PROGRAM NAMED 'TOP PICK' BY NURSING REVIEW WEBSITE

The **Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)**, with **Family Nurse Practitioner specialization (FNP)** program at University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) was selected as a top pick by GraduateNursingEDU.org for its annual list of best programs, the website announced.

"GraduateNursingEDU.org did an exhaustive review of every fully accredited MSN-FNP program in the country, looking for schools that offer an exceptional student experience. When we came across the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences' School of Nursing, we knew we had a program we could feel good about recommending," said the site's senior editor, Tony Smith.

"With world-class faculty, flexible scheduling options and opportunities to study abroad in Italy, University of St. Augustine easily earned its place on our list of Top Picks for the Best MSN-FNP Programs for 2019-20," Smith added.

"We are very pleased by this recognition for our MSN-FNP program," said School of Nursing Director Dr. Robin Dennison. "USAHS has a strong reputation for excellence in education. Our focus on graduate studies in health sciences allows for an intimate, personalized approach that encourages student success."

"Our program is an outstanding choice for mid-career professionals looking to take their next big step. Flexibility is key to what we offer at USAHS. Another aspect of flexibility is your ability to select your preceptor and the facility for your practica, so you can do the practica in your own community if a qualified preceptor is available." — School of Nursing Director Dr. Robin Dennison

→ **Allyson Roeda '18** is an experienced Registered Nurse skilled in Neonatal Intensive Care (NICU), med-surg, and orthopedics. She is neonatal resuscitation and basic life support certified and skilled as a midwife assistant and doula. Roeda graduated with an MSN specializing in Nursing Education and is keeping her options open in her future as a nurse. She wants to return to the bedside as she feels she still has a lot to learn but has an interest in midwifery.

→ **Valerie Wahlers '18** has experience as an RN Case Manager and recently started as an RN Care Manager at Scripps Health in Encinitas, California. She received her MSN with a Nurse Executive focus.

"USAHS is proud to present this initial cohort of diverse, passionate MSN graduates. They set great examples for this program and are poised for success in their perspective futures as nursing professionals," Dr. Logue said.

"Congratulations to our first Master of Science in Nursing graduates," USAHS Director for Nursing Programs Dr. Robin Dennison said. "These eight students are exemplary of the nursing students at USAHS. I look forward to hearing about their impact on our healthcare system as they implement their roles of nurse executive, nurse informaticist, or nurse educator." ♦

FUN FACT

According to Nurse Journal, the highest paying jobs for nurses with an MSN are:

- ❖ Nurse Consultant
- ❖ Research Nurse
- ❖ Nurse Educator
- ❖ Nurse Administrator
- ❖ Advanced Nurse Practitioner



BREAKING GROUND

Offering a respite for adults with dementia and their caregivers

When caring for loved ones with dementia or Alzheimer's disease, Jamie Williams '08, and her mother, Janet, know firsthand the importance of individual attention and support.

Williams' grandfather had dementia for more than a decade. In 2017, after brainstorming how they could improve services for both people with the disorders and their families, the mother-daughter duo opened Hidden Treasures Alzheimer Respite Ministry in Monroe, Louisiana. Located inside a church, the ministry offers day care for up to 15 adults, four days a week.

Williams, a Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) graduate, and her mother, a social worker, do everything from play dominoes and music to lead crafts and simple exercises to keep adults engaged.

"At University of St. Augustine for

Health Sciences, some of my classes were in pediatrics and neuro," Williams says. "A lot of the information correlates to what I'm doing today with my Alzheimer's and dementia clients. Most of the time, we're playing games."

With dominoes, Williams says clients are working on cognition and attention to task. With crafts like coloring and painting, they are working on fine motor skills.

"A lot of their Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) they also have to re-learn because they've forgotten how to wash their hands, or they've forgotten proper toileting and hygiene," Williams says. "A lot of things you teach children to do you're re-teaching these adults."

The individual attention at Hidden Treasures has helped many of the adults improve their memory recall and language skills, she says.

And while occupational therapy is

important, sometimes it just takes a caring word or two for them to feel safe.

"We have one gentleman who after lunch, he starts wondering where his spouse is," Williams says. "He doesn't know what he wants to do, and he's cried a couple times. We figured out he responds to the word 'good.' That word connects with him. I can look him in the eye, pat him and say, 'You're good.' And he'll just look at me and say, 'I love you.' In that moment, you know he gets that he is OK."

The first week the client's wife picked him up, she told Williams, "I don't know what I would do without y'all. Just to be able to go home and take a nap has meant the world to me."

"Those little hidden moments, when they come out, it's like a breath of fresh air," Williams says. "This is why we do what we do. —Allison Eatough

"I can look him in the eye, pat him and say, 'You're good.' And he'll just look at me and say, 'I love you.' In that moment, you know he gets that he is OK."

— Jamie Williams '08



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

San Marcos OT Student Finds Acceptance to Overcome

On her good days, you can find Master of Occupational Therapy graduate Jasmine Price '18 in a bachata dance class, headed to the gym or laughing at nothing with her best friends. On her bad days, she's using all her energy just to "show up".

Aside from being the first in her family to attend college, she has overcome mountains of personal, mental and emotional obstacles to make it to the stage at Commencement. These obstacles may have set her back a term or two, but she didn't let them keep her from the finish line.

"While in the (MOT) program I've been more depressed than I have ever been in my life; so depressed that I couldn't smile, I dreaded leaving home, and food had no taste," Price said. "But I made it through. Today I know that if I could make it through all that, I can do anything. Just try me."

Price struggled with her mental health long before arriving on the USAHS San Marcos campus, but with a big move away from her support system in the Bay Area, a rigorous MOT program, a new curriculum and particularly the difficulty of bouncing around from cohort to cohort she was forced to come to new terms with her mental illness. It began to affect her physically, causing her to isolate herself and sometimes even pass out.





“Today I know that if I could make it through all that, I can do anything. Just try me.”

It was a personal struggle for Price that helped her begin to speak out about her needs and shaped USAHS' OT program and its ability to accommodate students with mental illness and other disabilities.

Price had to accept that she was different, and her learning experience was going to be different. She realized that for her to make it through the program she had to be her own advocate and work with the school to find solutions that accounted for her disability.

“Being at school was the first time in my life where I had to say, ‘I am Jasmine. I have a disability,’ to people who weren’t close friends or school officials” Price said, as she spoke of self-disclosing to her graduating cohort during a roundtable discussion about mental health. “I

decided I needed to speak up and accept who I am and request or demand what I needed, or else I was going to sink.”

Acknowledging this not only helped Price academically, but her role and outlook as an Occupational Therapist changed. She feels like she can connect with patients and families on a different level because she knows what it’s like to be different and face challenges that so-called mentally and physically healthy people don’t face.

Price also completed a Spanish for Health Care Professional’s certificate at the University of California, San Diego and is on her way to receive the Spanish Language Certificate. She crosses the border to Tijuana on the weekends to work with children and families in lower socioeconomic settings.

She is diversifying the field of

Occupational Therapy and her patients notice. She recalled a mother whose child was recently getting treatment, and she said to Price, “You have no idea how happy I am to see you here.” This mother had been working with Occupational Therapists for several years with her child who is on the Autism spectrum, and Price was the first OT she encountered who “looked like her.” This powerful moment for Price further solidified her decision to go into pediatric care, specifically, working with those from at-risk populations.

Price still has her bad days, but she is motivated by her differences. She looks back and sees how much she has overcome and wants to take that experience into the field with her to help others overcome and accept their differences. ❖

News Briefs

CAMPUS OPENINGS 20 | MSLP COHORT 20 | STAYING CONNECTED 21



Dallas Opening

■ The new USAHS campus in Dallas-Forth Worth is now open! Located at the Riverside Commons complex in Irving, the university has finalized the first phase of constructing the new 30,000 square-foot location, with the inaugural cohort of occupational therapy students starting on May 13. Pending regulatory approval, USAHS plans to launch physical therapy and speech-language pathology programs as well.



Left to right: Ms. Donna M. Dorsey, Dr. Bonnie Copeland, Les DaCruz, Dr. Terry Crowe, Dr. Tobi Baldwin, Dr. Stefanie Podlog, Dr. Amy Herrington, Dr. Yvonne Body, Dr. Neetu Trivedi, Mr. Richard Krygiel, Dr. Ramon Jimenez

Board Faculty Winners

■ The 2018 Faculty Board Awards dinner was held at the beautiful Hotel Colonnade in Coral Gables, Florida.

The annual awards honored faculty members who made great achievements and commitments to the mission, vision and core values of the university. The Board selects amongst faculty that have been recommended by the university community. This year's winners were:

- Excellence in Teaching:
Dr. Amy Herrington & Dr. Yvonne Body
- Excellence in Innovation:
Dr. Stefanie Podlog
- Distinguished Alumni:
Dr. Tobi Baldwin

Miami Opening

After a year and a half growing in a temporary location, the Miami campus moved to a permanent home in August. The new campus opened in Coral Gables at the landmark Douglas Entrance Office Park, known for its iconic entry and bell tower, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Faculty, staff, and students in physical therapy and occupational therapy programs now have more than 50,000 square-feet of space for classrooms, labs, library, study rooms, and the state-of-the-art Center for Innovative Clinical Practice.



MSLP First Cohort

The USAHS Austin campus welcomed the University's first cohort of Speech-Language Pathology students. USAHS is excited to prepare students for the fast-growing speech-language pathology field with hands-on experiences and expert faculty.

STAYING CONNECTED

St. Augustine Area Businesses, University Rally to Support Parkinson's Disease Fundraiser

■ Every nine minutes, an American is diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD). There are an estimated 1 million Americans living with Parkinson's disease and more than 10 million people worldwide, according to the Parkinson's Foundation.

Dr. Melanie Lomaglio tDPT '17 is co-owner of St. Augustine Rehabilitation Specialists (STARS Rehab) and a graduate of USAHS where she also served as a faculty member for 12 years. She has coordinated the St. Augustine Parkinson's Support Group for over 10 years and works exclusively with patients who have Parkinson's disease. When Lomaglio heard that the Parkinson's Foundation was planning Moving Day, a fundraising event in Jacksonville, she jumped at the opportunity to help plan the inaugural event.

"Moving Day Jacksonville is a fun and inspiring fundraising event that unites the community in the

fight against Parkinson's. Since 2011, Moving Day events across the country have raised more than \$17 million to improve care and advance research toward a cure," said Celeste Tennant, community development manager for the foundation.

Lomaglio and the STARS Rehab team raised over \$2,400 for the event through a community-supported raffle.

"Moving Day is more than just a walk. It is a celebration of movement featuring a special Movement Pavilion with yoga, dance, Tai Chi, boxing, PWR, and other activities—all proven forms of exercise to help manage Parkinson's symptoms," Lomaglio said.

She was asked to emcee the November 10, 2018 event, which raised more than \$52,000, according to event organizers.

Lomaglio also inspired a group of students from USAHS to volunteer at the event. Most of them were students in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program.



Melanie Lomaglio

"Most of our volunteers are students from University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences as well as the University of North Florida. We couldn't do this without our volunteers," said Crista Ellis, community relations manager for the Parkinson's Foundation.

For USAHS student DeAnn Taylor, volunteering at Moving Day was personal. "My grandfather lived with Parkinson's and he passed away in 2014, so I'm walking in memory of him. Parkinson's has become one of my passions because I saw how physical therapists helped him. He was able to walk until he died. So, I'm here supporting the Parkinson's community because I want to make an impact just like those physical therapists did for him," she said.

Lomaglio said the most important thing for Parkinson's patients is never stop exercising; research has shown it to be just as effective as medication itself.

"I hope to inspire the students to go out and replicate what I'm doing because we need more therapists to dedicate their professional careers to helping those with Parkinson's disease," Lomaglio said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PARKINSON'S FOUNDATION



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