MISSION

Educating ethical healthcare professionals to engage and serve diverse local and global communities to advance person-centered healthcare.

VISION

We will be leaders in educational innovation, interdisciplinary research and community engagement.
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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

I am delighted to share with you the second issue of the John G. Rangos, Sr. School of Health Sciences (RSHS) Annual Report. The Rangos School continues to deliver excellent education in engineering, health sciences and health management to prepare the next generation of health care professionals committed to improving the health and quality of life of the people they serve in diverse local and global communities.

As the RSHS family, there is no question that beginning Spring 2020 we faced one of the most unprecedented times in our school’s history due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am truly amazed by the resiliency, dedication, and determination displayed by Rangos faculty, staff, students, and alumni in the face of these challenging and uncertain times. The collective efforts of the RSHS leadership team, faculty, and staff ensure that we continue to provide outstanding educational experiences to our students both in person and hybrid/online educational formats. Moving forward, we will continue to prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of our faculty, staff, and students during the next academic year with our carefully designed RSHS COVID-19 contingency plan.

Despite all challenges during the past year, we remained persistent and made excellent progress in our current strategic planning priorities with a particular focus on new academic program development and further strengthening the research infrastructure of the School. You will read more about our progress in these two key strategic planning areas in the report. In addition, we recently reaffirmed our collective commitment to social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion by updating the RSHS Strategic Plan. We are including social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion as important strategic priorities and have identified a number of action items to create and lead change locally, nationally, and globally to end systemic racial injustice in the diverse communities in which we all live and work.

In addition to key highlights from the seven Rangos School departments, including our new Department of Engineering, we are proud to provide you with updates about the new members of the RSHS Advisory Council, outstanding scholarly and research accomplishments of our faculty, and additional success stories of our students and alumni in this issue. We continue to expand the RSHS’ national and global recognition with exciting new partnerships and look forward to providing additional updates in future reports.

As the Dean of the John G. Rangos, Sr. School of Health Sciences, I remain grateful for the dedication, hard work, and continued support of the Rangos faculty, staff, students, and alumni to make the RSHS one of the top health sciences schools not only in this country, but in the world and look forward to another productive year together! I hope you will enjoy the second issue of the RSHS Annual Report. I welcome you all to share your feedback with me at akincif@duq.edu.

Sincerely,

Fevzi Akinci, Ph.D., MHA
Dean, The John G. Rangos, Sr. School of Health Sciences
As the first Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Research in the John G. Rangos Sr., School of Health Sciences, I am happy to share information and provide some updates regarding my first year in this position. As many of you already know, Dean Akinci came to Duquesne University with aspirations of growing the school in terms of academic offerings, student enrollment and global initiatives. This past year, Dean Akinci asked me to focus my efforts in two areas of the RSHS 2019-2023 Strategic Plan: to develop, optimize and expand academic programs, and to advance school initiatives in research, scholarship and technology.

During the 2019/2020 academic year, we launched the Public Health Minor, and in the Fall 2020 semester, we welcomed 9 students who enrolled in the new BS/BA program in Public Health. Planning for these two public health programs preceded the current pandemic, but given the worldwide state of affairs, these programs are more important, and timelier than ever! I think it is now evident to everyone that the current workforce will benefit from individuals with formal training in public health, epidemiology and biostatistics. As the only university in Pittsburgh with undergraduate public health offerings, we are pleased to be leaders and visionaries in this field. The Public Health Minor as become quite popular with a current enrollment of 60, which represents students from the Schools of Health Sciences, Nursing and Pharmacy. Students who enrolled in the Public Health Major can pursue either a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree. We are thrilled to contribute to the professional development and personal growth of these talented students, and look forward to exposing them to the many public health projects and initiatives Pittsburgh has to offer. In order to maximize growth within this field, the RSHS will also offer an online Master of Public Health Program in the near future.

The Department of Health Administration and Public Health, formerly the Department of Health Management Systems, has developed a 4-course program, referred to as a micro-credential, in Health Informatics and Data Analytics. Micro-credentials are intended to provide graduate level training for students who may not be ready to enroll in a traditional master’s degree program, but aspire for new responsibilities in their current job, or for promotion in their professional career. Future micro-credentials may include Patient Safety and Healthcare Compliance and Risk Management.

The RSHS is collaborating with the School of Nursing to develop a nurse anesthesia doctoral program, with the goal of enrolling students as early as 2021. We will pursue accreditation for this program with the Council of Accreditation. Faculty within the RSHS will be responsible for teaching anatomy, diagnostic imaging, physics, biochemistry, and diagnostic test interpretation to these students.

On a broader scale, I am pleased to report that the Duquesne China Health Institute (formerly the China Linkage Program) is exploring the possibility of offering a PhD program in Health Sciences with specialty areas of physical therapy, health administration, speech-language pathology and public health. If approved, this will be the second PhD program in the School. The PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences has been in existence for 19 years and has 9 alumni.

The research agendas and the scholarly productivity of the RSHS faculty remains impressive! Collectively, RSHS faculty received $121,128.10 in grant funding during the last academic year. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic limited opportunities for faculty to present their research in-person during conferences and also caused the cancellation of the 2020 Graduate Research and Scholarship Symposium.

During the Spring 2020 semester, all classes were abruptly transitioned to online formatting which required faculty to teach online and administer exams and competency-based testing remotely. As such, faculty within the RSHS have had to become adept with technology including lock-down browsers, teleconferencing software, and in many cases, HIPAA compliant software for telemedicine experiences for students in the clinical phases of their programs. Online learning continued throughout the Summer 2020 semester and faculty are now prepared for HyFlex instruction for the Fall 2020 semester which will include live instruction in the classroom with some students participating in class remotely.
New Bachelor’s Offerings

With the start of the Fall 2020 semester, the School of Health Sciences is excited to announce two new Bachelor’s degree options.

The Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences will provide students with the skills needed to both conduct comprehensive health, wellness and fitness assessments, and develop programming to address the needs of clients, patients and populations. Furthermore, students will be equipped to assess the outcomes associated with these intervention strategies and prepared to implement changes accordingly.

The Health Sciences Program consists of two primary tracks, an Integrated Health Track and a Pre-Health Track. These tracks are designed for students to pursue specific career paths, complete a general health science education, and/or to meet graduate professional degree requirements. Both tracks will afford students the flexibility to expand and customize their education to align with areas of professional interest and to meet trending healthcare demands. In fact, our Health Sciences major is one that will allow students to create an integrated and interdisciplinary pathway to graduation, unlike what typically occurs in the discipline-specific, professional degree programs.

Through our agile curricular frameworks, our Health Sciences majors will become evidence-based, patient and client-centered healthcare professionals who are equipped with the knowledge and skills to shape and actively contribute to the dynamic healthcare system.

There is a shortage of public health professionals globally. As Pittsburgh’s only undergraduate Public Health program, students in Duquesne’s Public Health program learn what it takes to make their mark on health care as soon as they graduate. Because the potential career opportunities are so diverse, we offer students an option of pursuing either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science in Public Health, depending on where their interests lie.

Public health professionals work to combat the COVID-19 epidemic and other disease outbreaks, protect the environment, conduct research focusing on how to make population healthier, evaluate the impact of changing demographics on population health, develop interventions to promote healthy behavior, and develop/improve health related policies. A public health degree offers an array of career opportunities nationally and globally. High demand for public health professionals and administrators is expected over the next decade. An undergraduate degree in public health can also serve as an entry point to a medical profession.

RSHS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The John G. Rangos, Sr. School of Health Sciences (RSHS) Advisory Council, composed of leaders from the various disciplines of the School and professionals from different healthcare organizations, was created in Fall 2018 under the leadership of Dr. Fevzi Akinci, Dean of the RSHS.

We are happy to welcome these new members to the Council:

- Engineering – Kimberly Stafford
- Occupational Therapy – Kristen Kaufmann Putignano, Vanessa Keech and Matt Bittner
- Speech-Language Pathology – Kathleen Dames and Amy Saraceno

The Advisory Council is key to the School and provides expertise and advice in a variety of areas in the healthcare environment, guiding the School towards its stated mission and philosophy and assisting in meeting the goals within the RSHS 2019 – 2023 Strategic Plan. The Advisory Council’s diverse professional skills, awareness and concern to improve the healthcare needs of the community place RSHS in a unique position for current and future initiatives.

The School is honored to gain the incredible insight offered by this esteemed group of professionals and looks forward to the Advisory’s Council experience and guidance to help RSHS move forward in changing the healthcare field opportunities by enhancing the delivery of education to the students and society.

2019 - 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

The Rangos School of Health Sciences (RSHS) Strategic Plan serves as the blueprint to take the School to the next level of excellence, in conjunction with the initiatives outlined in the University Strategic Plan.

MISSION: Educating ethical healthcare professionals to engage and serve diverse local and global communities to advance person-centered healthcare.

VISION: We will be leaders in educational innovation, interdisciplinary research, and community engagement.

In summer 2020, the Rangos leadership team reflected on recent events and reaffirmed our collective commitment to social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. More importantly, we all agreed that we MUST ACT TOGETHER NOW to create and lead change locally, nationally and globally to end systemic racial injustice in the diverse communities in which we all live and work. We immediately amended the RSHS Strategic Plan by adding the following goal:

Goal 7: Promote social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community and ACT TOGETHER NOW to create and lead change locally, nationally and globally to end systemic racial injustice in the diverse communities in which we all live and work.

As the first strategic initiative to support this goal, Dean Akinci has appointed a diverse RSHS Social Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team with representation from Rangos faculty, staff, students and alumni. The RSHS Social Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team will help us identify and implement a number of strategic initiatives and action items to support our collective commitment to creating a peaceful and just society in our community, in our country, and in the world.
STUDENT/FACULTY RATIO
19:1

30% of faculty are tenured; 24% are on tenure track

Appointed New RSHS Social Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team

100% CERTIFICATION EXAM PASS RATE (ALL-TIME) FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

Occupational Therapy students entering the professional phase have graduated at 100%

99% of students report job placement within 6 months

Physical Therapy pass rate of 95% on the national licensing exam (3-Year [2017-2019] Average)

$7,230,397 in funding was requested; $676,444 awarded in 2019-2020

50 new freshmen in new Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences launched in fall 2020

100% Athletic Training board first-time pass rate on the national certification exam for the class of 2019. This marks the ninth time in the past ten years for this achievement.

Speech-Language Pathology 3-year 100% ASHA exam pass rate; 3-year 100% employment rate

17 grant applications were submitted; 9 were funded

Launched new Public Health undergraduate program in Fall 2020—only one of its kind in Pittsburgh!
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Faculty, students and alumni provided care at the Pittsburgh Steelers 5k, the Allegheny Country Wrestling Tournament and the Serve 2 Cure Tennis Tournament.

Students had an opportunity to provide medical services to athletes with intellectual disabilities through a longstanding partnership with the Special Olympics of Pennsylvania Winter Games. Dr. Sarah Manspeaker, AT'01 (current athletic training faculty member) served as the medical director for the Winter Games.

Under the direction of Dr. Keith Gorse, students engaged in a semester-long collaboration with Boys and Girls Club of Pittsburgh. Students performed a site risk assessment and developed written and oral reports to help eliminate potentially harmful situations, develop responsive emergency action plans and decrease overall liability for the facility.

GRANTS AND SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENTS
Faculty and students had two presentations at the 2019 National Athletic Trainers’ Association Annual Meeting and Clinical Symposium.


Keith Gorse, along with co-authors Fran Feld and Rob Blanc published a new textbook entitled, Non-Orthopedic Emergency Care in Athletics.

Department faculty delivered four research or education-based presentations regionally and nationally. Additionally, faculty published (or have in press) nine scholarly manuscripts.


Dr. Keith Gorse has retired after serving as an Assistant Professor and Clinical Education Coordinator in the Department of Athletic Training for 19 years. Dr. Gorse joined the Department of Athletic Training after serving as the head athletic trainer at Carnegie Mellon University for 15 years, where he provided care to their 16 NCAA Division III varsity athletic teams.

Dr. Gorse got his start in athletic training and education when he majored in Secondary Science and Athletic Training at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Gorse also went on to complete his Master’s degree in Education at Pitt and his doctorate in Education at Duquesne University. Early in his career, Dr. Gorse combined his passion for education and athletic training at Hempfield High School and at Carnegie Mellon University, in both places teaching in the Physical Education programs and working as an athletic trainer. While at Carnegie Mellon, Dr. Gorse was also able to serve as a clinical instructor for athletic training students placed with him from local universities.

In his time at Duquesne, Dr. Gorse provided instruction to students in the areas of foundational clinical skills, emergency care, injury prevention, and athletic training organization and administration. Keith was also responsible for spearheading our Department’s community engaged learning experiences, where students would often work with community organizations to optimize health and safety practices within their facilities. More recently, Dr. Gorse and his co-authors published multiple textbooks focused on emergency care, the management of non-orthopedic injuries and conditions, and athletic training injury management.

Throughout his time at Duquesne University, Dr. Gorse was also able to remain clinically active. In addition to volunteering his athletic training services to the Pennsylvania Special Olympics, Dr. Gorse often found time to assist the athletic training staffs at Shady Side Academy and Fox Chapel High School. Additionally, over the last five years, Keith has served as a medical observer for both the National Football League and the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Dr. Gorse’s greatest impact at Duquesne University and in the athletic training profession has come as a mentor to aspiring athletic trainers and healthcare professionals. As the Clinical Education Coordinator of our Athletic Training Program he has done exactly that. Dr. Gorse managed over 30 clinical placement sites and guided more than 60 preceptors annually. At the same time, he has been responsible for shepherding 240 students through the clinical education experiences of our program, which our students will tell you has been the best part of their Duquesne Athletic Training experience.
ENGINEERING

The John G. Rangos, Sr. School of Health Sciences (RSHS) became the first academic institution in the U.S. and globally to offer an accelerated Biomedical Engineering and Nursing (BME/BSN) Dual Degree to undergraduates. The program was named "Most Innovative" biomedical engineering major by NerdScholar.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, job opportunities for biomedical engineers and nurses are expected to grow faster than average—respectively 5% and 7% between 2019 and 2029. With the combined knowledge and skills of the two disciplines, professional opportunities for the nurse-engineers may be limitless. Graduates will stand out in a competitive job market with a skillset to help develop technical solutions to health problems.

GRANTS AND SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENTS

Dr. Bin Yang filed a patent disclosure through Duquesne University with the University of Pittsburgh entitled, “Real-time soft tissue imaging using structured polarized light illumination.”

Dr. John Viator was awarded US Patent 10,544,443, “Detection of Bacteria Using Bacteriophage.”

Dr. John Viator was awarded a grant from the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Universal Research Enhancement (C.U.R.E.) grant to study melanoma metastasis.

Dr. Rana Zakerzadeh was awarded a Faculty Development Award for computational studies about oxygen transport in abdominal aneurysms.

Dr. Melikhan Tanyeri published an article on hemostatic assays in the Journal of Annals of Bioengineering.

Dr. Rana Zakerzadeh presented her research on aortic stenosis at the 72nd Annual Meeting of the American Physical Society Division of Fluid Dynamics.

Dr. Bin Yang was session chair for SPIE Photonics West, “Emerging Digital Micromirror Device Based Systems and Applications.”

Dr. John Viator published results on predicting melanoma metastasis using laser induced ultrasound in Lasers in Surgery and Medicine. He also published a paper on bacterial detection in blood using laser induced ultrasound in the Journal of Biomedical Optics.

Dr. Melikhan Tanyeri was awarded a Faculty Development Award for “Teaching Key Engineering Concepts through Music.”

Dr. Rana Zakerzadeh demonstrated heart function at the event “Scientists Like Me: Women in STEM” at the Carnegie Science Center.

Dr. Melikhan Tanyeri opened the Biomedical Microdevices Lab, a state-of-the-art facility that can create devices with features smaller than a human hair, supporting advances in biomedical engineering, as well as chemical, biological, and pharmaceutical sciences.

Amanda Pellegrino, undergraduate student in Engineering, was awarded a Goldwater Scholarship to enhance her studies in tissue engineering.

In response to the COVID crisis, a group of engineering undergraduate students was selected as finalists for the Johns Hopkins Virtual Design Challenge. Their design was to provide a rapid and inexpensive replacement for masks to protect against viral transport.
The Department of Engineering has research focus areas in biomedical optics and sensing and in computational methods. Research labs use lasers, microfluidic fabrication and methods, and computational means to tackle problems in human health. These problems include blood coagulation, cancer diagnosis, defects in blood flow, rapid identification of infectious agents, and structural problems in the eye. Our researchers collaborate nationally and internationally and are funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other agencies.

Madelyn Hoying, BS Biomedical Engineering and Physics, ’20

Madelyn Hoying, 2020 graduate as a Biomedical Engineering and Physics double major, began her research career as a first-year student, working with Duquesne University Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences Assistant Professor Dr. Theodore Corcovilos. She has since gone on to help develop two of Duquesne’s student NASA teams, which have competed in the Micro-g NExT competition and the RASC-AL Forum. The Micro-g NExT team designed a zip-tie cutter prototype to be used in space missions, which they tested at Johnson Space Center’s Neutral Buoyancy Lab. Additionally, Madelyn did a research internship at the NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va, working on the physics behind solid state lasers.

“I want to be an astronaut. I want to go to space. Everything I’m doing is working towards that,” Madelyn says with confidence.

Madelyn is currently getting her PhD in Bioastronautics from Harvard/MIT.

Amanda Pellegrino, Current student pursuing BME-BSN Dual-Degree

Due in part to pioneering this new dual degree program, fifth year student Amanda Pellegrino chose the program. “[The program] allows me to learn engineering techniques and laboratory skills while also working with patients with diseases that I could one day discover engineering solutions to,” says Amanda.
The Department of Health Administration and Public Health (HA & PH) is delighted to welcome our new Chair, Dr. Faina Linkov, effective July 1, 2020. Dr. Linkov holds a PhD in Epidemiology, MPH in the Community and Behavioral Health Sciences. Dr. Linkov is a multidisciplinary researcher with research interests in molecular epidemiology, cancer, prevention, health systems research, global health, scientific communications, and research productivity with over 100 original research publications and reviews. She has been a recipient of multiple grants and awards, including a Mentored Research Award from the American Cancer Society, Phi Beta Psi Sorority Foundation Department of Defense, Scaife Foundation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Hillman Foundation, USAID, Government of Kazakhstan, and NATO. Dr. Linkov will be prioritizing our initial accreditation work with the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME) for our online MHA program this coming year. Additionally, Dr. Linkov will be expanding our international outreach, with recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between Rangos School of Health Sciences and Kharkiv National Medicinal University in Ukraine, aimed to facilitate research and education collaboration between the two schools. We also envision expansion of our international outreach in China, Central Asia, and Latin America.

The name of the Department of Health Management Systems (HMS) was officially changed to Health Administration and Public Health (HA & PH) to better reflect exciting new degree program offerings in public health and expanded focus on teaching the administrative skills. In addition to the successful launch of our online MHA program the Department implemented a new innovative B.S. in Health Administration program curriculum. The Department began offering a B.S./B.A. in Public Health in Fall 2020 and is currently working on a proposal for an online MPH and the RSHS’s first online micro-credential program in Health Informatics and Data Analytics.
SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

Dr. Joan Kiel was invited to serve as a guest co-editor of special edition of Journal of Health Administration education issue on pandemics. Drs. Linkov, Khanijahani, Swanson-Biearman, and Akinci have been invited to submit a paper to this special issue focusing on models of internship delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Khanijahani delivered an invited presentation on Classification and Regression Tree Analysis in studying health disparities at APHA’s 2019 Annual Meeting and Expo in Philadelphia, PA.


Dr. Swanson Biearman published several papers focusing on improving patient outcomes, including a paper titled “Health care provider in triage to improve outcomes” published in the Journal of Emergency Nursing, September 1, 2019.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

- Occupational Therapy maintains strong community-engaged learning networks with organizations such as St. Anthony’s School, Shepherd’s Heart, East End Cooperative Ministry, Renewal Incorporated, Gwen’s Girls, Auberle, Vincentian and ACHIEVA.

- Dr. Amy Mattila leads the Academic Fieldwork Educator Subsection as Coordinator of the AOTA Academic Education Special Interest Section.

- Dr. Meghan Blaskowitz leads as the Education and Research Development Coordinator of the AOTA Developmental Disabilities Special Interest Section.

- Dr. Elizabeth DeIuliis leads as the Executive Secretary to the Board of Directors for the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association.

- Dr. Ann Stuart leads as co-chair of the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Political Action Committee.

- Retta Martin leads as a member of the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association, Commission on Practice.

- Dr. Kim Szucs leads as the Faculty Advisor to the Pi Theta Epsilon, Occupational Therapy honor society.
AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS
Dr. Richard Simpson, PhD, Associate Professor, earned tenure in 2019.

Dr. Elizabeth Delulios, OTD, OTR/L earned promotion from Clinical Assistant Professor to Clinical Associate Professor in 2019.

Dr. Ann Stuart OTD, OTR/L was awarded the DU Student Life Faculty Advisor of the Year Award in 2020 and under her mentorship the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) was awarded the Organization of the Year Award by DU Student Life for 2019.

Dr. Meghan Blaskowitz, DrPH, OTR/L received the RSHS Dean’s Award for Faculty Excellence in Teaching in 2019.

Dr. Elena Donoso Brown, PhD, OTR/L received the RSHS Dean’s Award for Faculty Excellence in Scholarship in 2019.

Dr. Amy Mattila was named a Gaultier Fellowship for 2019-2020 and Dr. Meghan Blaskowitz completed her term as a Gaultier Fellow in 2019.

Taylor McElroy received the RSHS Departmental Outstanding Student and Dean’s Award for Excellence in 2019.

Four faculty and two students won awards in the 2020 John G. Rangos Sr. Prizes for Students and Faculty.

Delaney Batik and Amanda Seidl submitted winning student proposals. Drs. Meghan Blaskowitz, Elena Donoso Brown, Rich Simpson and Ann Stuart won faculty prizes (students Natalie Falcione, Jenna Gallipoli, Fiona Kessler and Rachel Tokarski were contributors to Dr. Donoso Brown’s winning faculty effort).

GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIP
Dr. Kim Szucs is part of an interdisciplinary team awarded a NIH grant for a multi-site Clinical trial examining Meditation and Exercise as an Adaptive Intervention to Reduce Low Back Pain.

Dr. Jeryl Benson was awarded the Presidential Scholarship Award grant to support research on the impact of sensory activity schedules for children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD).

Drs. Jeryl Benson and Meghan Blaskowitz were awarded the Charles Leech Foundation grant to study transition services for adolescents and young adults with IDD.

Dr. Meghan Blaskowitz was awarded a Faculty Development Fund Grant that supports person-centered planning for adults with IDD.

Drs. Mattila, Blaskowitz and Muñoz continue to implement their 4-year Pathways Grant focused on Community-Engaged Teaching and Research (CETR).

Dr. Elizabeth Delulios published her 2nd book, a coedited effort entitled, The Entry level Occupational Therapy Doctorate Capstone: A Framework for the Experience and Project. Drs. Blaskowitz, Cook, Donoso Brown and Mattila were all contributing authors.

Dr. Jaime Muñoz was a co-editor on a textbook entitled, Mental Health in Occupational Therapy: A Vision for Participation, 2nd edition. Drs. Blaskowitz, Donoso Brown and Mattila were all contributing authors.

Occupational Therapy faculty continue to publish their peer reviewed scholarship in a broad range of publications including the Journal of Occupational Therapy, Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology and The Journal of Pain.

Occupational Therapy faculty continue to present their scholarship in a broad range of national and international conferences including the World Congress for Neurorehabilitation, Congress of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, Lilly International Conference on Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning, Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe Congress, American Pain Society Scientific Summit, American Occupational Therapy Association National Conference, American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine National Conference, Annual Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) Conference, and the Annual Conference on Rehabilitation Engineering (RESNA).

100% of OTD students passed the national certification exam (2016-2019) with scores on this exam exceeding national averages. 99% of students report job placement within 6 months.
PHYSICAL THERAPY

HIGHLIGHTS

Locally, students complete rotations within UPMC, Allegheny Health Network, Encompass Health Corporation, Heritage Valley Health System and privately owned clinics.

National rotation sites include Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in Downey, CA; Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, MD; David A. Grant/Travis AFB in California; Touchstone Rehabilitation in Phoenix, AZ; and University of Rochester Sports Medicine in New York.

FACTS, FIGURES AND ACCOLADES

• NPTE Pass rate of 97.1% for 2017-2019, with an 85.7% first-time pass rate in 2019
• 2019 Professional phase graduating rate of 97.1%
• 100% job placement rate for graduates for the last five years (2015 – 2019)
• Program received full 10-year reaccreditation from CAPTE in 2018

CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

382 active contracts with health care organizations

STUDENT NUMBERS

Continue to enroll a small professional phase class (mean 34.7 students)
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A group of students participated in the annual Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) One Walk. The class of 2018 donated $2,473 to JDRF at graduation.

Students raised more than $1,600 and participated in the annual Walk to End Alzheimer’s.

Dr. Regina Harbourne is partnering with developmental psychology faculty at the University of Pittsburgh to create a learning landscape playground in Wilkinsburg. Additionally, she is collaborating with Penn State faculty and the Nwakdem Benevolent Foundation to develop a curriculum and support an inclusive school in Cameroon.

Dr. Ken Havrilla conducted three cardiovascular screenings at the Wilmerding YMCA. He also coordinated a community-engaged learning experience for the class of 2019 at the Vintage House.

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES


Dr. Diane Borello-France and colleagues were recognized by the American Urogynecological Society for the Conservative Management Award Prize for their paper, Randomized Trial Comparing Combined Midurethral Sling and Behavioral/Pelvic Floor Therapy to Midurethral Sling Alone for Mixed Urinary Incontinence. The paper was presented at the 2018 International Continence Society’s 48th Annual Meeting in Philadelphia.


Dr. Ken Havrilla was named assistant to the department chair, and he serves as the director of clinical education.

Dr. Matt Kostek was invited as a discussant and content expert to the Future Research Planning Committee of the Parent Project in Muscular Dystrophy organization in Washington, D.C. He also was featured in a podcast on muscular dystrophy hosted by Tim Lightfoot with the Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance.

Dr. Ben Kivlan is a member and contributor to the Multicenter Arthroscopy Study of the Hip. He provides statistical and scientific writing support and served as a co-author on several manuscripts.

APPLICANT INFO

Receive an average of 450 applications each year

4.0 mean GPA for accepted students (represents a mix of weighted and unweighted GPAs)

1250 mean SAT score of accepted student

27 – 28 mean ACT score (composite) of accepted student

95% pass rate on the national licensing exam

(3-Year [2017-2019] Average)
FACTS, FIGURES AND ACCOLADES

The Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) program at Duquesne University is the nation’s first guaranteed seat, five year, bachelor’s + master’s degree program in the United States. Since 2000, we have graduated students who have gone on to productive and successful careers as speech-language pathologists practicing around the world.

Program Outcomes:

- **100% pass rate** on National Certification Praxis Exam in Speech-Language Pathology for 10 of last 10 years
- **100% employment** rate for graduates since class of 2000 at 1-year post graduation (national benchmark)

Initial Employment:

- Class of 2019 **employed in 12 states**, including Pennsylvania
- Class of 2018 **employed in 14 states**, including Pennsylvania
- Class of 2017 **employed in 8 states**, including Pennsylvania
- Class of 2016 **employed in 10 states**, including Pennsylvania
- Class of 2015 **employed in 9 states**, including Pennsylvania

In 2018 - 2019 there were 5 alumni enrolled in Ph.D. programs:
- University of South Florida
- Vanderbilt University
- Ohio University
- Michigan State University
- James Madison University
SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

In the 2019-2020 Academic Year, SLP faculty published 20 peer-reviewed scholarly papers and gave (including accepted, but cancelled due to COVID-19) 34 national and state conference presentations. Importantly, 20 students participated as authors and co-presenters on those publications and presentations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the 2019-2020 Academic Year, under the direction and supervision of highly qualified speech-language pathology community-based colleagues and full-time SLP faculty, students delivered over 11,000 hours of assessment and treatment to adults and children with communication and swallowing disorders. Many of these services were delivered via telepractice once in-person services were stopped due to COVID-19. Over 3,000 of those hours were delivered through the DU Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic.

DUQUESNE-CHINA HEALTH INSTITUTE (DCHI)

Each year through a partnership with universities in China, The John G. Rangos, Sr. School of Health Sciences (RSHS) hosts more than a dozen health care professionals and college graduates from China who are taking classes as part of a unique graduate program designed to help them earn a master’s degree in occupational therapy, physical therapy or speech-language pathology.

The arrangement was developed with support from the Chinese government, and Duquesne is the first American university involved in such an arrangement.

DCHI is experimenting branching its PT program to Advanced PT Level education by offering two additional specialized courses in response to the needs of some of its PT students who have worked as therapists and have already acquired more experiences in PT in China. It is expected DCHI will continue to explore opportunities to expand and establish special programs, especially in PT, to accommodate the need for special needs in rehabilitation in China, and to expand the population of the student pool.

DCHI is also working diligently on establishing PhD in Health Sciences with Associate Dean Calhoun. The formal proposal is finalized and submitted for the University’s official review and approval in Fall 2020.
ALUMNI NEWS

Tara Ferguson, a 2020 graduate of the department has been accepted into the highly competitive neonatology residency for physician assistants at UPMC Magee Women’s Hospital.

Julia Marn, a 2018 graduate of the department was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to establish a pediatric cancer registry in Zambia. Ms. Marn has always been interested in pediatric cancer and conducted research at the St. Jude Hospital as an undergraduate student, and completed an elective clinical rotation in Africa as a graduate student. Julia completed an elective clinical rotation in Tanzania and provided medical care in remote areas of that country which further intensified her interest in global health.

SCHOLARSHIPS FROM THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

Three physician assistant students, Eric Rousell, Alexandria Severino and Christina Conti have each received more than $150,000 in scholarships from the Veterans Administration. In exchange for these generous scholarships, each student must commit to working in the VA Healthcare system for a period of 3 years.

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

Faculty Presentation
Dr. Bridget Calhoun and Professor Kristin D’Acunto presented the poster, Students Question the Validity of Implicit Bias Testing during the Physician Assistant Education Association conference in Washington, DC in October 2019.

Student & Faculty Publication

Student & Faculty Research Projects
Tara Ferguson, a 2020 graduate, and Dr. Bridget Calhoun presented a pilot study to Document Medical Errors Witnessed and Committed by Physician Assistants in Pennsylvania during the 44th Annual Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants Continuing Medical Education Conference in October 2019.

Annamarie Lovre, a student in the final year of the program presented, An Anatomical and Physiological Perspective of Injuries in Pianists during the MTNA Collegiate Chapter Piano Pedagogy Symposium with her faculty mentor, Dr. Bridget Calhoun.

1,000th Physician Assistant to graduate soon!
A TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY BOVE

Everyone knew Anthony Bove. He was an accomplished young man with many positive attributes. He was a bright and promising 4th year Physician Assistant student when he was taken away from us too soon. Anthony had a special charisma about him, one that always lit up the room, and he always had a smile on his face. It was apparent that he loved life. Anthony could always be counted on to provide comic relief when situations seemed stressful or overwhelming. He was all of these things and more, but more importantly, Anthony was a devoted and loved friend who always made it a priority to include everyone.

It was Anthony’s dream to become a highly skilled Physician Assistant. He had a deep desire to help others and wanted to make a difference on each and every life that he touched. It was apparent that he loved learning. He had an inquisitive mind and would always ask questions to help further his development as a Physician Assistant student. It was always a pleasure to watch Anthony learn. In his brief time as a student at Duquesne, Anthony left a positive impression on all whom he encountered, staff and students alike.

Anthony’s life may have been cut too short, but he showed us all how to live it to the fullest. You are missed, Anthony, but you are not forgotten.

“Life is short so make it worthwhile, don’t spend time grieving just spend it with a smile.” -Author Unknown

A TRIBUTE TO DR. MICHAEL ESSIG

There is only one person who has been involved with the Department of Physician Assistant Studies since its inception, and that person is Dr. Michael Essig. Dr. Essig served as the inaugural medical director of the program and served in that position from 1992-2020. Throughout his time with the program, Dr. Essig also served as the interim program director three times. Dr. Essig is a Pittsburgh native, and completed his undergraduate training at Carnegie Mellon University. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in 1981 and completed his residency at West Virginia University. Dr Essig is a veteran of the United States Air Force, and after serving for 6 years was employed by Mercy Hospital. While at Mercy Hospital, Dr. Essig was appointed as the Director of the Family Medicine Residency, and was well-loved by nurses, attending physicians and the residents he helped train. After a successful career at Mercy and Allegheny General Hospital, Dr. Essig joined Smithfield Medical, where he worked for 16 years.

When the establishment of a PA program was considered by Duquesne University in 1992, Dr. Essig was identified as the ideal medical director! He remained in the role of medical director until his retirement in 2020. As a medical director, Dr. Essig was far more than a figure-head. Dr. Essig had a weekly presence on campus and taught every semester since 1994. Over the span of his career as medical director for the Department of Physician Assistant Studies, Dr. Essig has contributed to the education of more than 1000 physician assistants. Most recently, Dr. Essig was responsible for the Medical Science I and II courses, that enrolled both physician assistant and physical therapy students, Clinical Medicine I, II and III and Applied Pharmacology.

Dr. Essig has served as a role model and mentor for physician assistant students and he will be missed by the entire Rangos School of Health Sciences community as he enjoys his retirement!
Adherence to Home Programs in Individuals After Stroke

Home practice programs are a common part of rehabilitation services across disciplines and practice settings. Shortened lengths of stay and decreased access to services has resulted in an urgent need for effective home programs particularly for individuals post-stroke. Although clinicians report frequently implementing home practice programs, little is known about methods for measuring and increasing adherence to program guidelines. Adherence to home practice programs is important as many interventions for individuals post-stroke require intense, salient, and repetitive practice. Elena Donoso Brown, PhD, OTR/L, Assistant Professor for the Department of Occupational Therapy, in collaboration with her interprofessional colleagues, have begun to explore the multifaceted issue of adherence to home programs after stroke across multiple research investigations.

To develop a foundation for this line of research, Dr. Donoso Brown and colleagues conducted survey investigations in occupational therapy and speech-language pathology to describe current practice patterns and identify areas for further investigation. Across both disciplines, a need exists for further investigation into implementation of technology and the effectiveness of different adherence monitoring strategies (e.g., logbooks). A comprehensive scoping review conducted by Dr. Donoso Brown and her research team provided further guidance for future research needs. These foundational projects were complemented by a treatment study aimed at evaluating the use of music to augment adherence in a stroke rehabilitation home program.

In a current study funded by the Duquesne University Faculty Development Fund, Dr. Donoso Brown, in collaboration with Associate Professor in Speech-Language Pathology Sarah Wallace, PhD, CCC-SLP, ASHA-F, is examining critical factors of home practice program adherence for individuals with the communication impairment aphasia. This study will evaluate the effectiveness of using an aphasia-friendly logbook on reading practice adherence for individuals with post-stroke aphasia.

The value of this interprofessional, collaborative line of research was highlighted in a podcast interview conducted by Aphasia Access in 2019. Future studies will continue to identify mechanisms and factors that influence adherence. The long-term goal for this line of research is to develop clinical guidelines that will facilitate the creation of home practice programs for individuals post-stroke. By creating these guidelines, clinicians will have a mechanism to provide an effective low-cost extension of services while improving long-term outcomes and access to care for individuals post-stroke.

Metrics

- Student research apprentices that will include eight positions across both occupational and speech-language pathology programs.
- Disciplines engaged in research: Occupational therapy, Speech-language pathology, Music therapy, Mathematics, Library Sciences and Psychology.
- Publications will total seven, including four national presentations.
- Support from two internally funded grants: Aging Teaching and Research Consortium and The Faculty Development Fund.
Ingrid M. Kanics, OTR/L, FAOTA, CPSI, ’01

Ingrid is an occupational therapist who strives to help communities create and run amazing places where people of all abilities can play together. For almost 20 years, she has been designing and building playgrounds, parks and children's museums so that everyone can fully engage in these spaces. This journey began when she acquired a spinal cord injury while in the U.S. Army, resulting in spinal surgery and 18 months of rehab. Despite her recovery, Ingrid still experiences deficits from her injury. To reduce fatigue, she alternates her mobility between walking and rolling (in a wheelchair). When walking, she depends upon her right side for sensory information, and upon her left side for stability. This daily mental dance, her bio-mobility and other experiences related to her injury deeply influence her work of helping communities expand their understanding of inclusion for all. In addition to her Masters of Occupational Therapy from Duquesne University (2001), Ingrid has a Masters of Interior Architecture from Chatham University (2013) with an emphasis on inclusive, sustainable design. She owns her own business, Kanics Inclusive Design Services, LLC, where she consults with communities from around the world who want to focus on the creation and operation of inclusive indoor and outdoor play spaces. Ingrid also presents at local, state, national and international conferences on the topics of inclusive play, sensory processing and play and how embracing Universal Design makes a world where we can all play together.

Cara N. Koscinski, OTD, MOT, OTR/L

Cara Koscinski brings passion and excitement while providing occupational therapy to children with special needs. Cara is a mother to her own two children with autism spectrum disorders. Not only does she understand occupational therapy, but she is able to appreciate the unique perspective of the caregiver. This is evident by her additional training and drive to seek new and fun ways to help children to achieve their goals. When she could not find comprehensive books to help guide her, Cara decided to write her own! She has published six books for caregivers and therapists and wrote a chapter for the new Autism in Lockdown book. Her books sell world-wide and have won multiple awards.

Cara earned her post-professional Doctorate in Occupational Therapy in 2019 at Rocky Mountain University, Master’s degree in Occupational Therapy from Duquesne University in 1997; and BS in Health Sciences at Duquesne University in 1996. She is currently a professor at the University of Saint Augustine's OTD and MOT programs. Cara also provides occupational therapy services, advocacy, and consultations as The Pocket Occupational Therapist. Cara enjoys speaking and delivering keynote addresses to therapists, teachers, and special needs organizations across the country. After obtaining extra training Cara utilizes and teachers others about use of a trauma-informed approach and received an award for her work in this area. Her website www.PocketOT.com is followed by over 110,000 people worldwide.

Service to the special needs' community invigorates Cara. She is the OT advisor and regular columnist for Autism, Asperger’s, and Sensory Digest; volunteers for her local foster parent organization; and has completed supportive interviews with the Autism Society of America to help children with autism during the COVID pandemic. It is Cara’s mission to provide education to her clients and students while showing the unique value of occupational therapy.

Alex Brennsteiner, HMS ’12

Brennsteiner has spent his career progressing experience homelessness and drug addiction place for post-hospital recovery for patients and recovery. Brennsteiner leads the business and project plan development for the AHN Medical Respite program. This program provides a safe opportunity to plan and develop the AHN Medical Network Performance Manager, Highmark Health upon graduation.

Brennsteiner earned his B.S. in Business Administration from Duquesne University in 2013 and his M.B.A. in Health Administration from UPMC Hillman Cancer Center. Brennsteiner earned an award for his work in this area. His website www.PocketOT.com is utilized and teachers others about use of a trauma-informed approach and received an award for her work in this area. Her website www.PocketOT.com is followed by over 110,000 people worldwide.

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