The Center for Literacy and Disability Studies (CLDS) has been awarded $2.5 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education, for Project Core, an Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities – Stepping-Up Technology Implementation grant. Stepping-Up Technology grants are aimed at identifying strategies needed to effectively implement evidence-based technology tools that benefit students with disabilities as well as disseminating products that will help a broad range of schools to effectively implement these technology tools.

Under the direction of Dr. Karen Erickson, the four-year project (with a contingent fifth year) will improve access to evidence-based augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools.

**DOD Grant Funds Duke-UNC Study of Anxiety Disorder Development in Children with ASD**

A new Duke-UNC Chapel Hill collaboration titled “Precursors to the development of anxiety disorders in young children with autism spectrum disorder” has received a grant from the Department of Defense that will provide $31,390 in total funding over three years. Drs. Geraldine Dawson (Duke), Helen Egger (Duke), and Grace Baranek (UNC) are PIs for the study, with Dr. Guillermo Sapiro (Duke) serving as Co-Investigator.

The project’s immediate goal is to conduct an in-depth study of the relationship between sensory over-responsivity (SOR) and anxiety symptoms in preschool age children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) using parent report, clinical observation, electroencephalography (EEG or brain waves), and eye-tracking technology. Long term, investigators hope to be able to identify children with ASD who are at risk for developing anxiety disorders so that early intervention can target specific symptoms that put children at risk and stop full-fledged anxiety disorders from developing, which could mean a more positive outcome for many people with ASD.

“Anxiety disorders are extremely common among individuals with ASD, occurring at four times the rate of the general population, and these disorders can negatively affect people’s lives in a variety of ways, from family functioning and friendship development, to school performance and employability,” said Dr. Baranek. “Despite this prevalence, little is known about the early risk factors for anxiety with ASD.”

**NIH Grant Supports Interdisciplinary Research on Walking in the Real World After Stroke**

Dr. Prudence Plummer, Assistant Professor, has received a NIH R21 grant to fund “Real-world assessment of dual-task performance after stroke,” an interdisciplinary endeavor involving researchers in physical therapy, biomedical engineering, and psycholinguistics. The grant will provide $275,000 in direct costs over two years.

Dr. Plummer and the project’s co-investigators, Drs. Carol Giuliani (UNC), Lori Altmann (University of Florida), and Bijan Najafi (University of Arizona) will examine how stroke survivors’ ability to walk in a real-world environment compares to their ability to walk in the research lab, and how that ability is affected by concurrent cognitive tasks, such as conversing.

“Being able to comfortably and confidently walk in public settings is a key determinant of community integration and participation, yet very little is known about the impact of the environment on gait after stroke,” said Plummer. “This research will provide new information about gait recovery after stroke and will help us to develop interventions to improve locomotor adaptability and safety.”

**FALL RESEARCH FORUM**

Wednesday, September 24
11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m., 321 MacNider

Wednesday, October 22
11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m., 2020 Bondurant

Wednesday, December 3
11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m., 2020 Bondurant

All DAHS faculty, research staff, post-docs, and PhD students are welcome. Lunch is included!
### New Grants Awarded (January 2014-June 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AWARD TITLE</th>
<th>AWARD</th>
<th>PI</th>
<th>SPONSOR</th>
<th>BEGIN DATE</th>
<th>END DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Families with Adolescent-Aged Children and the Co-construction and Re-negotiation of Occupations and Routines</td>
<td>$7,500.00</td>
<td>Bagatell, Nancy</td>
<td>UNC Chapel Hill</td>
<td>1/15/2014</td>
<td>12/31/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of Rocker-Bottom Shoe Design on Static and Dynamic Measures of Balance</td>
<td>$9,987.92</td>
<td>Gross, Michael</td>
<td>Estey and Bomberger, LLC</td>
<td>12/15/2013</td>
<td>6/14/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of a Novel Point of Care Sweat Chloride Test for the Diagnosis of Cystic Fibrosis</td>
<td>$33,700.00</td>
<td>Legrys, Vicky</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin at Madison</td>
<td>5/1/2014</td>
<td>12/31/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers and Motivators to Clinical Trial Participation</td>
<td>$12,705.82</td>
<td>Menezes, Prema</td>
<td>Janssen Services</td>
<td>8/27/2013</td>
<td>8/26/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Proposals Submitted (January 2014-June 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>TEAM</th>
<th>SPONSOR</th>
<th>PROPOSED FUNDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimizing Early Autism Screening-Research-Community Partnerships w/ Head Start</td>
<td>Baranek, Grace; LaForett, Doré; Crais, Elizabeth; Bulluck, John; Turner-Brown, Lauren; Watson, Linda; Faldowski, Richard</td>
<td>Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)</td>
<td>$899,998.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Inflexibility in IDD Outcome Measurement</td>
<td>Boyd, Brian; Shafar, Dawn; Baranek, Grace; Peak, James; Siders, John; Clark, Renee; Kraus, Robert; Leggett, Thomas; Zhang, Wanqing</td>
<td>NIH National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)</td>
<td>$3,710,933.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-Based, Diversity-Sensitive Practice in the State-Federal Public Vocational Rehabilitation System: Innovative Training Solutions</td>
<td>Burker, Eileen; Chan, Dara; Rak, Eniko; Schmidt, Judy</td>
<td>US Department of Education (DOED)</td>
<td>$1,000,000.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variability in Informational Masking for Speech on Speech Recognition</td>
<td>Calandruccio, Lauren; Buss, Emily; Leibold, Lori; Lockhart, Steve</td>
<td>NIDCD Small Grant Program</td>
<td>$456,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders in Interdisciplinary Facilitation and Transition (LIFT)</td>
<td>Crains, Elizabeth; Schmidt, Judy; Mason, Linda; Domby, Lisa; Klinger, Mark; Bagatell, Nancy; Coppola, Susan</td>
<td>US Department of Education (DOED)</td>
<td>$988,385.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project CORE</td>
<td>Erickson, Karen; Greer, Claire; Geist, Lori; Hatch, Penny; Ryan, Skip</td>
<td>US Department of Education (DOED)</td>
<td>$2,477,680.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating Visual Attention to Print in Children with Rett Syndrome</td>
<td>Erickson, Karen; Geist, Lori</td>
<td>Appalachian State University (ASU)</td>
<td>$57,977.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Assessing and Facilitating Literacy Skills in Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities</td>
<td>Erickson, Karen; Hatch, Penny</td>
<td>NC Department of Public Instruction</td>
<td>$30,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Mindfulness Intervention for Anxiety in Chromosome 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome</td>
<td>Hooper, Stephen; Faldowski, Richard</td>
<td>National Institutes of Health (Subcontract with Duke)</td>
<td>$313,407.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Consortium on Alcohol and NeuroDevelopment in Adolescence: Duke</td>
<td>Hooper, Stephen</td>
<td>National Institutes of Health (Subcontract with Duke)</td>
<td>$26,880.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care Transition Research Network for Youth and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders</td>
<td>Hooper, Stephen; Daniels, Julie; Ferris, Maria; Klinger, Mark; Clark, Renee; Chapman, S.</td>
<td>Educational and Research Institutions</td>
<td>$221,494.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study of Hypertension in Pediatrics Adult Hypertension Onset in Youth (SHIP AHOY)</td>
<td>Hooper, Stephen</td>
<td>NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (Subcontract Cincinnati Children's Hospital)</td>
<td>$260,939.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Kidney Disease in Children CKiD</td>
<td>Hooper, Stephen</td>
<td>NIH (Subcontract Children's Hospital of Philadelphia)</td>
<td>$36,293.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditory Masking Effects on Speech Fluency in Aphasia and Apraxia of Speech</td>
<td>Jacks, Adam; Haley, Katarina; Roth, Heidi</td>
<td>National Institutes of Health (NIH)</td>
<td>$142,962.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Multi-Center Study of a New Method of Sweat Testing: The CF Quantum® Sweat Test</td>
<td>Legrys, Vicky</td>
<td>Educational and Research Institutions</td>
<td>$20,000.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Dual-task Walking After Stroke: Effects on Attentional and Locomotor Control</td>
<td>Plummer, Prue</td>
<td>American Heart Association (AHA)</td>
<td>$214,682.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking in the Real World After Stroke: Investigating the Influence of Environmental Setting on Dual-Task Interference</td>
<td>Plummer, Prue; Lipscomb-Hudson, Angela; Giuliani, Carol</td>
<td>National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research</td>
<td>$599,704.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological State Regulation and Expressive Language Outcomes for Children with Autism</td>
<td>Watson, Linda</td>
<td>National Institutes of Health (NIH)</td>
<td>$222,485.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance Care Planning for Families of Older African Americans with Dementia</td>
<td>Williams, Sharon; Hanson, Laura; Edwards, Lloyd</td>
<td>Alzheimer’s Association</td>
<td>$248,124.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Scientific Service Program for Elite Discus Throwers</td>
<td>Yu, Bing</td>
<td>USA Track and Field</td>
<td>$18,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns and Variations in Emergency Department Visits for U.S. Children with Autism: A Rural-Urban Comparison</td>
<td>Zhang, Wanqing; Boyd, Brian; Sikich, Linmarie</td>
<td>Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)</td>
<td>$97,379.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome to all of the new students, staff, and faculty who are joining the Department of Allied Health Sciences (DAHS) for the upcoming academic year! This research newsletter reflects upon the many accomplishments of FY 2013-2014 and highlights upcoming events and exciting new initiatives on the horizon for FY 2014-2015.

We welcomed Jennifer Daniel, full-time Grants Administrator, to our DAHS Office of Research. She replaced Wes Winkelmann, who left in June to pursue a graduate degree at NC State. Jennifer has already hit the ground running—processing numerous grants, serving on committees, and coordinating parking, among other things; she is featured in our staff spotlight on page 5. We also welcomed Aaron Abate', Advanced Accounting Technician (School of Medicine FBO Service Center), who devotes 50% of his efforts to assisting with DAHS contracts; his responsibilities include monitoring post-award accounts, routing contracts, reconciling accounts, assisting with pre-awards, and development of reporting methods. Please stop by and introduce yourself to Jennifer (3110 Bondurant–M, T, Th, F) and Aaron (3114 Bondurant–T pm, Th, F am).

Our first departmental retreat, which included all faculty and staff, was a big success, with DAHS Chair Dr. Stephen Hooper leading us through a very productive day at the Friday Center on June 9. Break-out groups made substantial progress with refining research, teaching, clinical, and administrative initiatives, in order to begin implementation of the broader strategic plan. Our research initiatives will focus on sustaining and growing strong programs of research and scientific teams, prioritizing cross-cutting interdisciplinary foci, increasing collaborative research within and outside UNC, and building research capacity.

As a department, we are well-positioned to collectively address issues of health and well-being in our society by utilizing the individual strengths and expertise of so many different disciplines. A team science approach is critical to addressing many complex scientific and social challenges, and it is an increasing priority for federal funding. Thus, this year’s DAHS research forum series (three Wednesdays in the fall and again in the spring) will focus on “Effective Collaborations and Methodological Innovations” to help leverage our myriad strengths and build productive collaborations. (See front page for dates and times.) We encourage all faculty, staff, and PhD students interested in research to join us.

Back by popular demand, the Methodology Happy Hour series, led by Drs. Faldowski and Zhang will continue. This event is intended to create a social space for faculty and students to discuss any types of methodological issues that may be of interest or present challenges – stay tuned for dates and times.

Our PhD Research Methods Curriculum Committee, comprised of the three program directors and representative faculty from Human Movement Science, Speech and Hearing Sciences, and Occupational Science, as well as members of the Office of Research, has successfully drafted a modular curriculum with a range of new cutting-edge interdisciplinary research methods courses proposed to begin in Fall 2015. The proposed plan is being circulated for faculty input before being routed to the Graduate School for approval. I want to thank the committee members for all of their hard work and expertise – it was a remarkable collaborative effort.

Finally, please take a look at the new resources available on our website to facilitate your grant writing. We have developed templates/boilerplates with descriptions of various department, school, and university facilities and resources as well as provided samples of various components. Also check out the new Target Enrollment Table Generator! You can access these resources by logging in with your ONYEN at the following link: http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/research/researcherresources/dahs-resources/boilerplates-and-templates.

From Dr. Grace Baranek, Associate Chair for Research

FY13-14 Total $4,223,614
Total includes new grants and renewals.

“I really enjoy working with so many different people in various departments and divisions. I am constantly learning from our investigators and their research teams, which excites me because I am fortunate enough to make my own contributions toward their goals and objectives.”

–Aaron Abate’
Grant Supports HSL Librarian Partnership with DAHS Research Team

Three Health Sciences Library (HSL) librarians and Dr. Lori Leibold, Associate Professor, earned funding for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Library of Medicine (NLM) Administrative Supplement. Dr. Leibold is principal investigator of the parent grant from the National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) titled, “Susceptibility to and release from masking in infancy and childhood,” which addresses the maturation of children’s hearing across childhood.

The two-year NIH/NLM award will supply nearly $50,000 in salary support for informationist services provided by HSL librarians Barrie Hayes, bioinformatics and translational science librarian; Kate McGraw, liaison to the School of Dentistry and assistant department head of user services; and Dr. Barbara Rochen Renner, library services evaluation specialist and liaison for the Department of Allied Health Sciences.

Each HSL librarian will serve as an informationist in support of a specific aim of Leibold’s project, such as streamlining the way the research team manages literature; helping disseminate results of their research with providers, research participants, and potential participants; analyzing and recommending data management plans and systems; and creating an efficient way to make a collection of audio cues available to other researchers in the field.

DOD Grants Funds Duke-UNC Study (from page 1)

especially in preschool age children when anxiety disorders first manifest. We’re hoping to change that with this study.”

Previous research suggests that SOR — a set of symptoms characterized by heightened and unusual reactivity to sensory stimuli that occurs more frequently among children with ASD than typically developing children — is associated with anxiety in individuals with ASD. SOR emerges early in life and is often a disabling condition, as it can be associated with avoidance, aggression, lower levels of social and adaptive behavior, and food selectivity. Higher rates of both SOR and anxiety are also associated with chronic gastrointestinal (GI) and sleep problems.

In addition to studying the association between SOR and anxiety symptoms, investigators will explore whether impairments in the ability to disengage attention from a stimulus increase the likelihood that children with SOR develop anxiety. Attention-shifting can help reduce anxiety by allowing an individual to direct his or her attention away from threatening stimuli and instead focus his or her attention on adaptive stimuli.

Project Core Promotes Tech Tools (from page 1)

interventions required for access and academic achievement in the general education curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD) and complex communication needs (CCN). The evidence-based technology that is the target of the intervention is the Dynamic Learning Maps™ Core Vocabulary (DLM® Core).

DLM® Core includes words determined to be necessary for students with SCD and CCN to engage, learn, and demonstrate knowledge in an academic environment. Grounded in the principles of implementation science and scaling up to 10 schools over five potential years, the project will entail iterative cycles of collaborative planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the DLM® Core. Throughout each stage, tools will be refined for training, coaching, assessing readiness, and monitoring fidelity of implementation. The project will result in a web portal of professional development resources for school-level implementation teams, coaches, and educators supporting students with SCD and CCN.

The project will start January 2015. Additional members of the research team include Penny Hatch, Lori Geist, Claire Greer, Skip Ryan, and Allison Dennis.

New Faculty

Dr. William Hoole joined the Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences faculty as an Assistant Professor in January 2014. Dr. Hoole earned his BS from Middle Tennessee State University in 2001 and his AuD from UNC in 2007. In addition to serving patients at the UNC Hearing and Communication Center, his academic responsibilities include course instruction and practicum coordination for audiology graduate students. Dr. Hoole is a licensed audiologist in both North and South Carolina and a certified member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). His research interests include traditional and implantable hearing technologies, professional ethics and industry involvement in clinical education, mitigating socioeconomic barriers for accessing amplification, and societal awareness of autism among individuals with communicative disorders.

Promotion

Lisa Domby was promoted to Associate Professor in the Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences, effective June 11, 2014.

NIH Grant Funds Research on Walking (from page 1)

The study will involve 30 adults with stroke and 30 age and gender-matched healthy adults. Each participant will be assessed in single and three different variable-priority dual-task conditions (no-priority, gait-priority, cognitive-priority) in the laboratory and a real-world context (hospital lobby), and in two different dual-task combinations (walking while talking, walking while performing an executive function task).

Investigators will examine how gait with and without a concurrent cognitive task differs between the research lab and the real-world setting and whether individuals with stroke are able to flexibly prioritize their attention between gait and a simultaneous cognitive task in the lab and the real world. Additionally, researchers will establish estimates of minimal clinically important differences in dual-task interference on gait, which will enable them to identify the individuals with stroke that are most susceptible to clinically significant mobility disability in the real world.
Staff Spotlight

Jennifer Daniel

Recently, Jennifer Daniel’s professional life has been an interesting blend of the familiar and the new. July marked her 15th year with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, but just her second month with the Department of Allied Health Sciences (DAHS). Daniel came on board with the DAHS as Grants and Contracts Manager in late May, just before previous manager Wes Winkelman departed for graduate school. She brought years of grants and contracts experience from her prior appointments with the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities (CIDD), but has been hustling to familiarize herself with the wide array of divisions, programs, and projects encompassed within the DAHS. While the diversity makes the department more complex, Daniel said it also makes the work more appealing.

“I like that there are so many different projects,” she said. “Hearing people talk about the different research they’re doing is very interesting. I like that I get to play a small role in advancing those projects, helping the PIs manage their budgets so they can focus more on their research.”

Daniel earned her undergraduate degree from Elon University, where she majored in broadcast communications and minored in business. After a few years working in communications, Daniel wanted to return to the Durham area where she had grown up and used her business background to get a job with UNC Physician and Associates. She joined the CIDD in 2001 as a Clinical Scheduler, and then became the Contracts and Grants Assistant in 2003. From 2006-2013, she was the CIDD Business Officer.

Working at the CIDD, Daniel often heard good things about the DAHS, especially from Dr. Jack Roush, Speech and Hearing Sciences Division Director, and Dr. Stephen Hooper, who had several appointments with the CIDD and became the DAHS Chair in October 2013.

“Steve and Jack were always talking about Allied Health Sciences, saying that the people here were great, that the staff and faculty were so nice,” Daniel said. When the DAHS grants and contracts position became available, Daniel remembered those ringing endorsements and decided to apply.

In addition to getting a glimpse into research, Daniel said she enjoys managing grants and contracts because she loves working with numbers and bringing various components together into an organized whole.

“It’s like solving a puzzle,” she said. “I like to see all the pieces match up and coordinate nicely.”

Like her professional life, Daniel’s personal life also contains some elements of the familiar and the new. Her 5-year-old son is about to embark on the exciting new adventure of kindergarten. Daniel and her husband, Lance, have been married for nine years, and have known each other for over 22 years.

“We actually met through a former friend of mine that he dated for several years,” Daniel said. “During those years, I and my boyfriend at the time would go out on double dates with them and we all had a lot of fun together. It’s funny how things work out and where fate leads you.”

OS PhD Students Receive Awards to Support Research

Three Occupational Science PhD students, Valerie Fox, Anne V. Kirby, and Adrienne Miao, have been selected to receive $800 research awards from the Society for the Study of Occupation (SSO); USA. The SSO: USA announced the awards in July. Students were selected based on the strength of the grant proposals they submitted.

Fox’s research is focused on exploring participation in social life for young adults following their first psychotic episode. This qualitative study will combine collaborative ethnography and discourse elicitation to fully examine the experience of first episode psychosis as it relates to engagement in social occupations. Dr. Antoine Baillier is her advisor.

Kirby is taking a multi-method approach to exploring factors that influence occupational participation outcomes for young adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The three parts of the project will include a systematic literature review, interviews with families and adolescents with ASD, and analyses of longitudinal predictors using a nationally-representative dataset. Dr. Grace Baranek is her advisor.

Miao’s research is an ethnographic exploration of the everyday occupations of families with children with disabilities. She is also interested in how study design and methods contribute to family-centered research experiences, as well as how investigators access and analyze multiple perspectives. Her advisor is Dr. Ruth Humphry.

Study Identified as One of Top 20 Advances in ASD research for 2013

“Comparative Efficacy of LEAP, TEACCH and Non-Model-Specific Special Education Programs for Preschoolers with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD),” was one 20 studies listed in the 2013 Summary of Advances released by the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC). The study found that preschoolers with ASD who receive high-quality early intervention benefit developmentally regardless of the treatment model used. Dr. Brian Boyd, Assistant Professor, and Fellow at UNC’s Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, co-authored the study, which was published online in June 2013 by the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders.

Post-Doc Receives Fellowship from Autism Speaks

Dr. Sarah Schipul, a post-doctoral fellow at the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities, has been named a Meinzer Postdoctoral Fellow in Translational Research by Autism Speaks. Dr. Schipul, who is conducting research under the mentorship of Dr. Grace Baranek, Department of Allied Health Sciences, and Dr. Aysenil Belger, Department of Psychiatry, will use EEG readings to compare the synchronization of brain activity in children with or without autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In particular, she will examine whether disruptions in brain activity affect behavior and whether such measures can be used to gauge the benefits of potential medicines and other interventions.
Referred Publications


Continued on page 8

RESEARCH NEWS 7


Nephrology resource regions. tries: Access to radiology services in limited national Radiology for Developing Coun-


Book Chapters and Non-Refereed Publications


**Buss Receives Inaugural Peters Award**

Dr. Emily Buss received the first Robert W. Peters Award for Excellence in Research Mentoring at the Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences Commencement in May. The award is named in honor of Dr. Robert W. Peters, who founded the Institute of Speech and Hearing Sciences, which later became a division in the Department of Allied Health Sciences. Sheila Barnett and Colin Peters funded the Robert W. Peters Award for Excellence in Research Mentoring Endowment at the Medical Foundation of NC to honor their late father. The award will be presented biannually to a deserving faculty member.

**Coppola Elected WFOT Programme Coordinator for Research**

Dr. Sue Coppola, Professor, is currently serving a five-year term (2010-2015) as the USA Delegate to the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT). In June, at the WFOT Council Meeting in Japan, she was elected to the WFOT Executive Management Team as Programme Coordinator for Research. She will serve as coordinator for a four-year term (2014-2018).

**Wells Elected NCASM President, Completes PhD**

Dr. Mary Ellen Wells, Assistant Professor and Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science Program Director, has been elected to serve as President of the North Carolina Academy of Sleep Medicine (NCASM) for a two year term (2014-2016). NCASM is NC’s premier and only chartered professional association for sleep medicine and serves technologists, technicians, trainees, physicians, and all other sleep stakeholders. Dr. Wells graduated with her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from North Carolina State University in May. Her dissertation, titled “Mobile Learning in Medical Education: A Case Study Through the Lens of Sleep Education,” involved creating a sleep medicine “app” for smart phones and tablets.

**Crais to Chair ASHA Academic Affairs Board**

Dr. Elizabeth Crais, Professor, has been appointed by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association to chair the Academic Affairs Board starting in 2015. The Board provides guidance to the almost 300 undergraduate and graduate programs in speech and hearing across the country. The Board’s charge is to (a) identify and monitor critical issues, forecast needs and trends, develop resources, implement programs, and recommend actions that address academic preparation and (b) support and enhance capacity building efforts in response to clinical and faculty-researcher personnel needs and shortages.

**Mercer Selected for Faculty Engaged Scholars**

Dr. Vicki Stemmons Mercer, Associate Professor, has been selected for Class V of the Thorp Faculty Engaged Scholars (FES) program, which brings together faculty from across campus to engage in a two-year experiential, competency-based curriculum designed to advance their engaged scholarship. Dr. Mercer will be focusing on further development and expansion of the Community Health and Mobility Partnership (CHAMP) project, a falls prevention program that she began in McDowell County in western North Carolina in 2009.

**Mitchell Completes PhD in Leadership Studies**

Dr. Brenda Olivia Everett Mitchell, Department of Allied Health Sciences Associate Chair for Student Services and AHEC Operations, completed her PhD in Leadership Studies through the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (A&T) in late 2013. Dr. Mitchell’s dissertation, titled “Relationship of Peer Mentoring to Academic Success and Student Engagement During the First Two Years of College for Historically Underserved Students,” was a correlational explanatory quantitative research design that revealed a number of statistically significant findings about the relationship between peer mentoring and college success.

**Moon Receives Teaching Award, Completes PhD**

In May, Dr. Tara Moon was presented with the Louise Ward Excellence in Teaching Award, which is based on multiple years of service and represents a consistently high standard of teaching in the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science. Also in May, Dr. Moon graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a PhD in Health Related Sciences.
The Carolina Center for Public Service has awarded a Community Engagement Fellowship to an interdisciplinary team of student researchers from the Department of Allied Health Sciences: Tyson Harmon (PhD student in the Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences), Mei-Ling Lin (PhD student in the Division of Occupational Science), and Gabrielle Scronce (DPT Class of 2014; Human Movement Science PhD student, fall 2014). In collaboration with the Triangle Aphasia Project (TAP), the research team will seek to establish a mentoring experience between people with aphasia and graduate students in their three divisions.

“Research has indicated that an important quality of life aspect for people with aphasia is participation in meaningful activities, but that can be difficult to address in therapeutic service-delivery post-stroke,” said Harmon. “We hope to establish an ongoing program whereby people with aphasia can act as mentors to students by sharing their personal recovery experiences and answering student questions. We believe that such a program will be mutually beneficial as it will provide future clinicians with immediate exposure to people with aphasia, while simultaneously giving individuals with aphasia an opportunity to serve students by offering a personalized perspective of disability and rehabilitation.”

Assessments will be conducted pre- and post-participation in the program to measure impact on quality of life across various domains. The program itself will also be evaluated to determine its contributions to educational, therapeutic, and research goals.

Stigma Free Carolina Campaign Endeavors to Support Mental Health Across UNC Chapel Hill Campus

Would you think less of someone who has received mental health treatment? According to the results of a 2010 Healthy Minds Study, the vast majority of UNC Chapel Hill students would not. However, more than half the respondents to the study believed that most other people would judge someone who received treatment negatively, a perception that may be hindering some students from seeking help early, when they first begin to have mental health concerns.

Organizers of Stigma Free Carolina, a multi-faceted campaign scheduled for September 12-October 11, hope to change that. The project is led by Nikhil Tomar, Todd Jensen, and Nelson Pace, doctoral students in the Occupational Science, Social Work, and Epidemiology programs respectively, who connected as members of the Graduate School’s Royster Society of Fellows. Initially, the three were planning a photography campaign featuring people holding signs with supportive messages about mental health. Then, after forming a committee including Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Associate Director Dr. Maureen Windle, CAPS Psychologist Dr. Dan Darnell, Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Education, Fellowships and Communication Dr. Sandra Hoeflich, and Rethink: Psychiatric Illness Co-chair Taylor Swankie, the scope of the project grew. The committee now has more than 30 individuals representing more than 15 organizations across the campus.

With the project’s growth, Stigma Free Carolina will now include a comprehensive website (stigmafree.unc.edu), a kick-off luncheon with fun, educational activities on September 12 at Top of Lenoir, mental-health awareness training sessions delivered by Rethink: Psychiatric Illness, a panel seminar featuring mental health experts from around campus and the state, a photography campaign, and an interactive theater/workshop performance by Interactive Theatre Carolina. The campaign’s culmination will coincide with Mental Illness Awareness Week, October 5-11.

Tomar, who first conceived of the idea behind Stigma Free Carolina, said support for the campaign has far exceeded expectations. Every faculty and staff member, student leader, and administrator the committee approached has responded positively and agreed to join in the effort. Campus entities including but not limited to The Graduate School, UNC Student Affairs, Carolina Dining Services, and UNC Student Stores have provided generous support.

Tomar, Jensen, and Pace have submitted a study proposal to the UNC Institutional Review Boards to conduct surveys before and after the events to see if the campaign changes attitudes regarding mental health on campus. In addition to producing successful outcomes from this year’s campaign, Tomar said the committee hopes this will become an annual event.

Community Engagement Fellowship Awarded to Student Research Team

PT Student Recognized for Community Service

Lisa Spees, Sarah van der Horst, and Chancellor Carol L. Folt, at the awards celebration, on April 2.

Doctor of Physical Therapy student Sarah Svetkey van der Horst received the 2014 Robert E. Bryan Public Service Award from the Carolina Center for Public Service. van der Horst was recognized for her work founding and directing Amigas en Salud, an exercise and health awareness program that provides free services, such as a weekly Zumba class and bimonthly health tutorials, to underserved members of the Latina community. Classes and programs are delivered in Spanish, and facilitated by volunteers, many of whom are current UNC School of Medicine, Social Work, PT, Public Health, and undergraduate students. In addition to van der Horst’s leadership, the Amigas en Salud’s executive team consists of Romina Boyle (Zumba instructor), Lisa Spees (doctoral student in Public Policy), Stephanie Schmitt (master’s student in Interdisciplinary Health Communication), and Mitzy Gonzalez (master’s student of Social Work). For more information on Amigas en Salud, visit http://amigasensalud.org.
Dr. Ilana Levin, PT, DPT, is a firm believer in the flexibility of the human mind, and her experiences over the past two years in the Human Movement Science (HMSC) doctoral program have only reinforced this outlook. Assisting with faculty research projects and pursuing her own interests, Dr. Levin has repeatedly observed how people with neurological or physical challenges can adapt.

"Even as adults, even when there is some brain dysfunction, people are still interested in changing and adjusting," she said. "That's very motivating for me."

The PhD program has also given Dr. Levin ample opportunity to explore her own mind's flexibility, as she has transitioned from clinician to researcher and from pediatric physical therapist to working primarily with adults, all while balancing life with her family, which includes her husband, 7-year-old-son, and 3-year-old daughter.

Navigating major life changes is nothing new for Dr. Levin, who emigrated from Latvia to Israel at the age of 8. As a young adult, she served as an electronics technician in the Israeli Army for three years, during which time she began practicing Tai Chi and developed an interest in mind/body interaction that eventually led her to Physical Therapy, as well as appreciation for technology that continues to inform her research. After earning her bachelor's degree in PT from Tel Aviv University in 1998, she began a career focusing on pediatric patients.

Dr. Levin practiced in Israel and then in the U.S. after relocating in 2004. She earned her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from UNC through the transitional DPT program in 2010, and was accepted to the HMSC program for the fall of 2013, receiving a prestigious UNC Graduate Merit Scholarship to fund her first year of study. In addition to taking classes and developing her research focus, Dr. Levin has served as a teaching assistant for online DPT courses and assisted with research conducted by Drs. Mike Lewek and Debbie Thorpe, as well as Dr. Prue Plummer. While her experience as a therapist well prepared her for interactions with research participants, Dr. Levin said her new role has required a shift in thinking.

"While our goals as clinicians are precise, the way we try to implement those goals and the interactions with patients are kind of spontaneous," she said. "With research, it's all about standardizing, and it's been interesting for me to develop new abilities and discipline working within that structure."

Dr. Levin's research interests include factors contributing to decreased mobility in individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities (cerebral palsy in particular) and intervention programs to increase functional mobility in this population. She is especially interested in gait retraining and improving dynamic balance, and aspires to contribute to the development of technology-assisted user-friendly interventions that facilitate motor learning and increase access to health promoting activities.

Dr. Levin said assisting Dr. Thorpe greatly influenced her desire to work with adults with cerebral palsy, a population that has not been widely studied and is greatly underserved. This field of research also gives Dr. Levin a chance to feed a curiosity she developed through her early interactions with people from different cultures.

“One of my motivations in working with people diagnosed with neurological conditions is the opportunity to engage with people whose senso-motor experiences are so different from my own,” she said. “I really enjoy learning their perspectives.”

**SHS PhD Student Awarded New Century Scholarship**

Speech and Hearing Sciences PhD student Thomas A. Page was awarded a New Century Scholars Doctoral Scholarship from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation in the fall of 2013. Page is project coordinator and examiner for the Outcomes of School Age Children who are Hard of Hearing (www.ochl-study.org). His dissertation research focuses on identification of child, family, and environmental characteristics that influence communication and academic outcomes in children who are hard of hearing.

**RadSci Student Repeatedly Recognized for Excellence**

Issack Endeshaw Boru, who graduated in May with a BS in Radiologic Science, received the Hayden B. Renwick Academic Achievement Award, the Harvey E. Beech Outstanding Senior Award, Kappa Omicron Black Male Appreciation Recognition, the Phyllis Ann Canup Pepper Radiologic Science Memorial Fund Scholarship, and the Dr. Jerry Lambiente Radiologic Science Loyalty Fund Annual Scholarship. In March 2014, he was inducted into the Order of the Golden Fleece, Carolina’s oldest and most prestigious honorary society, and upon graduation, he received the Tina D. Robbins Memorial Award, which the Division of Radiologic Science faculty presents to one graduating student who has demonstrated high ethical standards and a genuine concern for his/her patients.
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PHD PROGRAM GRADUATES (JULY 1, 2013-JUNE 30, 2014)

HUMAN MOVEMENT SCIENCE


OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE


2014 David E. Yoder Symposium
The Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences hosted the 2014 David E. Yoder Symposium on March 28. The all-day session, titled “Combining Literacy and Language Intervention of Young Children,” was led by Dr. Laura Justice, Executive Director of the Children’s Learning Research Collaborative and EHE Distinguished Professor at The Ohio State University. The Division hosts the Yoder Symposium every two years to honor Professor Emeritus David E. Yoder.

Human Movement Science Research Symposium
The 11th annual Human Movement Science Research Symposium was held February 21 at UNC. Students, faculty, researchers, and clinicians from across the region attend the symposium each year to present and discuss current research. Dr. Irene Davis of the Harvard Medical School delivered the keynote address “Benefits and Pitfalls of Barefoot & Minimal Footwear Running.”

2014 Mitchell Symposium
The Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy welcomed Dr. Gelya Frank, PhD, Professor at the University of Southern California, Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, as the 2014 Mitchell Symposium Scholar.


Below, Dr. Gelya Frank, center, with UNC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy faculty members and PhD students.