



The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

SPTA Newsletter

UNC Makes an Appearance at Advocacy Day

Helen Buchanan (DPT1)

While the Classes of 2018 and 2019 were out on their clinical rotations, members of the Class of 2020 joined faculty and alumni to participate in the NCPTA's annual Advocacy Day on May 31, 2018. Over 200 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students from across North Carolina met with members of the NC General Assembly to advocate on behalf of the profession. Students learned about the legislative process and current efforts by the NCPTA with regards to Senate Bill 177 (House Bill 187), a bill that would allow physical therapists in North Carolina to provide spinal manipulation without a physician's referral.



After a briefing from the NCPTA's president Kyle Covington and lobbyist Alex Miller, participants visited state legislators and provided information about the value of physical therapy while seeking support for S.177. Students were also able to observe part of the legislative session as May 31 marked the legislature's vote for the state budget.

Special thanks to Michael McMorris and Debby Givens for their participation and guidance to the first-year students leading up to and during Advocacy Day. It is so important to get involved early and take part in advocating for our profession

"Spring"-ing into Service with Habitat for Humanity

Katie Fabian (DPT1)

After facing off on the basketball court during March Madness, the philanthropy committee used an opportunity with Habitat for Humanity of Durham to rebuild our ties to the DPT students at our rival down Tobacco Road. A group of first and second year UNC students partnered with our peers at Duke to work on some finishing touches of a home for our neighbors in Durham. Students worked on projects such as painting molding, sealing the house's crawlspace, and clearing the backyard in preparation for laying grass seed. It was a great morning of building relationships, houses, and community with not only our classmates, but also our future peers and the members of our local community.

Thank you so much to everyone who was able to join in on the fun and thank you to the Duke students who joined with us to help out our community! We will certainly be organizing more builds and joint opportunities for service in the future!



FACULTY AWARD:

Dr. Vicki Mercer, PT, PhD, named Outstanding Physical Therapist by the North Carolina Physical Therapy Association (NCPTA)

UNC SPTA: Table of Content and Mission Statement

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The purpose of the UNC SPTA is to promote the profession of physical therapy and encourage the professional development of students enrolled in UNC's Division of Physical Therapy in the Department of Allied Health Sciences through leadership and service opportunities.



Tyrrell County Service-Learning Trip 2018

Helen Buchanan (DPT1)

Twenty-one students and three faculty members from UNC-Chapel Hill traveled to Tyrrell County, NC to work with community partners on a variety of community activities related to the social determinants of health. The 2018 trip marks UNC's ninth year of interdisciplinary teams traveling to Tyrrell County to engage in service-learning activities during spring break.

The trip is part of a one-credit hour service learning course that unites graduate and undergraduate students from the Division of Physical Therapy, School of Nursing, School of Public Health, and the College of Arts and Sciences. Faculty supervisors of the trip include Sonda Oppewal from the School of Nursing, Vicki Mercer from the Division of Physical Therapy, and Joanne Caye from the School of Social Work. While the group was only in Tyrrell County for five days, the students and faculty hope that their work and partnerships will have long-standing impacts within the communities they served.



The team devoted a substantial amount of time to senior health and the challenges faced by clients with limited transportation in rural areas. Physical therapy and nursing students completed several home visits with the elderly, concentrating on health concerns, falls risk assessments, and improving accessibility in their homes. Additionally, a team of students and faculty conducted falls risk assessments at the Tyrrell County Senior Citizens Center in Columbia.

“I appreciated the experience of getting to screen older adults for falls risks and their own health concerns,” explained Helen Buchanan, a first-year student in the Physical Therapy program. “I was able to do two home visits with older ladies I met through the screens, which was very impactful for me.”

Another team of UNC students planned mentoring sessions at Columbia High School for the senior class to encourage and give advice on how to pursue their goals after graduation. UNC students partnered with the Learning Center to provide high school seniors with resources for post-graduation opportunities, hosted a guest speaker who is an alumna of Columbia High School, and held small-group conversations to share their own experiences as first-generation college students at UNC.

Charity Lackey, a nursing student who assisted in the coordination of the mentoring day, describes her experiences: “My time at Columbia taught me that these students have stories, and breathing life into them generates energy that can surmount any unwarranted vulnerability they experience.”

Additionally, UNC students hosted health and physical education activities at the elementary, middle, and high schools for more than 300 students.



Activities

covered a wide variety of topics such as analyzing food labels, promoting an active lifestyle, and discussing characteristics of healthy relationships. Through these activities, the group aimed to engage youth in their health and their future opportunities for growth.

Another social determinant of health explored by UNC students during the trip was the availability of nutritious, affordable food. Teams of students partnered with the Church Road Emergency Food Closet to assist in the reception of donations, the distribution of food to community members, and the organization of the food closet's current space. Before the trip, Candace Beddard, MSN nursing student, led the creation of a healthy-eating guide with a recipe plan to make meals for \$80 per week for a family of four. The only health care provider in the county, a family nurse practitioner who leads the Columbia Medical Center, and an RN who works with her, requested this project. These guides were distributed at the main grocery store and other community gathering points within the county.

In order to reach community members who may experience accessibility issues with fresh food, students partnered with Columbia Medical Center to plant over 300 vegetable seedlings that will be delivered to community members.

Finally, students participated in several projects to assist the county in maintaining its rich ecosystems, which form an important portion of county tourism. Students gathered trash along the boardwalk at the Scuppernon River in Columbia and removed an invasive plant species, alligator weed, from the riverbank. A team of students also assisted Pettigrew State Park with clean-up after the recent nor'easter, clearing nearly four miles of trail. The students enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about the area's ecosystems and partnered with a variety of related stakeholders.





2018 Golf Tournament

Maddie Wygand (DPT3)

“Ben Carrion and I had the privilege of organizing the 12th Annual UNC Division of Physical Therapy Golf Tournament on September 29, 2017 at the Golf Course at Chapel Ridge. This was a fun event for students, alumni, local clinicians, and supporters of the UNC PT Program to come together to socialize, play golf, and contribute to the PT profession!”

This year we had beautiful weather and were able to complete the entire tournament. Golfers had fun competing with their teams in the tournament as well as the many hole contests, including Closest to the Pin, Longest Drive, Putting Contest, and even a Hole in Two to win a trip to Pebble Beach. Once the golfers returned from the course, everyone enjoyed socializing while eating delicious food catered by Backyard Bistro and having a chance to win raffle prizes donated by many local businesses. All proceeds from the tournament went to the Foundation for Physical Therapy and the UNC Student Physical Therapy Association. The Foundation for Physical Therapy donation went toward the Marquette Challenge which challenges PT schools to raise money to fund PT research.



Pictured: Ben Carrion (DPT3) and Maddie Wygand (DPT3), co-leaders of the Annual Golf Tournament

We would like to extend a special thank you to Dr. Mike McMorris for his tremendous help and guidance as our fearless faculty adviser. Also, thank you to everyone who golfed, donated, and/or volunteered to help make this tournament successful.”

A Note from the Continuing Education Committee

Hannah Ryan (DPT1) and Helen Buchanan (DPT1)

Annual Walk MS in Raleigh

Amy Collins (DPT1)

On April 7th, UNC’s Department of Physical Therapy partnered with UNC’s Department of Neurology to fundraise for Multiple Sclerosis and participate in the annual Walk MS in Raleigh. The UNC Neuro-Heels walked 3 miles around the PNC Arena in Raleigh. Led by Dr. Irena Dujmovic from the Department of Neurology and team captains, Spencer Edgerton (DPT2) and Elise Widman (DPT2), UNC walked through the rain for loved ones, friends, family, and all those fighting the battle against MS. UNC also staffed a booth with information on tips for exercising with MS and had a wonderful time educating others on the benefits from physical therapy.

Together We Are Stronger



Throughout the 2017-18 academic year, students participated in numerous opportunities that continued their education both outside of the classroom and in advocacy for the profession. Multiple speakers were sponsored by the UNC Student Physical Therapy Association Continuing Education and Networking Committee. In the fall, human movement science PhD candidate Christina Vander Vegt presented concussion research and rehabilitation strategies that physical therapists can utilize during screening and treatment of concussions based on her work in UNC’s Matthew-Gfeller Sport-Related Traumatic Brain Injury Research Center. In the spring, UNC DPT Class of 2018 students Sage Stout and Jennel McIntosh presented their respective capstones on post-concussion management in pediatrics and strategies to address implicit bias.

Students also took part in multiple legislative aspects of the profession. In March, students attended the first annual North Carolina Student Conclave, hosted by the North Carolina Student Special Interest Group, where PT and PTA students from across the state gathered to get involved in issues important to students while in school and after graduation. Additionally, the UNC SPTA hosted the Capitol District National Advocacy Dinner along with Duke and Elon’s student associations. The dinner served as an opportunity to promote advocacy for the profession and to educate PT and PTA students, clinicians, and the public about the legislative process both on the state and federal level.

Health Fair

Elise Wildman (DPT2)

Six PT students volunteered at the First Baptist Health Fair in Durham. The health fair provided community screenings by dentists, physicians, podiatrists, and optometrists as well as education and counseling concerning prenatal care, hygiene and nutrition. Dan Herb, PT, PhD, Dean of the Congdon School of Health at High Point University, supervised the physical therapy screens while our students were able to observe the evaluations, ask questions about the participants pain and brainstorm treatments with Dr. Erb. The fair was an excellent example of physical therapy's role in community service interventions targeting illness prevention and health promotion. Each individual expressed great appreciation for our interest and investment in their health, and it was valuable to participate in the subjective interviews and observe the recommended treatment.



Pictured (from left to right): Olivia DeSena, Jenna Silver, Mollie Pathman, Taylor Guardalabene, Elise Wildman, Deanna Sipes

The Importance of Diversity in Health Care Professions

Deanna Sipes (DPT2)

As we continue to see a change in demographics in the United States, there is still a vast gap in the representation of diversity in physical therapy that leads to challenges in building crucial relationship with patients, however, PT's will inevitably encounter people of various ethnicities and cultural backgrounds in their careers. Data shows that disparities in healthcare and dissatisfaction are pronounced among racial minorities. Minorities often report that their doctors do not understand them nor respect their values and beliefs, and that they are looked down on by their providers. This is important to note, because when patients feel heard and understood, they are more likely to follow treatment plans and less likely to miss appointments. Not only does feeling comprehended and valued benefit one's cooperation of care but it can reduce health care costs, medical errors, and improve health outcomes and one's well-being; therefore, it is important to emphasize a profession that is representative of many patient populations. Although many physical therapists listen to patients and attempt to make them feel understood, the grand barrier to this relationship is poor communication skills with patients of diverse backgrounds and the lack of diversity in healthcare professionals themselves. These barriers ultimately contribute to racial and ethnic disparities of care.



This year, Deanna Sipes, class of 2019, formed the Diversity and Inclusion Committee in the Student Physical Therapy Association (SPTA) to address some of these issues and their influence in the DPT program at UNC. The goal of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee is to have a group that focuses on enhancing the diversity and inclusion in the program and, in turn, the field of physical

therapy. The main goals are the following: (1) enhance the diversity of incoming classes and new faculty hires, (2) provide resources and support to promote success for underrepresented students in the program, (3) enhance inclusion and education of diverse populations within the program and curriculum, and (4) conduct cultural competence trainings for current students and faculty to better relate to patients off all walks of life. To address the goals of expanding the diversity of the UNC DPT student body, the committee and other PT students have participated in multiple outreach events this year, including the Boys and Girls Club of Durham, Charles E. Jordan High School, Tar Heel Outreach day, Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS), and more. At these events, the DPT students targeted underrepresented individuals in the area to share information about physical therapy and allow interested people to participate in functional assessments, like Timed Up and Go, with assistive devices. The goal of these outreach events is to have more underrepresented individuals interested in and aware of PT as a career option.

SAVE THE DATE:

End of Summer Pool Party

Date: Aug 18 at 3pm

Venue: Shadowood Apt Complex

Professionalism Ceremony

Date: Friday, Aug 24 at 4:30pm

Venue: MBRB 2204

Orientation Scavenger Hunt

Date: Monday, Aug 20 at 1pm

Venue: Meet in Bondurant G030

Trivia Pub Night

Date: Monday, September 17

Venue: Linda's on Franklin St

First Fall Big Group Meeting

Date: Wednesday, September 5

Venue: LL100

UNC DPT Annual Golf Tournament

Date: Friday, September 28

Venue: The Golf Club @ Chapel Ridge