

Accolades

SUMMER 2022

UNIVERSITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE FOR HEALTH SCIENCES MAGAZINE

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Force for Good awards
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Class Notes





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Registration - A \$100 non-refundable deposit must accompany your registration form. A 50% non-refundable, non-transferable deposit is required for Certification. Balance is due 30 days prior to start date of the seminar. Balance can be transferred or refunded with two week written notice. Notice received after that time subject to only 50% refund. No refunds or transfers will be issued after the seminar begins. Team Discount - Two (2) or more colleagues registering for the same seminar at the same time receive a 10% discount. (Advanced notice and full payment is required; does not apply after the first day of a seminar.) Multiple Seminar Discount - Register and pay in full for two or more seminars at the same time and receive a 10% discount. (May not be combined with any other discounts or previous registrations.) Audit Seminar Discount - Register and pay for a seminar previously attended/completed and receive a 50% discount. Seminar dates, locations, and tuition are subject to change; please call before making any non-refundable reservations.

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Dear University Community,

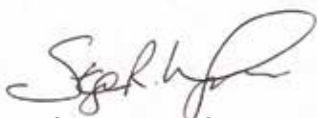


Hello fellow alumni! Hope you are all doing well. Your University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) Alumni Association Advisory Board has been busy since the last issue of *Accolades*. Project highlights include:

- We assembled, modified and approved the USAHS Alumni Association bylaws, which were officially approved during our March meeting. This was a significant accomplishment for this group to move forward for years to come. Special thanks to **Stephen Elam, PT, DPT, EdD** (MPT '96, tDPT '11 and Board Vice President) and the Governance Committee for their commitment and time investment in making this happen.
- The Alumni Engagement Committee, under the leadership of **Jane Min, OTD, OTR/L** (OTD '21 and Board Vice President), and the Geographic Mentor Program are off to a great start! This program assigns alumni across the U.S. to students when they get their clinical placement. The geographic mentor supports the student in learning about the area and can also act as a professional mentor as the student nears the end of post-graduate learning and moves forward in a new career.
- I personally have three mentees currently, and it has been as rewarding for me as I believe it has been for them. I strongly encourage you to learn more about the program (see page 7) or contact me if you have an interest in volunteering as a mentor. I think most of us could agree that if we had someone like this when we were on internship, it would have been quite helpful in those transitions.
- The Advocacy Committee, under the leadership of **Rebekah Jarrar, MA, MDT, OTR/L** (MOT '17 and Board Vice President), has started establishing contacts with local and national professional organizations, such as the American Occupational Therapy Association, American Physical Therapy Association, the American Medical Association and more. Please let us know if you are involved with a professional organization and could represent USAHS and its alumni. This is a great means of promoting the University and our professional organizations at the same time!

On behalf of the entire Advisory Board, thank you to those who have helped us fulfill the Board's vision. Stay safe out there and again, please reach out to alumni@usa.edu if you are interested in getting involved in any of these opportunities.

Professionally,



Stephen R. Weyandt, PT, DPT (MPT '00, tDPT '04)
President, USAHS Alumni Association Advisory Board

Vivian A. Sanchez
CHANCELLOR

Dr. Brian Goldstein
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF ACADEMIC
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Terry Rakosky
CHIEF EXPERIENCE OFFICER

Polly Crabtree
DIRECTOR, ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Editorial and Design

Suzanne Harbison
DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY
COMMUNICATIONS

Stefanie Smith
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Simone Tieber
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Inquiries

www.usa.edu/about/alumni/
alumni@usa.edu
800-241-1027

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for Health Sciences



USAHS is proud to be a Certified B Corp Institution, joining a global movement of people working as a force for good. USAHS has been a Certified B Corp since 2015.



STAY CONNECTED

Help us grow our USAHS social media presence—and stay informed on the accomplishments and events of the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences! Find USAHS' alumni groups on LinkedIn and Facebook.

We encourage alumni to share job postings, accomplishments and information of interest to the community at large on these pages.

The LinkedIn and Facebook groups are private. If your member request has not been approved within 48 hours, please contact alumni@usa.edu.

Note that you must be an SLP alum to join the SLP group, a PT alum to join the PT group and an OT alum to join the OT group. All alumni are encouraged to join the LinkedIn group.

We look forward to sharing and engaging with you!



www.linkedin.com/groups/12645146/



PT: www.facebook.com/groups/usahsptalumni

OT: facebook.com/groups/usahsotalumni

SLP: facebook.com/groups/usahsmsslalumni

Follow USAHS Social Media

In addition, be sure to follow USAHS on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok. You can find us by searching for University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences. Tag us in your post-graduation endeavors, so we can celebrate with you. Plus, leave a review on Facebook so others can learn from your experiences!



Continuing Professional Education

The Continuing Professional Education (CPE) team provides a complimentary webinar series for alumni, taught by a USAHS alum or faculty member. There have been 10 seminars to date, with topics including Human Trafficking, Cultural Linguistics and the most recent—IT Band Syndrome (RunTech), conducted by **Dr. Michael Turner, PT, DPT, OCS, MTC, FAAOMPT** (MHS '99, DPT '12).

Upcoming complimentary CPE alumni webcast topics include “Child and Adolescent Assessment for Mental Health Concerns” and “Exploring the Basal Ganglia and Common Clinical Diagnoses due to Basal Ganglia Damage.”

Don't forget USAHS alumni also receive 20 percent off CPE seminars that the University offers. Participants can earn continuing education units that may be applied toward the licensure requirements in their profession. To browse USAHS Continuing Education Offerings and register, visit cpe.usa.edu.

MANUAL THERAPY AND CRANIO-FACIAL CERTIFICATIONS



In January 2022, the Rules and Practice Committee of the Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners reviewed a request to add the University of St.

Augustine for Health Sciences Specialty Certification to the list of certifying entities for treatment without a referral. Specifically, the specialty certifications in Manual Therapy (MTC) and Cranio-Facial (CFC) were determined to meet the Board's established criteria. Any Doctor of Physical Therapy who holds a PT license in Texas and maintains a USAHS specialty certification is now eligible to treat a patient for no more than 15 consecutive days without a referral.

All physical therapists with USAHS MTC and/or CFC certifications are required to provide documentation every two years to maintain their credentials. Refer to the “Certification Maintenance Requirements” using the QR code for a list of approved professional development activities.

If you are considering MTC or CFC certification, please visit cpe.usa.edu for a complete listing of seminars, dates and locations, or call 800-241-1027 x1400 for more information.



Force for Good Awards Recognize Alumni and Community Partners

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences believes in the power of education to change lives and transform society. USAHS is committed to making a lasting impact in the communities we serve, and we are proud to be a Certified B Corp institution, joining a global movement of people working as a force for good.

The **Force for Good Award** is presented to alumni and community partners who possess characteristics most supportive of the University's mission, core values and B Corp commitment. These attributes include integrity, innovation, responsiveness, support and advocacy.

The alumni Force for Good Award recipients for the 2021 Fall and 2022 Spring Terms are:



Fall 2021 St. Augustine:

Christian Bourgeois, PT, DPT, MTC, OCS, FAAOMPT, CMTPT (DPT '07)
Physical Therapist and Owner at Bourgeois Physical Therapy and Sports Rehab

As a partner in the Allied Health Program in the Ascension Parrish in Louisiana, Dr. Christian Bourgeois provides exposure to physical therapy for those interested. This includes introducing high-school seniors to the physical therapy profession in his clinic and hosting senior undergraduate students from Southern University.

Since graduating in 2007 with his doctorate in Physical Therapy, he has continued to grow as a clinician and educator, practicing physical therapy and teaching for the University. Dr. Bourgeois has been both a core and contributing faculty member for the Flex DPT program. After relocating back home, he opened Bourgeois Physical Therapy and Sport Rehab with his wife, Melissa, in 2015.

Dr. Bourgeois believes in supporting the community. Patients are treated like family, and he teaches techniques, such as blood flow restriction for strengthening, to other health care providers.



Spring 2022 St. Augustine:

Robert W. Kentner, DNP, RN (DNP '21)
Quality and Infection Prevention Manager at Sidney Regional Medical Center

Dr. Robert Kentner is a 20-year U.S. Navy veteran and received his Doctor of Nursing Practice from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences in 2021.

In addition to his role as Quality and Infection Prevention Manager at Sidney Regional Medical Center in Nebraska, Dr. Kentner actively volunteers in his local community as a paramedic and firefighter. He is an active USAHS champion, proactively sharing his experience and support with alumni and current students as mentor and preceptor.

Dr. Kentner is also on the board of directors for an international organization for Faith-Based Nursing. He tirelessly works to promote access to care and the holistic delivery of care for all.

Force for Good Award Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 Recipients

(community and clinical partners):

- **Spring 2022 Dallas:** Cole Health, Pediatric Therapy and Applied Behavior Solutions
- **Spring 2022 Miami:** Carolina Hoires, LCSW, Director of Social Services for the Brain Center
- **Fall 2021 Dallas:** Genesis Women's Shelter & Support
- **Spring 2022 St. Augustine:** Deborah Mock, Director, Day Services, Arc of St Johns, Inc.
- **Fall 2021 Austin:** Cindy R. Miller, Sr. Program Manager for Children and Youth Programs, San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind
- **Fall 2021 Miami:** Lady Michelle Servillas, PT, CADCCT, NDCCP, Physical Therapist, ServCare
- **Spring 2022 San Marcos:** George G. Glenner Alzheimer's Family Centers, Inc.
- **Fall 2021 San Marcos:** Charles "Chaka" Webb, Founder, Stoke for Life Foundation
- **Spring 2022 Austin:** Stan Wedel, retired



Listen to the Force for Good Award recipients during the commencement ceremonies:



Nominate an extraordinary USAHS alum who demonstrates the characteristics required to continue the University's mission of being a Force for Good:



Will You Serve as a Mentor?



“The USAHS Geographic Mentorship Program is helpful for advice to students. It’s meaningful to me, because I am able to be a contact point for assistance as needed in an unfamiliar area for students.”

—Kirsten Paschal-Wilson, MOT, OTR/L (MOT '15)

Every term, the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences assigns students to more than 2,000 clinical placements across the United States. Students filling these positions are frequently placed in locations that they are unfamiliar with. To help them with the transition to a new area, the Alumni Engagement Office has started a Geographic Mentors program. We are looking for alumni who are willing to help students before they start their clinical placements with information about a specific city or area.

Students are looking for information on:

- Housing and resources for setting up a household
- Recreation and points of interest
- Shopping and eating
- Travel and accommodations
- Cultural resources and activities

Students are placed and matched with geographic mentors upon request three terms per year. There is no guarantee that geographic mentors will be matched with students. If at any time you wish to be removed from the list of available geographic mentors, please let us know.

“I think it’s extremely helpful when you aren’t from an area to have a list of things to do and places to see and shop from someone who is familiar with that place. It’s one less thing you have to worry about, as you are already anxious about the internship itself. I enjoy talking with someone who is where I used to be. I also like being able to give back to others, as I had people helping me when I had internships in cities I wasn’t familiar with.”— Lisa Kubes (MPT '97)



“The program is valuable because it gives the students relief and lessens their worries. I appreciate how, as a mentor, I can give students the necessary advice that I wish I could have had when I was in their position.”

— Bogdan Katkov, DPT, CSCS (DPT '22)



If you are willing to serve as a geographic mentor for our students starting clinical placements in areas you are familiar with, please complete the form using the QR code. Thank you in advance for your participation.

BRIONA DAUGHERTY (MS-SLP '22)

MS-SLP Alum Brings Music to the Profession



Briona Daugherty's (MS-SLP '22) speech-language pathology (SLP) path began on board a cruise ship. Daugherty graduated from San Diego State University with a bachelor's degree in theatrical performance. She studied opera and musical theater, originally wanting to be a touring singer for Broadway-style shows.

After spending time as a professional singer in Las Vegas and New York City, she began a career performing on cruise ships, including five years in China, Japan, Korea and Thailand. The longer she worked on cruise ships, the more she aided other vocalists in adjusting to life onboard. This included helping entertainment employees maintain their voices for more than two hours a night

in a 2,000-seat theater. After witnessing entertainers experience vocal injuries and illness from overuse, she became interested in learning what was causing the injuries. Her goal was to help these singers recover faster and prevent future injuries.

"It's so painful to see someone you know who worked for 15 years get a great contract and then see that colleague go home because of injuries. No one onboard really understood the injury or how to support it," says Daugherty.

A year before the pandemic, she began taking prerequisites to become a speech-language pathologist. Then all contracts for cruise ship employees were put on hold due to COVID-19.

Daugherty decided to look for Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology

programs that were taught virtually, which led her to USAHS.

She explains that so much of a person's identity in day-to-day life revolves around what they do for a living.

"It's one of the first things people ask in introductions, and it's what I think of myself when I look in the mirror. I remember going through the first two semesters of the program feeling like I wasn't myself because who I was, was a singer, and not a grad student nor SLP yet," says Daugherty.

"The University bent over backwards to help me get a vocal disorders placement because of my background. During my clinical experience, I started seeing professional vocalists. I felt like I belonged again. I knew exactly what they were dealing with in their injury, the fear of losing their livelihood and the pressures of the job, and for the first time in my life, I finally knew how to help them," Daugherty exclaims.

Music in Therapy

While at USAHS, Daugherty enjoyed tinkering with using music in therapy. She found it difficult to find songs and books for young children featuring SLP target sounds.

"I remember looking for an /r/ book and was shocked because there was nothing available. So, I made a PowerPoint presentation and wrote the first draft of 'Giraffe's Rainy Birthday' for therapy. Kids lose interest with lists of words, but with rhymes, songs and stories, they remember them."

She knew her ideas were working when a parent reported that their three-year-old child was singing the songs and quoting the limericks in the bathtub.

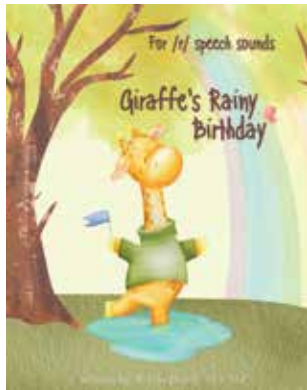


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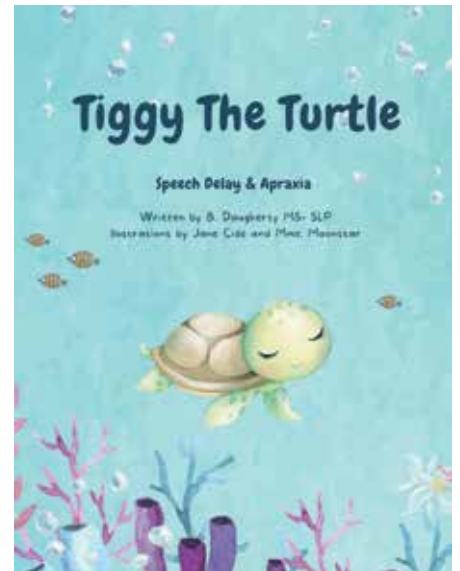
Since graduation, Daugherty has published five books in the ‘My Speech Pals’ series on Amazon for speech delay, apraxia, autism spectrum disorder and articulation. *Tiggy the Turtle* made #1 on the hot new Amazon picks list for speech-language pathology in its first week.

Clinical Facilitator and contributing faculty member **Kathryn Flurry Mercer, MCD, CCC-SLP**, says, “During my time supervising Briona in Virtual Clinic, I watched her merge her love for creating music with her passion for connecting with children. In a virtual setting, finding ways to motivate a toddler to practice



speech sounds was beyond the typical in-person challenges. Her playful, engaging songs helped the children and their families practice speech sounds in a fun and approachable way. I can still remember the ‘Ticky Tack, Doggy Dog’ song.”

Says Daugherty, “Kathryn Mercer was my first mentor at USAHS, and she was the first one to say, ‘That was great; next time bring your ukulele.’ The University helped me realize that the type of SLP a cruise ship performer would end up looking like would be a little different and to not shy away from that. Once I fully accepted that as a part of a career, I took it and ran!”



Tiggy the Turtle: for Speech Delay and Apraxia read along

Students Compete in College Bowl

Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology (MS-SLP) students on the Austin and Dallas, TX campuses competed in the College Bowl for the Praxis Exam at the California Speech-Language and Hearing Association Annual Convention March 26 in Pasadena, CA. The students won second place in the competition and were the first MS-SLP team to represent the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences in the event.

The competition provided six timed rounds of questions on topics related to Praxis questions, to which students had to provide the best response. The four students worked together at a table on stage to come up with their responses. Eight public and private universities participated in the event.

The students who competed were **Autumn Anderson, Nancy Baugh, Camryn Rambo Flaherty, Carina Sanchez,** and **Alanna Afrasiabi** as alternate. The faculty advisor was Assistant Program Director for the MS-SLP program and Associate Professor Christine Fiestas, PhD, CCC-SLP.



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At Your Service

Community outreach is an important part of the University’s mission, and service learning is a key component of our programs as a **Certified B Corp Institution**. The following is just a snapshot of some of the community service activities that have occurred across our campuses.

UNIVERSITY WIDE

The University partnered with **Building Impact** in October to provide a cohesive volunteer experience benefiting non-profits supporting veterans, mental health and S.T.E.A.M. education. During the 2021 **Week of Service**, 227 enthusiastic USAHS volunteers learned about the non-profit organization they would be supporting during six virtual events and then assembled 240 kits containing items and supplies they selected to support the cause.

Volunteers were able to add a special personal note of encouragement and support to each kit they assembled. The united effort of USAHS employees during the annual event contributed more than 200 total hours of volunteer service and a value of donated goods and time of \$17,268.



SAN MARCOS

The **Pi Theta Epsilon** (PTE), Delta Kappa Chapter on the San Marcos, CA campus sponsored fundraising events in November 2021 to support **Urban Street Angels** and its in-house social enterprise program, **8 West**. The proceeds raised at the events—\$998.63—will be used to continue to fund the program.

Urban Street Angels is a transitional housing facility in San Diego County for homeless youth ages 18-24 and is one of the level II fieldwork and doctoral capstone sites for the San Marcos campus occupational therapy students.

The 8 West program helps youth gain valuable work experience by participating in an artisanal soap-making business. Each soap is professionally packaged and signed by the individual who was responsible for making it.



DALLAS



Doctor of Physical Therapy students at the Dallas, TX campus took part in a trash bash park clean up. During the four-hour event, organized by the campus Student Physical Therapy Association (SPTA), students filled multiple trash and recycling bags. After the trash clean up, students were involved in the planting of a tree in the park.

MIAMI

The **Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA)** on the Miami, FL campus participated in the American Heart Association Walk. SOTA participants raised \$817.81 for the cause and were able to connect with individuals who have been impacted by occupational therapists. “We spoke with individuals and their families who have had strokes, coronary artery bypass grafts, transplants and left ventricular assist devices. They talked about how OT has impacted them in so many ways,” says SOTA President **A’yanna Wallace**.



ST. AUGUSTINE



Associate Professor **Deb Jackson, PT, PhD, OCS, CMP, ATC** and Assistant Professor **Bonnie Rogulj, PT, DPT, GCS** participated in the *Walk to End Alzheimer’s* event in St. Augustine, FL to raise awareness and support the Alzheimer’s Association. The team, which also included **Vanja Rogulj**, raised \$550 for the non-profit organization.

AUSTIN

The **Austin SPTA** hosted a physical therapy-themed 5k, which included the use of wheelchairs, walkers and other assistive devices provided by the University. Austin’s SPTA had 25 event participants. Proceeds are donated to help support women in need through the National Breast Cancer Awareness Organization.



As part of the service-learning component at USAHS, students perform hundreds of hours of volunteer time every year.

If you have an idea for a service event or have participated in community outreach efforts that *Accolades* can highlight, please email details and photos to alumni@usa.edu.

OTD Capstone Project:

Using Virtual Reality to Promote Social Participation



“I love creating a world where you’re free to make mistakes—and people won’t judge you or make fun of you,” says **Christina Gonzalez, OTD, OTR (OTD ’21)**. She is helping to create this kind of world by facilitating virtual reality experiences for children who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD). “Virtual reality is a controlled, consistent environment that some kids with ASD respond well to,” she says. “They can practice social skills in a safe and empowering way.”

For her capstone project in USAHS’ Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program, Dr. Gonzalez focused on the therapeutic use of virtual reality (VR) with children ages 12 to 14 who have ASD plus intellectual giftedness (ASD + IG). In collaboration with VR developer Jaclyn Wickham, she wrote an intervention protocol that occupational therapists can

use to guide their therapy sessions using VR with this population.

“It’s practice for the real world in a safe setting where you can make mistakes,” says Dr. Gonzalez, adding that the wow factor of cool technology makes a VR session “way more motivating for kids than just regular therapy.”

Dr. Gonzalez chose to focus her project on children with ASD + IG because their relative strengths in academics, creativity and task commitment make them good candidates for VR—and they also can benefit from the chance to practice social communication and interaction.

“This population is difficult to identify,” she says. “It’s small, overlooked and lacking in resources. Clinicians often misdiagnose the child due to the camouflaging effect. This means that the child’s gifted characteristics often mask their disabilities, and their disabilities camouflage their talents.”



Read the full blog



PT Faculty and Students Collaborate with Pima College

Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students on the San Marcos, CA campus participated in a collaborative lab and simulation with the Pima College Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA) program. Alongside 20 Pima College PTA students and faculty, 64 Residential DPT students and four faculty members participated from USAHS.

The collaborative lab included reviewing a complex neuro inpatient case with a traumatic spinal cord injury. Working in small teams, DPT and PTA students examined charts and planned how to execute the American Spinal Cord Injury Association assessment tool with the patient. Each group had four to five DPT students (one as patient and one as liaison to the PTA student to help explain what the other three DPT students were assessing). Students completed a collaborative construction of therapeutic exercises for this simulated patient in the Center for Innovative Clinical Practice. The simulation included live actors as the patient, the patient’s family and a nurse.

“The lab and simulation went well with a ton of collaboration and better understanding of how PTAs are trained, as well as for the PTA students—all the components that go into an initial assessment,” says Associate Program Director and Associate Professor **Jim Mathews, PT, DPT, PhD**. “In addition, the simulation taught students how to better manage family members who are distractions and how training other professionals is an important skillset of inpatient care.”

USAHS Students Form Student Veterans of America Chapter

Students on the St. Augustine, FL campus, led by Flex Master of Occupational Therapy (Flex MOT) student **Lureida Soto**, were inspired to form an organization to support student veterans and family members of veterans and active-duty military. What began as the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) FLSA Student Veterans Club in fall 2021 has grown into a chapter of the Student Veterans of America, a nationwide organization with 1,500 chapters representing 750,000 student veterans in 50 states and four countries.

The USAHS chapter's mission is to promote active participation of healthcare student veterans and family members through support, resources, networking opportunities, professional development workshops and community outreach events during and after educational pursuits in health sciences.

"Many times we, as military-affiliated students, feel lost when trying to use our military benefits and scholarships, and we do not know where to reach out for help when we encounter personal, professional or academic challenges," says Soto. "Forming this student organization and having a support team of like-minded individuals makes us feel that we have an occupational balance to succeed as USAHS graduate students and future clinicians."

Soto was born and raised in Puerto Rico. At the age of 20, she enlisted in the United States Coast Guard through the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative Program (CSPI). After six years of military service, she became a civilian and is now in her seventh term of the Flex MOT program.

To form the group, Soto and fellow students worked with Instructor **Kelli Cabrera, OTD, OTR/L, CHT**, who prior to joining USAHS in 2021, was an active-duty occupational therapist in the



Lureida Soto and her family

"Forming this student organization makes us feel that we have an occupational balance to succeed as USAHS graduate students and future clinicians."

United States Air Force. Dr. Cabrera was stationed at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, where she worked in the outpatient orthopedic clinic and the inpatient hospital. During this time, Dr. Cabrera helped establish the hospital's first pain clinic, breast cancer rehabilitation program, Special Operations injury prevention program and mental health wellness classes. She worked closely with the Thunderbirds and provided ergonomic assessments for the HH-60 helicopter crews.

"The USAHS FLSA Student Veterans Club's vision is to assist in establishing Student Veterans Club chapters at all the University campuses and operate as one entity," says Dr. Cabrera. Leaders have presented the SVA's vision and mission at all USAHS campuses to connect with student veterans and others who are interested in forming a chapter on their campus.



AOTA Social Welcomes 100 Guests in San Antonio, TX

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Inspire 2022 Annual Conference and Expo took place March 31-April 3 in San Antonio, TX. The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences hosted a reception for 100 students, alumni and faculty who attended the conference.



OTD Alum Aids Rural City in Earning \$100,000 Access Grant

Madison Rowlison's, OTD, OTR/L (OTD '21) Doctor of Occupational Therapy capstone project focused on community access for elderly residents in Sunland Park, NM. Sunland Park is a rural community on the U.S.-Mexico border near Las Cruces, where she resides. Dr. Rowlison worked with the city council and transportation board to make changes for better access. Her project and proposed changes earned the city a grant of \$100,000 to make the changes she outlined.

"I was inspired to do research with elderly, borderland residents and provide a voice for this underserved, minority population after completing a photovoice project in Assistant Professor **Jennifer Summers'** Clinical Applications of OT in Psychosocial and Community Settings class. I interviewed my mother-in-law, who is part of a minority group. The interview with her identified that there are many transportation, community engagement and healthcare access barriers in Sunland Park, where she lives," says Dr. Rowlison.



For her research, Dr. Rowlison conducted a mixed-methods pilot study using three data collection tools, a place standard assessment (an online assessment

using a likert scale to rate people's view of their community), semi-structured interviews and a walking survey (a survey to understand the walkability of a place). This identified areas where improvements for community mobility among elderly residents could be made.



Dr. Rowlison with David Armijo, Executive Director of South Central Regional Transit District

"Hopefully, this grant will also help improve community engagement, decrease isolation and improve the overall well-being of this under-served minority population."

After she conducted her capstone project in April 2021 and provided the results to Sunland Park City Council, Dr. Rowlison was asked to consult on another survey to help the city identify what services elderly residents in Sunland Park needed.

"As a culmination of these research projects, the City of Sunland Park was awarded \$100,000 from the New Mexico

Legislature via the NM Department of Aging to enhance the local senior center and purchase new equipment and institute new programs to better support the elderly residents of Sunland Park," says Dr. Rowlison. "Hopefully, this grant will also help improve community engagement, decrease isolation and improve the overall well-being of this under-served minority population."

EdD Alum Leads DPT Students in Hosting Rock Steady Boxing Classes



In a pro bono clinic based on the Miami, FL campus, University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences students are helping people with Parkinson disease improve their balance, coordination and quality of life. Guided by faculty, Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students plan and lead virtual classes in Rock Steady Boxing, a non-contact, boxing-based fitness curriculum.

“Rock Steady Boxing helps people with Parkinson’s because it involves aerobic exercise, rotational movements and power generation,” says Assistant Professor **Miguel Garcia, PT, DPT, EdD** (EdD ’21), who spearheaded this initiative.



In early 2020, Dr. Garcia trained to be a Rock Steady Boxing coach with the plan to create a program on campus. He would bring in patients from the Brain Center, an outpatient neurological clinic in Miami, FL. The Brain Center is a non-profit organization that offers free community programs for people with neurological issues, such as Parkinson disease, multiple sclerosis and dementia.

Dr. Garcia and his colleagues in the Miami DPT program—**Dr. Gabriel**

Somarriba, Dr. Tatiana Godoy Bobbio, Dr. Christine Salmon and Dr. Caprice Quiñones—collaborated to design an in-person boxing class and integrate it into Neuromuscular II, a core course for DPT students in their sixth trimester.

Before the classes could begin, the pandemic upended plans to host them on campus. Faculty decided to move forward—in a virtual mode. The weekly Zoom classes began in fall 2020. On-campus boxing classes have begun in the Summer 2022 trimester, complete with equipment (gloves, punching bags, and weights).

Dr. Garcia and his colleagues are running a first-of-its-kind research study on the effectiveness of conducting Rock Steady Boxing classes through a telehealth medium. The yearlong study involves 13 participants who respond to questionnaires quarterly about their perception of the classes and their own health outcomes. Faculty will also gather data on the boxers’ changes in cardiac capacity.



Read the full blog



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USAHS FOUNDATION SEEKS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DONATIONS

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences Foundation was formed for the purpose of providing financial assistance and other resources to promote the educational achievement of students at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, to advance scientific research conducted by students and faculty of the University, and to provide a public benefit to the communities where the University operates.

Your donation to the USAHS Foundation will be used to

- Recognize student achievement and support student success through scholarships
- Advance the research and scholarly agenda for faculty and students with research grants
- Support students’ clinical learning and enhance community access to care

For more information about how to make a donation to the USAHS Foundation, please write to contact@usahsfoundation.org.

PMHNP Program Coordinator Dr. Helene Vossos Joins USAHS

In 2021, the School of Nursing welcomed **Helene Vossos, DNP, MSN, APRN, ANP-BC, PMHNP-BC**, as Associate Professor and the coordinator of the *Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner-Primary Care* (PMHNP-PC) advanced practice specialty, one of two new nursing specialties that the University is launching (page 17).

Dr. Vossos is a nationally board-certified psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP), adult nurse practitioner, nurse educator, author and nurse leader. She was appointed as the 2022 president of the American Psychiatric Nurse Association, Florida chapter (APNA).

“I’m excited to join USAHS because of its student-first approach and its focus on the health sciences,” she says. “USAHS is special, thanks to its interprofessional and innovative teaching strategies. And it’s close to home.” Dr. Vossos lives with her husband between St. Augustine and Daytona Beach, FL.

She enrolled in the Master of Science in Nursing at the University of Michigan-Flint (UM-Flint), where she earned a dual specialty as an adult nurse practitioner and PMHNP. “There is no whole health unless there is mental health,” she says, adding that in the PMHNP role specialty, “You learn to treat the patient’s mind, body and soul. The patient may need psychotherapy, or treatment of an underlying medical condition, or spiritual care.”

Dr. Vossos decided to become a certified PMHNP because those with mental illness “are the most underserved, vulnerable and grateful patients,” she says. “It’s my inherent talent to be able to provide a therapeutic relationship with patients, and promote health, hope and healing.”



“It’s my inherent talent to be able to provide a therapeutic relationship with patients, and promote health, hope and healing.”

She went on to earn her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) at Concordia University in Mequon, WI. She then taught in the undergraduate and graduate schools of nursing at UM-Flint for four years, where she managed 10 clinical sites and 10 clinical faculty members. U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, MD, visited her classroom to speak about the psychological trauma that the Flint water crisis inflicted on community members, who worried that their children would be poisoned by lead. She participated in the nurse-led crisis resolution, including a lead testing and referral system.

During her career, Dr. Vossos has worked across diverse settings, including inpatient, outpatient, private practice and a substance abuse treatment center. As part of her scholarship and service to nursing, she has authored academic textbook chapters on mental health topics and journal articles, and presented at national conferences.

When her mother became ill in 2017, Dr. Vossos and her husband of 40 years moved back to Florida, where they live with their two dogs and two cats. Having grown up with her father in the Air Force, she gives back to veterans by seeing patients weekly at a VA residential program. Dr. Vossos says she is excited to join USAHS and leverage her extensive network of academic partnerships around Florida to establish more sites for practica. Students in the PMHNP-PC role specialty will complete three practica, focusing on clinical experiences with children/adolescents, adults/older adults and diverse populations. In the one on-campus clinical intensive that is part of this specialty, students will practice clinical skills hands-on in a Center for Innovative Clinical Practice (CICP) or may participate virtually via a telehealth platform. She plans to work with students on how to manage potentially suicidal patients, making differential diagnoses, practicing psychotherapy techniques, and prescribing and managing psychotropic medications. Dr. Vossos is helping to build the curriculum for this role specialty.

Although patient demand for mental health services is growing, out of 325,000 nurse practitioners in the United States, only 4.7% (or about 15,275) have a PMH specialty certification. “This creates a lot of opportunity for our students,” says Dr. Vossos.



Read the full blog

USAHS NURSING PROGRAM LAUNCHES TWO ROLE SPECIALTIES

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences has recently introduced two new role specialties in its Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program. Practitioners looking to expand their skills can help fill the nationwide shortage of adult gerontology and mental health nurse practitioners.

The new specialties for **Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner-Primary Care (PMHNP-PC)** and **Adult Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (AGNP)** are now recruiting students for the 2022 Fall Term and 2023 Spring Term, respectively. Anyone with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and nursing license can pursue an MSN for AGNP or PMHNP-PC. The University also plans to offer a post-graduate certification option for individuals who already have their MSN.

“These new nursing programs address areas of critical shortage in healthcare by developing nurse practitioners to provide safe, quality patient care to these unique populations,” says Assistant Program Director and Assistant Professor **Ashlee Loewen, DNP, APRN, FNP-C**. “The aging population has highly complex medical, functional and psychosocial needs that the skilled AGNP is able to recognize, diagnose and treat in order



to improve general health, well-being and quality of life.”

Dr. Loewen continues, “The expertise of the PMHNP-PC is needed now more than ever as the demand for mental health professionals is at an all-time high. PMHNPs can diagnose a wide array of psychiatric and mental health disorders for pediatric and adults, and provide pharmacologic and psychotherapy interventions.”

“These new nursing programs address areas of critical shortage in healthcare.”

FIND OUT MORE:



Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner-Primary Care Role Specialty



The Growing Demand for Mental Health Practitioners: Stats and Trends



Adult Gerontology Nurse Practitioner Role Specialty



Exploring a Career in Geriatric Nursing

Access Library Services after Graduation

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) library staff invite alumni to continue to make use of the library's services and resources after graduation, including:

- Resource Requests/Interlibrary Loan
- Reference help, e.g. How can I find articles on a certain topic?
- On campus printing/photocopying/scanning
- Guest access to Search USA, the library's search engine
- Guest access to the Library Catalog, which is an inventory of the physical materials available from the campus libraries
- Use of the physical library spaces on campus, including computer labs

NEW alumni service: Alumni of the University may continue to access scholarly work in the library's SOAR@USA open access archive after graduation, as this is a free, public resource. Alumni may also continue to post their own scholarly work for archiving in [SOAR@USA](#), provided it meets the following conditions:

- The work has been accepted either by a peer-reviewed journal or by a peer-reviewed society conference.
- The author holds the copyright to the work, or posting of the work complies with copyright and publishing agreements. (Typically, this will be either a work licensed under [Creative Commons](#) or an accepted manuscript.)
- The work has not been retracted by the original publisher for any reason.

Alumni with questions about posting to SOAR@USA may contact a USAHS librarian at soar@usa.edu. Visit library.usa.edu/alumni for an alumni guide on library services and resources, or email library@usa.edu.



Career Services Are Available to Job Seekers and Alumni Who Are Hiring

Alumni are always invited for lifelong services to all programs and events hosted by USAHS Career Services, whether they are seeking new work, making a career change or hiring for organizations, practices or clinics. Career resources and programs that are currently offered or being planned include:

- Career workshops and panels
- Virtual career spotlights
- Information sessions
- Job site tours / shadowing
- Resume reviews
- Podcasts, blogs, newsletters
- Webinar series
- Alumni mentors
- Networking events
- LinkedIn profile checklist
- Career summit / Hire USAHS
- Mini career days
- Student and employer focus groups

Find out more and read about USAHS' new Career Services Director:



CLASS NOTES

Alumni may submit updates about their professional or personal lives to share with fellow USAHS alumni. Share a short note using the Class Notes form on www.usa.edu/about/alumni/.



Jennifer Hobson (DPT '04) was published in the March 2022 edition of *The Journal of Craniomandibular & Sleep Practice* (CRANIO). Dr. Hobson worked on the Aqualizer research project for more than a year.



Christi Schmitt (DPT '12) recently became the Therapy Director at Bay Cliff Health Camp. The non-profit organization in Upper Michigan began in 1934 with a target program of a low-to-no-cost residential summer camp for children with disabilities. Campers receive a variety of therapies and take part in daily camp activities.



Micah Gorena (DPT '15) has been working as a physical therapist in the industrial setting focusing on ergonomics and injury prevention at grocery warehousing and manufacturing facilities.

Jessica Leiser (MOT '18) had an opinion editorial published in the *San Diego Union Tribune*. Leiser is an occupational therapist at the Sierra School of San Diego, which specializes in special education and supports students who require additional educational and behavioral supports. The article focuses on Leiser's work with students and a sustainable community garden in partnership with Sierra School of San Diego. "Through the partnership, I get to take learning outdoors for our students. They get to be hands-on in the garden by tending to beds, composting and harvesting crops. Lessons in horticulture transition to life skills learning when vegetables and spices become delicious ingredients to use during occupational therapy session cooking groups," says Leiser. Read the full editorial:



Heather Wise (MSN '20) worked, after graduating, for CVS Pharmacy as a COVID-19 coordinator before transitioning to a role as a Family Nurse Practitioner at a private family practice office. Wise worked in that specialty for a year before being offered a position as a clinic director of JRG (Joint Regeneration Group) in Virginia. She helped open the clinic and establish a program that offers non-surgical pain relief to patients who suffer from knee



arthritis. "It has been an honor to help improve pain and quality of life for my patients. With this position, I have had the opportunity to host a bi-weekly radio program called Ask the Expert. I have enjoyed sharing information and educating our community on arthritis and the treatment options available," says Wise.



Catherine (Kate) Andrea (EdD '21) has enjoyed finding a new work-life balance since graduation. She has published her dissertation work and developed two projects, which are next steps in exploring the use of simulation within Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) curricula. As an assistant professor, Dr. Andrea continues to strive to provide optimal educational experiences for her DPT students on the USAHS St. Augustine, FL campus and looks forward to earning her certification as a healthcare simulation educator by the end of the year.



Naida Roden (MOT '21) started her first job in April 2022 as a Registered Occupational Therapist with St. Joseph's Regional Hospital in Bryan, TX.



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