CHHS Student Abby Jeppson Named NIU Student Lincoln Laureate

CHHS senior Tertia “Abby” Jeppson has been named NIU Student Lincoln Laureate. An outstanding senior from each of the four-year degree-granting institutions of higher learning in Illinois is chosen annually to receive the prestigious Lincoln Academy Student Laureate Award. Lincoln Student Laureates are honored for their overall excellence in both curricular and co-curricular activities.

Jeppson is a double major in Communicative Disorders and Rehabilitation Services on top of a double minor in Psychology and Deafness Rehabilitation. Fascinated by the intersection of neuroscience and deafness, Jeppson’s focus is Speech-Language Pathology.

She collaborates with Assistant Professor of Speech-Language Pathology Dr. Jamie Mayer to investigate the use of a modified version of melodic intonation therapy for individuals who has severe aphasia (an acquired language disorder that affects one’s ability to speak and understand).

The approach uses singing as a possible augmentation for more traditional approaches of language-based therapy. She meets one hour each week with an individual with severe aphasia following a stroke, who speaks only three words – “on a Wednesday” – but can fluently sing the lyrics to familiar songs.

The case presents an interesting study as speech and language are left-brain activities while music is a function of the right brain.

“She gets more spontaneous words out during our sessions,” Jeppson said. “I was so impressed by Abby’s performance in my courses that I sought out her help in working with me,” Dr. Mayer said.

“Abby has proved herself not only ‘book smart’ but also extremely capable with regard to both research and clinical roles. She has been trustworthy and thorough, and has demonstrated the kind of patience and empathy that is rare to see among undergraduate students,” she adds.

“This is especially noteworthy given that she has had no previous experience in working with the adult neurogenic population nor with research. In short, her learning curve is basically vertical.”

Dr. Mayer and Jeppson plan to publish their work and present at the annual convention of the Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association.
Communities that are walk-friendly and bike-friendly are key elements in promoting physical activity and safety. This is even recognized by the Federal Highway Administration in its Bicycle and Pedestrian program. Each state has a coordinator to help promote bicycle and pedestrian transportation use, safety and accessibility.

DeKalb County, IL, has an active coalition that promotes the health of residents. A key goal has been to promote the built infrastructure for bicycle and pedestrian paths.

Knowing the importance of continuity of paths/sidewalks, the coalition concluded that a gap of about 300 feet between two existing paths was a hindrance to walkability. A continuous connecting path would allow children and adults to walk to school and a key community center. Building a 300 foot sidewalk sounds like a simple task but issues of ownership, maintenance, and funding loomed large.

To help solve this problem, many individuals and organizations collaborated over a surprising amount of time. Money was raised, the connecting 300 feet of path was constructed, and the ribbon cutting was held in early December.

It was an excellent example of collaboration and advocacy by multiple organizations including but not limited to Live Healthy DeKalb County, YMCA, DeKalb County Government, City of Sycamore, City of DeKalb, DeKalb County Community Foundation, KishHealth System and the Kishwaukee Kiwanis Club.

Building this connecting path was a small change, and it takes many small changes to make a community walk-friendly and bike-friendly.

We are proud of College of Health and Human Science students and alumni who strive to make a difference in their local communities. We are proud of their vision, their perseverance, and their advocacy and collaboration skills.

If you have made a difference in your local community, please share that with me (dblock@niu.edu) so that we can highlight some examples in the newsletter.

Associate Dean Dr. Beverly Henry Awarded Excellence in Practice: Dietetic Education

CHHS Associate Dean for Academics Affairs, Dr. Beverly Henry, was recently presented the Excellence in Practice: Dietetic Education Award from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The Academy’s Excellence in Practice Awards recognize outstanding registered dietitians and dietetic technicians, registered, who have demonstrated innovation, creativity and leadership in a specific area of practice. The awards are given in several practice categories, including Clinical Nutrition; Community Dietetics; Consultation and Business Practice; Dietetic Education; Dietetic Technician, Registered; Dietetics Research; and Management Practice. The awards honor Academy members who have demonstrated exceptional performance, contributed to the advancement of practice, and been effective and inspiring leaders in nutrition-related organizations.

Dr. Henry’s contributions to nutrition education programs include teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses on maternal and child nutrition, strategies for modifying nutrition behaviors and applied nutrition, as well as research studies focused on pediatric nutrition programs. Dr. Henry’s innovative approach to teaching and practice is exemplified by her 10-plus years of work in simulation. She has developed practice simulations for dietetic interns and allied health students. She is currently the Co-PI of a research grant funded by the Simulation Technology and Immersive Learning Center at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine. Dr. Henry has served as a mentor to her past colleagues, students and many Pediatric Nutrition Practice Group members. She also has been recognized by NIU with the Lankford Award for Teaching Excellence (2013), the Sullivan Award for Excellence in Research (2012), and as a nominee for the Outstanding Mentor Award of the NIU Presidential Commission on Women (2008). In addition, she was awarded the NIU Student’s Choice Teaching Award by the Student Advancement Committee (2006).

Of the recent award, Dr. Henry said, “I am very honored to receive this award and value this recognition. I know that I benefited in my development as an educator through my work experiences, including my time as faculty at NIU where teaching clearly matters. My interactions with interns, students and colleagues through the years brought me to understanding nutrition and dietetics differently and very much appreciating this field.”
CHHS Remembers Nursing Professor Donna Munroe

When any sort of meeting in the NIU College of Health and Human Sciences wandered off track, faculty, administrators and staff knew they could count on Donna Munroe to restore focus.

Possessing a sharp mind, a kind heart and a keen ability to make decisions, Munroe’s calm voice of wisdom and strong leadership extended across campus.

A professor in the School of Nursing and Health Studies since 2001, she had built a sterling reputation throughout NIU thanks to her passionate work on committees, becoming what Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Beverly Henry calls “a real presence at the institution.”

“Donna was the kind of person who honored her commitments. Her extensive knowledge of university policies, and her leadership in the development and revision of those polices, was deeply appreciated by her colleagues,” says Jan Strom, chair of the school. “She was always a voice of reason, armed with the relevant facts and institutional history.”

Munroe was participating in an afternoon meeting on Jan. 13, of the University Council Personnel Committee in Altgeld Hall when she died.

Colleagues now are struggling to comprehend the sudden death of a scholar whom Associate Dean for Research and Resources Jim Ciesla considers among “the most respected faculty members in this college. I don’t think anybody would argue with that,” he said.

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Chhs neWs

Steven Caljkusich, CHHS Information Technology Manager, and his family, founded and run BlueMoon Sanctuary, a DeKalb-based non-profit organization that rescues rabbits and provides pet therapy for Alzheimer’s patients. Blue-Moon Sanctuary was recently featured on the front page of the Daily Chronicle. Caljkusich and his family began rescuing all types of animals over 14 years ago and their first rescue, Pebbles, is still living with them. A few years ago a blind rabbit named BlueMoon changed everything. Discovering there were no local groups working with rabbits, the family started to concentrate on helping them. They currently support 23 rescue animals that receive love and medical care while living a casual, care-free life that does not include “cages.”


Jeppson Named NIU Student Lincoln Laureate

From page 1

in February. Dr. Sherrill Morris, chair of the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders says “Abby Jeppson brings energy and competence to every task and meeting she attends. Not only is she a leader and mentor to other students, she fully engages faculty and the community. She is personable, kind and a true professional. She will represent Northern Illinois University well.”

Jeppson also has earned several awards and scholarships for her academic achievements while at NIU. These include Dean’s List Honors, the Joan Good Erickson Clinical Interest Award, the O’Brien-Vrba Scholarship Fund, the University Honors tuition waiver, Tau Sigma National Honor Society and Phi Kappa Phi.

Her list of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is equally impressive. She works alongside American Sign Language coordinator Tina Robarts as the direct teaching assistant for ASL labs at NIU, which includes managing the labs and teaching her own lab. She formerly volunteered at Little Friends in Naperville, which serves children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities, to lead employees there in learning basic sign language.

Jeppson is also the president of Deaf Pride and secretary of both the Communicative Disorders Student Association and Tau Sigma. She is the coordinator of the peer tutoring program in the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders.

Robarts called Jeppson a strong student, a hard worker, a role model and a leader. “Abby is a self-starter, is always on top of things and shares helpful feedback and ideas. She is always one step ahead and keeps me on my toes,” Robarts said. “She volunteers to jump in and help with any task from the mundane to the challenging. She blends a well-organized, task-oriented style with sensitivity to the needs of our ASL students. She is always willing to give a helping hand over and above her normal call of duty,” she added.

A former high school cheerleader, Jeppson logs 10 hours a week coaching tumbling and gymnastics at the YMCA. Her third job – yes, third – is in the office of the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders, where her duties include developing mentoring opportunities for alumni and students and other student recruitment and retention activities. “I’m great at organization,” Jeppson said. “My planner is very full.”

She is currently applying to graduate schools and plans to work in the field in a clinical or medical setting. She wants to concentrate her professional practice on adult and elderly patients – specifically, those with brain tumors and those who have suffered strokes or traumatic brain injuries – and use non-verbal communication in their rehabilitation. Patients who are cold, for example, can express that by making a shivering motion.

“For someone who has difficulty talking, maybe I can make their day better,” she said. “Maybe I can help them get one word out that they didn’t have before.” Earning a Ph.D. is also a goal of hers. “I want to teach, mentor, work with clients and advance the field. I want to be that person who works to help students find what they really want to do in life – to find that passion,” she said. “It’s the best of all worlds.”
CHHS 2014-2015 Huskie Research Rookies

Three CHHS students have been selected as Huskie Research Rookies for 2014-2015. The program links undergraduate students with faculty mentors in their major or area of interest to conduct a small-scale research project.

Ashley Kyle, a junior Nutrition and Dietetics major, is working with Dr. Shelia Barrett, Assistant Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Lydia Moore, a sophomore Health and Human Sciences major, is working with Dr. Cathy Carlson, Associate Professor of Nursing.

Maria Niemyjska-Toczek, a freshman Pre-Physical Therapy major, is working with Dr. Amanda McCarthy, Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Counseling.

Kyle, Moore and Niemyjska-Toczek will present their work at the annual Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day April 21.

Students Receive Funding from NIU University Honors

Two CHHS students received funding from NIU University Honors to develop their research practices, skills and abilities over the course of a year-long, paid research assistantship with CHHS faculty members.

Sophie Li, Assistant Professor of Family and Child Studies, will be working with student Lorena Gonzalez. She will learn about survey design and implementation while also developing her literacy on the concept of “resourcefulness” in children, adolescents and adults.

Bryan Dallas, Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Counseling, and Julie Ramisch, Assistant Professor of Family and Child Studies, will be working with student Alyssa Ashmore. She will be working on the development of a survey instrument that, through interviews and other elements, can measure the extent to which college disability resource offices are able to categorize and rate their experiences working with family members of college students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

STEMfest 2014 at NIU

Northern Illinois University hosted its annual celebration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEMfest) Oct. 18, at the Convocation Center. CHHS was represented with booths from Audiology, Communicative Disorders Student Association (COMDSA), Medical Laboratory Sciences, Nursing, and Nutrition and Dietetics. Students and faculty had a great time interacting with all the STEMfest guests.
**ALLIED HEALTH AND COMMUNICATIVE DISORDERS**

**CHHS Dispatch • Winter 2015**

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**Speech-Language Pathology’s Kacy Kreger Earns Grant**

Kacy Kreger, a Speech-Language Pathology Master’s student, recently was awarded the 2014 Graduate Student Mentored Proposal or Pilot (PoP) Grant from the Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Language and Literacy (CISLL).

The grant is for her master’s thesis project titled: “Semantic Representations in Children with Autism, SLI, and Typical Language.”

Kreger’s project focuses on how children with autism spectrum disorder, specific language impairment, and typical language build semantic representations of novel words following an extended learned paradigm.

By analyzing the children’s word definitions, Kreger will work to identify differences or similarities in semantic learning between the three groups, and explore how their semantic representations may change over time. This project will also help determine which learning cues (visual, verbal or a combination) were most beneficial for these three populations of children, and what types of semantic features of the new words were learned.

The findings of this project will offer insight into the underlying language mechanisms in children with atypical language development. Furthermore, the results of this project have very practical applications, and may be used to help clinicians and educators use evidence-based teaching strategies that will facilitate word learning in children who have challenges acquiring language.

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**Movie Night Features “Monica & David,” Panel Discussion**

More than 50 undergraduate and graduate students attended Movie Night Oct. 16. The award-winning documentary shown, “Monica & David,” explores the marriage of two adults with Down syndrome and the family who strives to support their needs.

Following the movie, students were able to ask questions and find out about life from members of a discussion panel.

The panel included parents of children with Down syndrome, as well as a young adult with Down syndrome. Students were encouraged by the panel to build relationships with family members, and approach their future clients with no preconceived limitations.

One of the panelists, Teresa, emphasized that “Just because (someone) can’t say something doesn’t mean (they) can’t find another way to communicate.”

Another panelist, Patty, spoke about the work that went into finding her daughter, Kathryn, full-time employment and the coordination it takes to make sure she arrives to and from work safely.

Kathryn is now a spokesperson for ComEd, works full-time as a page at a library and is board secretary at Gigi’s Playhouse, a Down syndrome achievement center in Aurora.
AHCD Continuing Education Event

NIU Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic hosted a professional continuing education event Sept. 18, titled, “Using Core Vocabulary with Emergent/Context Dependent Communicators.”

The information was presented by speech-language pathologist and Augmentative/Alternative Communication specialist Gail VanTatenhove. She discussed providing access to and use of core vocabulary when working with individuals who are minimally speaking or non-speaking, so that they can communicate generatively and across contexts.

The full-day professional event drew 65 local therapists and educators to NIU’s Speech-Language Hearing Clinic. NIU Speech-Language Pathology faculty and many graduate students were also in attendance and managed registration.

AHCD Accolades:

• The Student Academy of Audiology has been performing hearing screenings one Saturday per month at DeKalb’s Lehan Drugs for adults and children.

• The Student Academy of Audiology was present at the Sycamore Pumpkin Festival to promote audiology, NIU, and better hearing.

• The Student Academy of Audiology helped with Sertoma’s Walk in November. Sertoma is an organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for those at risk or impacted by hearing loss through education and support.

• NIU Deaf Pride Students Organization provides free American Sign Language (ASL) instruction one day a week at Clinton Rossette Middle School, DeKalb.

• AHCD hosted a Graduate Colloquium Seminar “A Working Life for People with Serious Mental Illness.” Deborah R. Becker, M.Ed., CRC, spoke on evidence-based job placement methods benefiting individuals with mental health conditions.

• Medical Laboratory Sciences student Jess Colgan won the photo contest at the Study Abroad Fair for her photo from the Health Studies in Belize program.

• Dr. Christina Odeh, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy, recently participated in a Healthcare Careers Panel at Naperville North High School. The panel was part of “Career Carnival” week at Naperville North.

Meet the Faculty Event

Rehabilitation Services/Counseling Meet the Faculty streaming video event, from left: Chris Beldon, Greg Long, Bryan Dallas, Amanda McCarthy, Natalie Maurin, Dan Boutin.
Student-Faculty Social Event

Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology students and faculty at a “student social” event

AHCD super heroes!

AHCD Chair Sherrill Morris with students Gregory Tutor, Abby Jeppson, Molly Lamansky and Ashley Liem at the photo booth at the SuperHero event hosted by NIU Deaf Pride student organization.
Mead Elected to the National Board

Nutrition and Dietetics student Emily Mead was recently elected to the national board of directors of the Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society. The mission of the Honor Society is empowered leaders who use an integrative approach to enhance quality of living through excellence in scholarship, leadership and research. Mead’s goal is to make an impact throughout the nutrition and dietetics community.

She said, “Why do my passions tie in with my professions? My joy blossomed from my love of food. I’ve cooked and watched the Food Network for as long as I can remember. I was unsatisfied, and felt there was something more out there for me to achieve.

“Working at Concordia Language Villages as an assistant cook I developed menu-planning skills for children with allergies. I knew in that moment that nutrition was where I needed to be,” said Mead.

“I have the tools to help further Kappa Omicron Nu’s goals by encouraging excellence in scholarship, research and leadership. Through the position of student board member I will be able to reach out nationwide and be the Kappa Omicron Nu voice.”

Dr. Ridgway Wins Alvanon Creative Design Award

At the 2014 International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) annual conference, Dr. Jessica Ridgway won the 2014 Alvanon Creative Design Award.

Her piece entitled “Oh Fish in the Sea” was a design research project that focused on designing within the context of established themes and with the inclusion of technology.

The use of text, conceal and reveal, and integration of sound were the three themes for which the basis of the project was established. The fabric for the garment was digitally printed with a digital textile printer.

The textile print was created by Ridgway using a scanned piece of burlap and a water image which were merged together using Adobe Photoshop.

Also digitally printed were the handwritten words of a story that Ridgway’s grandfather told her when she was young.

Additionally, sustainability played an important role in the garment. It was constructed from pattern pieces that were all simple triangles, making the garment a no waste design.

“Oh Fish in the Sea” was featured as part of the live gallery event at the conference which proceeded the awards ceremony.

Ridgway also had an additional two design research projects presented at this year’s ITAA conference.
CROP Walk in DeKalb

Bread for the World and the NIU Student Dietetic Association participated in the DeKalb CROP Walk last fall. CROP stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty. The DeKalb CROP Walk is dedicated to the late Dr. Sondra King, who was an Associate Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics in FCNS.

NIU FCNS Faculty, Students Attend AAMFT Conference 2014

FCNS Faculty and Staff attended the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Conference 2014. At right, Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Alumni Francisco Zepeda (l) with current MFT students, from left: Kristen and Jakki, and MFT faculty Barb Cuppett and Julie Ramisch. As a way of giving back to the students in the MFT program, Zepeda financed 2 students’ attendance at the conference. Below, right: MFT students and faculty at the AAMFT Conference.

NIU University Honors Program at Social Justice Conference

Masters of Public Health Online Program Ranks Fifth in U.S.

NIU continues to make learning more accessible, and according to a recent ranking, those efforts are paying dividends for students in the School of Nursing & Health Studies of the College of Health and Human Sciences.

Public Health Online, a website dedicated to providing students and parents with expert-driven information and resources, has ranked the NIU Master of Public Health as the fifth-best online program in the country.

Utilizing a series of data collected by analysts and higher education experts, the online guide’s scoring system ranks an institution’s online cost, counseling service, placement of graduates and accreditation. Additionally, each program must be affiliated with a public, not-for-profit university offering a four-year program.

Dr. Jan Strom, professor and chair of Nursing & Health Studies at NIU, said it is important to provide an online option because the demographic profile of graduate students has changed.

Strom said a nationwide increase in non-traditional students, many of whom are working adults, has created a demand for programs with convenient, flexible and affordable courses that will help them advance their careers.

Dr. Arlene Keddie, program coordinator for the MPH program, echoed Strom’s sentiments.

“There are a variety of reasons why the population of non-traditional-aged students is increasing, relative to traditional full-time students,” Keddie said. “The online option is a far more flexible option that allows for adult students to combine working and pursuing their graduate degree.”

Keddie credits the NIU Health and Human Sciences faculty for the success of the MPH online degree program.

“All of the NIU online M.P.H. courses are prepared by faculty with doctoral training who conduct research in public health,” Keddie said. “These faculty are among those who teach the online courses, assuring that every student has the highest possible quality of instruction.”

From NIU Today

Nursing Students: Teach and Support Each Other Through Real-Life Experiences

In a recent Nursing Care of Childbearing Families class, students listened as a guest speaker spoke about her pregnancy and the birth and death of her baby. The speaker is a current NIU Nursing student. She shared her emotional, personal story with the class so they could learn about this topic through a real-life experience. The speaker shared many touching photos of her baby and family.

Many students in the class were in tears and shared sentiments in their reflections after class about how this affected them, saying how “brave it was for their peer to share her story.” Another student shared that they had also experienced a pregnancy loss recently and how this speaker helped them. Another student found support afterwards talking one-on-one with the guest speaker/student.

After such an emotional class, instructor Susan Schaub invited the “Huskie Hunks,” an a cappella group at NIU, to lift spirits by singing a few songs. Moods lifted, with cheering, applause and smiles ensuing. Schaub said of the Huskie Hunks, “I knew of this group and the power of music (one group member plans to be a music therapist), so I knew after such a ‘downer’ class, they would appreciate something to lift their spirits.”

The class ended with a few refreshments and students’ commenting, “An emotional roller coaster.” “What a class! I will never forget it.”
Masters of Public Health and College of Law
Students Improving Lives

Students from both the College of Health and Human Sciences/Masters of Public Health and NIU College of Law programs met Nov. 11, to discuss how their disciplines, both individually and working together, can improve people’s health.

The law students are all student attorneys at NIU Law’s Health Advocacy Clinic, a medical-legal partnership in Aurora. It consists of law students, attorneys, health care providers, social workers and other professionals who work together to remedy the non-medical sources of clients’ health problems.

The common goal is to promote the health and well-being of clients by addressing unmet social and legal needs.

The law students were eager to connect with students outside the law school who also were interested in preventative health, and public health was a great fit.

Professor Colleen Boraca, who serves as the Clinic’s director, reached out to Professor Wendy Bostwick, whose research is related to health disparities and who is currently teaching a Master’s-level class focusing on this issue.

Among other things, the class covers structural and social determinants of health, such as socio-economic status and discrimination, and how these contribute to a wide-range of health disparities in the United States.

During the meeting, students shared information about their backgrounds, their program’s requirements, and what they hope to do upon graduation. They then watched a brief documentary which examined the role that place or neighborhood can have upon health and health disparities.

Afterwards, students brainstormed legal and public health solutions to various social determinants of health including homelessness, poor housing, lack of stable income and violence. The instructors are exploring ways to work together with students to address the pressing issue of health disparities in the region.

NUHS Accolades:

- Kelsey VandenBorn was commencement flag bearer from CHHS for the December 2014 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. Kelsey is from Batavia, IL, and graduated from Batavia High School in 2010. She attended Kankakee Community College and Waubonsee Community College prior to transferring to NIU in 2012.

- Dr. Sarah Geiger, Assistant Professor of Public Health, was interviewed for an article on Ebola for NIU Today: “Ebola: Should we worry?”

NIU Family Weekend

NUHS’ Student Nurse Organization at NIU participated with a booth at Family Weekend.

NIU Homecoming 5K

Nursing students, below from left: Jen Wolfe, Scott Johnsen and Jessica Kudlicki, along with Associate Professor of Nursing Nancy Oldenburg, at the NIU Homecoming 5K.

CHHS Clinics

OFFERING HIGH-QUALITY CARE:

The Couple and Family Therapy Clinic at NIU: Providing therapeutic services for individuals, couples, and families. (815) 753-1684

Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic: Providing Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology services from a family focus, because a speech, language, or hearing problem affects all members of a family. (815) 753-1481.

Physical Therapy Clinic: Providing evaluation and treatment of acute and chronic musculoskeletal conditions. (815) 752-2675.

ACCEPTING APPOINTMENTS!
NIU Cadet Experiences Army Airborne School

By Cadet Bre Alis

This past summer I did something I never thought I would do—I attended the U.S. Army Airborne School at Fort Benning, GA.

I started out with a class of roughly 460 students from all over the country and all parts of the military. There were only about 20-30 females in the three-week school.

The first week was called Ground Week. The first day you take a PT test, and if students don’t pass, they get to re-take it the next day. If they fail again, students are dropped from the school.

The rest of Ground Week consisted of practicing parachute landing falls (PLFs) and proper exiting from a 34-foot mock tower, as well as mock doors.

During the week, students conducted PT in the mornings. Another way to get dropped from the school is to fall out of two of the 3.5-mile runs throughout training.

The second week was Tower Week during which students practiced PLFs using a mechanism called the Swing Landing Trainer.

Students are hooked onto suspenders and swing from a 12 foot platform. Students have to pull their risers in the direction of the PLF, and swing until the Sergeant Airborne releases them after they have properly executed the PLF.

Students must properly perform two PLFs in each direction to pass.

The last day of Tower Week, students figured out what chalk they were jumping in and then attended a class about safety. It covered what to do if you have twists, holes, or if your parachute doesn’t open properly.

After this long week, I was excited to be done and know that I passed all the madness. Jump Week was the last week and it was the longest.

This was the week where students put all of the training to the ultimate test by doing five jumps. Students must successfully complete all five jumps to receive their Airborne wings and to be certified as a Paratrooper.

When I boarded the plane every time, my heart started racing with excitement and complete fear. I was and still am afraid of heights, so jumping out of a plane from 1,250 feet was definitely a test of my fear.

I remember the first time I sat in the plane and taking off, I realized that the only way out of that plane at that point was jumping.

I was terrified but grateful I was getting such an amazing opportunity. I knew not many people will ever get the chance to do the things that I was doing. Jumping out of the plane came naturally after all the repetitive training.

Once I jumped out, I experienced the scariest four-six seconds of my life counting when my parachute should open.

I completed the last jump with no problems, and the second I hit the ground and I was fine, I had the biggest smile on my face because I did it. I made it. I jumped out of an airplane 5 times without killing or hurting myself. It was an amazing accomplishment that I will be proud of for the rest of my life.

On Friday, June 20, I graduated Airborne School and received my certificate and wings. We started out with about 460 students and I graduated with 359 paratroopers. It was an experience of a lifetime.

NIU Army ROTC Announces New Additions to Huskie Battalion

This past semester, NIU Army ROTC contracted five new cadets into the Huskie Battalion: Cadets Madison Richmond, Curtis Orndorf, Walker Steinke, James Sim and Francisco Valencia.

Orndorf and Valencia have been a part of the program for nearly three years, and both currently serve in the National Guard.

This summer, they will attend the Cadet Leader Course (CLC) in Fort Knox, KY, where their leadership skills will be assessed, and they will be one step closer to commissioning.

Steinke has been with the program for one semester. Last summer, he participated and completed the Leader’s Training Course (LTC) at Ft. Knox, and joined the rest of the junior class in August.

LTC is designed for new cadets who come late into the program, and gives them the opportunity to catch up to the rest of their classmates.

Richmond and Sim are both sophomores and have been in ROTC for nearly two years. Sim currently serves in the National Guard. Richmond contracted in early October, and received a three-year federal scholarship as well.

From left: Cadets Curtis Orndorf, Madison Richmond, James Sim, Walker Steinke and Francisco Valencia before taking the enlistment oath at half time during the Nov. 11 football game against Toledo.
Female Cadets Present Research; Plan to Publish

Since the Spring 2014 semester, three Cadets, Karina Avila, Maria Colompos and Shanell Walter, have developed and researched the topic of sociocultural aspects of women of color in the military.

They were guided by NIU College of Education Dean, Dr. La Vonne Neil, whom the Cadets met at a past ROTC event. “She is a data-driven, mission-focused scholar who sparked genius within us,” the Cadets said of Dr. Neil. “She has been on numerous occasions, a mentor, and even a motherly figure to us.”

After extensive work on the project, the Cadets were invited to Tennessee in late September. There, they presented their research at the 99th Annual Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) conference.

The conference, which usually involves graduate students and Ph.D candidates, was “an amazing experience,” said Colompos. “We were the only undergraduates chosen out of over 1,200 doctorate research proposals. We felt honored to have had this amazing opportunity to share our work.”

The finalized project, entitled “Fronteras, Bras, and Battles: the Sociocultural Perspectives of Women of Color in the Military,” will be published sometime this semester.

Huskies Take Second at Task Force Ranger Challenge

Each year, Army ROTC programs send teams of Cadets to participate in an annual Ranger Challenge event. NIU sends a team each year and this year was no exception.

Since the beginning of the semester, Cadets who qualified to work out with the Ranger Challenge team met almost every morning each week to undergo a tougher version of physical training than others in Huskie Battalion.

The training prepared the team for the uncertain events to happen at the actual competition.

NIU’s Ranger Challenge team led by sophomore cadet Kevin Clukey, took second place out of seven schools in September in Marseilles, IL. The team consisted of eight male and one female cadets.

For one weekend, they endured various obstacles that tested their abilities to work as a team, prove their physical and mental strength, and overcome complex situations.

This semester, the team has the opportunity to send Cadet pairs to the Ranger Buddy competition, which highlights similar events as Ranger Challenge.
CHHS Junior Faculty Brings Fresh Perspective

By Jim Ciesla
Associate Dean for Research and Resources

The College of Health and Human Sciences is fortunate to have a relatively large number of junior faculty. When a faculty member joins us, they bring with them a fresh perspective. Since most of them are newly minted Ph.D.’s, they are well versed in the newest advances in their fields.

In last summer’s Research Notes (CHHS Dispatch, 13:4), I introduced readers to the faculty who started at the beginning of fall term. In last fall’s column (CHHS Dispatch, 13:4), I introduced the PI Academy Class of 2014-2015.

I have been speaking of the importance we place on our new faculty as long-term investments in the academic life of our programs. Any long-term investment requires continuity.

In this column, I would like to recognize an achievement of one of our junior faculty. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation awarded Assistant Professor Matt Wilson their organization’s New Investigators Research Grant during the recent 2014 Convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

The New Investigators Research Grant supports new scientists who have earned their latest degree in communication sciences within the last five years and who are pursuing research in audiology or speech-language pathology. These grants are highly competitive. ASHA gives these awards to the most promising new researchers in the communication sciences.

Wilson, a Hearing Scientist, conducts research that addresses an issue that has been in the public spotlight over the past few years.

He will be using the grant money to pursue a project designed to examine how auditory attention and working memory abilities are affected over time in contact sports athletes who are frequently exposed to concussive and subconcussive impacts, commonly known as concussions.

The project the ASHA award will fund is the first in a series of steps that Dr. Wilson will take towards his long-term goal of research that can be used in conjunction with current concussion management protocols to identify the subtle, long-term cognitive difficulties that accompany repeated concussions.

Over time his research will make it possible for audiologists and speech-pathologist to better treat these types of injuries.

Additionally, Dr. Wilson hopes to use this grant opportunity as a platform to raise awareness about the issue of concussions within the community.

Dr. Wilson is an excellent example of the benefits of continuity and investing in faculty over the long-term. He joined the Audiology Program spring term 2013. He was in the PI Academy Class of 2013-2014 and now his program of research is beginning to bear fruit.

The kind of scholarly work in which Dr. Wilson is engaged is vital to the academic life of our College. Not only does faculty research generate important new knowledge that improves people’s lives, it provides positive opportunities for student learning and for CHHS engagement with the people who live, work, and practice in the communities our College serves.

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Prisca Collins Welcomes Dr. Julie Fritz for Presentation at NIU

By Jim Ciesla

Assistant Professor Prisca Collins welcomed to campus her mentor Dr. Julie Fritz who gave the presentation: Developing Effective Partnerships between Academic Researchers and Clinicians in route to Translating Research into Practice and Practice into Research.

Collins, a member of the PI Academy class of 2014, hosted the lecture as an Academy event.

The PI Academy is a year-long professional development program that includes training, workshops, and other educational events (See Dispatch 13:5). Academy members choose a mentor who are senior researchers in their area of specialization.

Dr. Collins chose Dr. Fritz because Fritz is a nationally-known scholar in their discipline.

Julie Fritz, PhD, PT, is a Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at the University of Utah and Clinical Outcomes Research Scientist at Intermountain Healthcare.

Dr. Fritz's clinical experience as a physical therapist has focused on the management of patients with spinal conditions, and this has also been the focus of her research career.

Her research focuses on clinical trials evaluating the effectiveness of different treatment options for patients with low back or neck pain, as well as health services research examining patterns of care delivery and their relationship with future healthcare utilization and outcomes.

Her research has been supported by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Department of Defense, and the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality.

It is not an overstatement to say that Dr. Fritz is a national leader in her discipline.

We are also very fortunate to have had the partial sponsorship of Accelerated Rehabilitation.

Chicago-based Accelerated Rehabilitation Centers, Ltd. was founded in 1989 and provides rehabilitation services in over 300 outpatient locations in seven states in the Midwest and in Arizona.

As a physical therapist owned and operated rehabilitation company, Accelerated offers a wide range of programs and specialized services.

Since Dr. Collins and Dr. Fritz conduct research in areas that are highly relevant to the services Accelerated delivers, their generous sponsorship was particularly fitting and appropriate.

We thank Accelerated Rehabilitation and look forward to a productive and engaged relationship in the future.

Dr. Fritz discusses her research with Dr. Mark S. De Carlo, Director of Research and Clinical Education, Accelerated Rehabilitation Centers.


For previous issues of the CHHS Dispatch Newsletters: http://chhs.niu.edu/about/dispatch/index.shtml
CHHS ALUMNI

CDC’s Diane Downie, Speaks at the CHHS Scholarly Exchange

The College of Health and Human Sciences was very pleased to host, Diane Downie, MPH, as a guest speaker for the Scholarly Exchange. Downie’s presentation, “Public Health Preparedness and Response: Federal, State, and Local levels” was of great practical relevance to the students, faculty and staff in attendance because of the high profile public health response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

Downie serves as a Public Health Analyst in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response.

In her presentation, Downie described in great detail the way the public health system identifies and assess disease outbreaks and the essential role of preparedness in effective response.

Because of her first-hand experiences at the CDC, Downie was able to share specific anecdotes that brought the topic to life.

“We are very fortunate to have Diane as a guest for the Exchange right in the middle of the flurry of attention and activity related to the Ebola response,” said CHHS Associate Dean Jim Ciesla.

“This is a teachable moment for our students. With Ebola in the news, we have our student’s and other Exchange attendees’ interest and attention.”

Downie stressed the fact that public health preparedness and response are core public health activities—things most people take for granted—and that they require sustained programmatic support even when there are no high-profile active disease outbreaks in the news.

She described how the CDC worked with other U.S. government agencies, the World Health Organization (WHO), and other domestic and international partners as it activated its Emergency Operations Center to help coordinate technical assistance and control activities.

The CHHS Scholarly Exchange is a forum for CHHS faculty, students, associated researchers, and others to present research, generate feedback on scholarly projects, host guest speakers and other similar activities in an informal setting that allows for interaction and two-way dialog.

CHHS Hosts Audiology Alumnus Lawrence G. Clayton

CHHS was pleased to host Lawrence G. Clayton (AUD 1966) to speak about his new device, TMJ NextGeneration™, at a CHHS Scholarly Exchange meeting.

Clayton, founder and Chairman of the Board of Ascentia® Health, Inc, developed and brought to market TMJ NextGeneration™, a first-of-its-kind, FDA cleared medical device that reduces Temporomandibular Joint Disorder (TMJD) pain.

The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research estimates the prevalence of TMJD to be between 5 and 12 percent of the population, so as many as 10 million Americans are affected.

TMJD is a group of painful conditions that affect people’s jaw and surrounding tissues. TMJD can significantly reduce people’s quality of life since the symptoms—which include chewing difficulty, jaw stiffness and pain, clicking and locking, and migraines headaches—often becomes chronic and difficult to manage.

Clayton’s device consists of two custom-made, hollow ear canal inserts. They work by providing near field support of the ear canal. Since the ear canal is located very close to the temporomandibular joint, the inserts prevent ear canal compression as the jaw moves. Patients who wear the devices report improvement in their pain.

In his presentation, Clayton described how he arrived at the “aha” insight during his time in clinical Audiology practice and the many steps it took to design, test and bring his invention to market.

He also presented the key research findings demonstrating his device’s effectiveness.
Hiett and Sandquist Get Top Nursing Awards

Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital awarded the 2014 Jean Ewing Nursing Excellence Award to Amanda Hiett, a registered nurse who works in the day surgery post-anesthesia care unit.

The Highland Park resident received the award for exemplifying the highest standards of professional and nursing excellence.

Hiett, a 2000 NIU Nursing graduate, has worked at Northwestern Lake Forest for five years. She previously worked nine years at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

The hospital also presented Debra Sanquist with an excellence award for her work in education as a registered nurse.

Sandquist, a 1988 graduate of the NIU Nursing program, works with Hiett in the day surgery unit.

Featured Alumni: Stan Rocush

Alumni Stan Rocush graduated from NIU in 1980 with a Masters in Community Mental Health. He remembers his time at NIU fondly, citing phenomenal instructors and classmates.

Currently President-Senior Director of Care Clinics, Inc., Rocush started his career as a credit manager and then as a police officer. While still employed with the Aurora Police Department, he formed his own company, Care Clinics, Inc., to do mental health counseling.

Rocush holds the highest level of specialized certification for working in the area of mentally ill substance abusers, MISA II. He is also certified as a Master’s Level Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CAADC) in Illinois, and nationally by the Illinois Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association (IAODAPCA).

He is also internationally certified as an Alcohol and Other Drug Addiction Counselor (AODA) by the ICRC and is certified as an anger management specialist.

Care Clinics, Inc., is a State of Illinois licensed substance abuse and education agency, treating a variety of emotional and behavioral health needs. It also offers workshops and seminars in areas such as Police Stress, EMT/Agitated Client Training, and Domestic Violence Training.

Since 1981, Care Clinics, Inc., has grown from a two person operation to an eight person operation and has expanded from one office to three. For more information about Care Clinics, visit: http://www.careclinicsofnaperville.com/index.htm.

Louis A. Gallo Promoted to Colonel

NIU Nursing Alum Lt. Col. Louis A. Gallo has assumed command of the 375th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at Scott Air Force Base and was selected for promotion to the rank of colonel earlier this year.

Gallo recently departed Moody Air Force Base in Georgia, where he commanded the 23rd Medical Operations Squadron from 2012-2014. During his command, he was recognized with the 2013 Air Force award for Outstanding Excellence in Nursing Leadership, the top Air Force award for senior nurse leaders.

Gallo has served 30 years of military service, including 26 years on active duty. He began his career in 1984, when he enlisted in the Army as a medic.

After graduating from NIU, he served as an officer for the Air Force Nurse Corps.

He has received several military decorations, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal and the Air Force Achievement Medal.

John Reardon Directs Special Needs Non-Profit

John Reardon has been named the executive director of The Arc of Cumberland & Perry Counties (CPARC), a non-profit organization in Carlisle, PA.

CPARC works with individuals with developmental disabilities and other special needs, serving more than 1,700 individuals annually.

Reardon was previously the CEO of Niagara Cerebral Palsy of New York, where he was very active in the community.

Licensed nationally as a speech-language pathologist, he has a Master’s degree in Speech-Language Pathology from NIU and a bachelor’s degree in Speech and Hearing from the State University of New York at Oneonta.

Tell Us Your Story

Your stories are welcome for inclusion in the Spring 2015 CHHS Dispatch.

CHHS Faculty and Staff should send updates by April 1, to Carrie Callahan at ccallahan@niu.edu. Alumni, please send updates to CHHSalums@niu.edu.
CHHS Welcomes Your Support!

Gifts targeted to the College of Health and Human Sciences are appreciated year-round and play an important role in CHHS’ mission to further science in the service of society. Gifts directed to CHHS are made through the Northern Illinois University Foundation.

Please (1) make out check to NIU Foundation, (2) write where the money should be designated in the memo line*, and (3) send to Christine Radtke, NIU Foundation, Altgeld Hall 135, DeKalb, IL 60115-2882. If you would like to contribute in a different way, please contact Christine Radtke at cradtke@niu.edu or (815) 753-1390.

* Donations can be designated to:
(a) College of Health and Human Sciences
(b) One of the three Schools in the College:
   School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders
   School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences
   School of Nursing and Health Studies
(c) A specific program in a School, or
(d) The Department of Military Science

Thank you for your ongoing support of CHHS!

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