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Salud y Saludos: The E-News of the College of Health Sciences

College of Health Sciences

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College of Health Sciences
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

Salud y Saludos

The E-News of the College of Health Sciences

Salud y Saludos

April 2016

In This Issue

From the Dean's Desk

PT Graduates Recent Achievements

Dr. Candyce S. Berger received The Susan Browder Award

RC and OT Interprofessional Education (IPE) Pilot Project

Collaborating for a Brighter Future

Student Engagement with Political Advocacy

Do You Know

UTEP's Rehabilitation Counseling Program Well Represented at the National Rehabilitation Educators Conference

Mark Lusk named Provost's Faculty Fellow for Civic Engagement

Applying Positive Deviance Inquiry and Human Centered Design to Issues of Assistive Technology Access in the Paso del Norte Region

CLS Students win awards for poster presentation at 2016 TACLS Conference

Workshop: Positive Deviance to Solve Complex Social Problems Data Driven Inquiry

From the Dean's Desk



After 9 years as dean of the College of Health Sciences at the University of Texas at El Paso, I have announced my retirement at the end of the spring 2016 semester. In looking back on the last nine years, I am filled with pride at all the accomplishments of our College, our faculty, staff, students and community partners. Whenever I have introduced the College of Health Sciences, I always emphasize two fundamental commitments of our College: (1) our commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration and (2) our commitment to inclusion of and outreach to our

community in our academic programs, research and service.

Before I came to UTEP, I was well-prepared by Dean Benjamin Cuellar in the College of Health and Human Services at California State University, Fresno. He began his career as a social worker and those strong social work values drove his vision and ideas as dean. We collaborated for many years to create and secure funding for a vibrant university-based infrastructure that provided opportunities for faculty and students to both share their talents and learn from our unique central California community, which shared many commonalities with the Paso del Norte region. Combining this experience with my rehabilitation background has enabled me to open many new doors in the UTEP College of Health Sciences.

I could not imagine an institution of higher education with which I would be better aligned than UTEP, especially with President Diana Natalicio's leadership and UTEP's values of access and excellence. Shortly after I arrived, I received a phone call from Dr. Natalicio and VPBA Cindy Villa informing me that the UT Regents had approved the allocation of funds for the construction of a new \$60 million Health Sciences and Nursing Building on the UTEP campus. Being able to contribute to the design of this state of the art building was an incredible experience.

I am so proud to have served with dozens of our faculty and community and international partners, to tailor a unique approach for our College to serve our region and our planet. We have integrated our academic and research programs to address both local and global health needs while preparing the next generation of the health and human service workforce for this region and beyond.

In the last 9 years, our College has received approval to start four new professional entry level graduate programs and reached full accreditation status with each of them. Including our existing programs, we have prepared for and participated in close to 20 separate program accreditation cycles, with 100% success. More importantly, we have accelerated the preparation of professionals to meet the severe health professional shortages we face in this region and beyond, increasing access to critical health and human services for thousands of people.

A great example is the development of the Master of Rehabilitation Counseling program. The community of people with disabilities in this region is perhaps one of the most under-served. When we began this program, we could find only 6 rehabilitation counselors in El Paso who held the professional credential of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, the credential that our graduates would be eligible to receive. We estimated, conservatively, that there were 80,000 individuals of working age who had disabilities in El Paso, alone. I am confident that our 40+ MRC graduates over the past 5 years have begun to address the needs of this population and serve as change agents for employers, governmental administrators and educators, to address the needs of the often hidden population of people with disabilities. In addition, our local economy can only benefit by matching needs with talents of this overlooked and resourceful community.

**MHIRT 2016 Class
Selected**

**Assistant Dean Letty Paez
Elected to Reynolds Home
Board of Directors**



Calendar of events

**College of Health Sciences
Graduation Celebration
and Hooding Ceremony**

Date: Saturday, May 14,
2016
Time: 3:30pm
Location: Magoffin Auditorium

**University
Commencement**

Date: Saturday, May 14,
2016
Time: 7:00pm
Location: Don Haskins
Center

In the News

[Health Fair Offers H.O.P.E.
to Homeless](#)

[TIME Magazine: UTEP
President Among World's
100 Most Influential People](#)

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Finally, it has been a tremendous honor work together to contribute to UTEP's success long into the future. UTEP will always remain in a very special place in my heart. .

Go Miners!

Kathleen A Curtis, PT, Ph.D,
Dean, College of Health Sciences

PT Graduates Recent Achievements

The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program is pleased to share news of two of our graduates' recent achievements. Congratulations to Dr. Pablo (Paul) Estrada, an alumnus from the Class of 2015! Dr. Estrada was recently accepted into the Harris Health Orthopaedic Residency program at Quentin Mease Community Hospital in Houston, Texas. He will begin his residency in the fall. This is an important next-step in his professional development, and a demonstration of his commitment to lifelong learning. Also congratulations to Dr. David Krause, an alumnus from the Class of 2011! Dr. Krause and colleagues' article "Making of a Successful Early Mobilization Program for a Medical Intensive Care Unit" will soon be published in the *Southern Medical Journal*. Their work is an important contribution to evidence-based practice.

**Dr. Candyce S. Berger received The Susan Browder
Award**



Dr. Candyce S. Berger, Chair of the Department of Social Work, has been awarded The Susan Browder Award for 2016 from the Society of Social Work Leadership in Health (SSWLHC) - Texas Chapter. The award is given to recognize a member's career-long contribution to SSWLHC, to the development of future social workers and to the social work profession.

Including her roles as MSW Program Director and Chair of the Department of Social Work at UTEP, Dr. Berger has served as a social work educator across five academic institutions. She recently served as President of the Society for Social Work Leaders in Health Care - Texas Chapter. Throughout her career, she has been a leader in exploring social work in health care and health care administration, often examining critical health issues, strongly set in a context of social determinants, such as maternal child health, teen pregnancy, substance abuse and violence prevention. Congratulations, Dr. Berger on this well-deserved award! ;

**RC and OT Interprofessional Education (IPE) Pilot
Project**

Rehabilitation Counseling (RC) Program, Occupational Therapy (OT) Program, and the Opportunity Center for the Homeless collaborated to provide an interprofessional education (IPE) experience for graduate students in RC and OT and to provide services for residents at the OC. IPE was concurrently included in RC's *Psychiatric Rehabilitation* and OT's *Psychosocial Aspects of Occupation* courses. Dr. Jennifer Sánchez (RC) worked with Professor Rocio Alvarenga (OT) to supervise their respective students who would provide services to and work with residents at the Opportunity Center for the Homeless. Students in RC and OT completed a service-learning requirement where they worked in interdisciplinary teams (i.e., RC, OT, and resident-their "client") onsite. Students met with the residents on 3 occasions over the course of the semester and worked together to establish goals, interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of their intervention. Prior to the initial meeting, graduate students in both the RC and OT programs, reported a limited understanding of what the other respective field was about. However, over the course of the semester, students have reported the experience valuable, indicated a better understanding of each others' respective fields, and described found value in what each field can provide to improve their client's outcomes. The pilot study was presented by Dr. Sánchez, Dr. Chen, and two graduate students in RC (Alexandra Alba and Leonor Ibarra) at the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) Spring 2016 conference in April.

Collaborating for a Brighter Future



Dr. Kathryn Schmidt (Social Work) partnered with the El Paso Child Guidance Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Centro San Vicente to submit a grant to provide trauma-informed interventions for students at Canutillo Elementary School. The grant from the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health would enable the group to provide counseling and prevention education to children now in grades kindergarten through second grade for five years, helping to prepare them and their families for brighter futures.

Student Engagement with Political Advocacy

Social work MSW student Robert Fernandez organized a visit from U.S. Representative Beto O'Rourke on April 8. Social work students and faculty talked with Congressman O'Rourke about mental health care, veterans issues, and the importance of voter participation. O'Rourke ended with an invitation for students and faculty to work with him to identify needs of community members.

Do You Know

- **The Mayor and the City Council of El Paso proclaimed April 2016 as National OT Month?**
- **The 2016 US News and World Report has ranked Occupational Therapy as the 17th in best healthcare jobs?** UTEP MOT Program was ranked at 88th, up from 113th in 2013.
- **73% of current students in the MOT Program receive the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students?** The 2.3 million dollars of SDS scholarship funding has benefitted many of our students in the past 4 years!
- **The MOT Program has just accepted 23 students for the Class 2018?** Out of 199 applicants!
- **Out of 26 Class 2015 graduates, within 3 months, 18 of them already passed the NBCOT national board exam?**
- **There is a national honor society in the field of Occupational Therapy called Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE)?** This year 8 more MOT (1st year) students were inducted into PTE. These students have to be in the top 35% of their class. Not only are they stellar scholars, they are also very active in the community (e.g., Gigi's Playhouse, El Paso Rescue Mission) Dr. Fierro has served as the advisor and mentor for the PTE students.



- **Ten students of the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) attended the 2016 AOTA Annual Conference in Chicago and received the AOTA inaugural Outstanding Student Advocacy Award?** The SOTA members have volunteered since last year at the El Paso Rescue Mission, Hospice Clinic for the homeless, Transitional Living for Women of YWCA. They have provided classes on stress management, parenting, and tutored the children at the homeless shelter. Many thanks to Dr. Fierro for her tireless support to the SOTA



- **The MOT students are always busy! Fundraising, volunteering, and running workshops?** They recently invited the University Counseling Center to present a QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention workshop to fellow OT students and faculty. All proceeds are donated to Gigi's Playhouse.
- **Four MOT students are assisting the UTEP Dance Department which has a ballet program for girls with Down Syndrome this spring?** We are looking forward to seeing the final performance in May!
- **The 1st year MOT students assisted in the Special Olympics at the James Butler School (Socorro ISD) on March 23?** They helped the school Olympics Committee staff in all aspects of the event and assisted the students (at all ages from elementary to high school) with physical or mental disabilities. The photo shows MOT student Olivia Lara with Rachel, winner of the Power Wheelchair Race. Olivia and Rachel went to the same elementary school!



- **OTs may use hippo therapy as a therapeutic means with children and adults with disabilities?** The 2nd year MOT students took a field trip on March 28th with Dr. Capshaw to Compadres Therapy as part of the class activities of her course Occupational Performance in School-Aged Children to learn about hippo therapy.

Many thanks to all the faculty members in the OT Program for their dedication, guidance and support to our students.

UTEP's Rehabilitation Counseling Program Well Represented at the National Rehabilitation Educators Conference

The 16th annual National Rehabilitation Educators Conference, hosted by the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE), was held in Newport Beach, CA from April 20th to April 22nd, 2016. The year's theme, *Redefining Our Identity: New Challenges, New Perspectives, A Bright Future for Rehabilitation Counselor Education*, aligned well with NCRE's mission to "promote the improvement of rehabilitation services available to people with disabilities through quality education and research." In attendance were Rehabilitation Counselors, Counselor Educators, and Researchers as well as undergraduate, master, and doctoral level students.

Dr. Erin Barnes was invited to serve as a panelist for the Keynote Address along with Dr. Amy Armstrong (Virginia Commonwealth University) and Dr. Michael Leahy (Michigan State University). Each contributor discussed their perspectives regarding the status and future of the field of rehabilitation counseling. Dr. Barnes, the early-career panelist, outlined strategies for increasing the field's visibility through community engagement. She spoke of her work at the Opportunity Center for the Homeless, emphasizing the way in which working within the community can serve as a mechanism for orienting both academics and practitioners to the clinical approach rehabilitation counselors use in order to improve client outcomes. Dr. Armstrong, the middle-career panelist, encouraged participants to engage in intentional activity, with the intent of creating positive identities, relationships, and climates. Dr. Leahy, the most senior member of the panel, spoke about professional issues within the field, and offered strategies for the ways in which rehabilitation counselor educators, particularly those in the final stages of their careers, can make a difference in moving the discipline forward.

Rehabilitation Counseling faculty, Dr. Barbara Schoen, Dr. Kristin Kosyluk, and Dr. Jennifer Sánchez, and Occupational Therapy's Dr. Christine Chen, were also in attendance and presented on various topics related to their respective research and teaching interests. Three Rehabilitation Counseling students, Alexandra Alba, Leonor Ibarra, and Stephany Martinez, presented at the conference under the mentorship of Dr. Sánchez. André Thomas, a Rehabilitation Counseling student attended the conference. Students received funding from the Graduate School, the College of Health Sciences, the Dodson funds, and through an RSA Long-Term Training Grant. All together, UTEP's faculty and students presented 2 invited panels, 3 concurrent sessions, and 6 posters. Way to go Miners!

Mark Lusk named Provost's Faculty Fellow for Civic Engagement



Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Howard Daudistel has named Mark Lusk, professor of social work, as one of two Faculty Fellows for the Center for Civic Engagement. Along with Mathematics Professor Amy Wagler, Dr. Lusk will serve for a year to provide faculty members with leadership and administrative experience while offering faculty perspective, guidance and vision to the administrative offices that they serve. Faculty fellows work closely with program directors on projects that help those units address UTEP's mission and goals.

Both Dr. Lusk and Dr. Wagler bring to their positions broad knowledge and experience in community

engaged scholarship (CES). They have already demonstrated leadership in expanding the awareness, knowledge and engaged practices of their staff and faculty colleagues on campus. Mark has worked extensively in the El Paso Juarez community with refugees and migrants since joining UTEP in 2007. Prior to joining UTEP, he worked for many years in South America and was a Fulbright Senior Scholar at the Catholic University of Peru and later as a Fulbright Senior Researcher at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro.

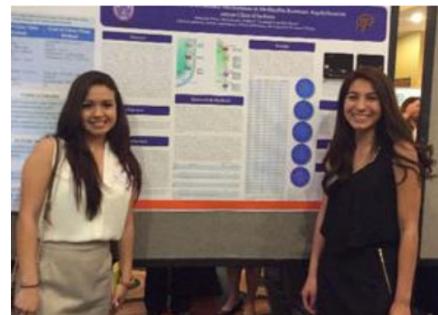
The Center for Civic Engagement has been in operation since 1998 and serves as a link between community partners and university faculty and students in the creation of community-based partnerships and engagement opportunities. With the support of faculty fellows, the CCE is a resource for faculty interested in expanding their existing community scholarship or in exploring opportunities to integrate community engagement in their work. We are very proud of Dr. Lusk!

Applying Positive Deviance Inquiry and Human Centered Design to Issues of Assistive Technology Access in the Paso del Norte Region

Residents of the Paso Del Norte region often lack access to current health and rehabilitation services and technologies. UTEP researchers seek to change this through some creative thinking and combining two promising approaches, positive deviance inquiry and human-centered design. Positive Deviance (PD) inquiry is a unique, asset-based approach to solving complex social issues. This approach rests on empowering a community to identify existing solutions practiced by a select group of people within the community (Positive Deviants) and then developing methods to amplify these existing solutions to aid the community at large. In comparison, Human Centered Design (HCD) is an engineering design approach to product development that similarly brings the user of a product into the process of designing the very product that they will utilize. While an improvement on traditional design techniques that are product focused rather than people focused, HCD still assumes something of a deficit in the community. In other words, HCD assumes that, if there is a problem in a community, then an adequate solution must not exist and therefore engineers and designers must identify these gaps and provide a solution in partnership with the community. Without the perspective that PD offers, Engineers practicing HCD therefore risk inadvertently introducing a solution that may not work as well as those already in use that simply need to be introduced to the community at large. The current limitation of the PD approach is that it has traditionally be used for service based solutions, such as workshops on proper nutrition used to address the problem of malnutrition, rather than engineered products, such as Assistive Technology (AT), which HCD does well. This study, therefore intends to merge the strengths of PD theory with HCD in the design of appropriate AT for individuals in the Paso del Norte region where access to AT has been historically difficult.

CLS Students win awards for poster presentation at 2016 TACLS Conference

The CLS Program sent five students to the 2016 annual Texas Association for Clinical Laboratory Sciences conference in San Antonio, TX April 6-9, 2016. Samantha Meza and Alexis Ramos received a 1st place award for their research conducted under Dr. Delfina Dominguez (CLS Faculty) and Dr. Jose Rivera (Pharmacy Faculty) titled *Molecular Characterization of*



Resistance Mechanisms in Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus Clinical Isolates Obtained from Hospitals in El Paso/Ciudad Juarez Border Region.

Diana Caraveo and Andrea Limas received a 2nd Place award for their research conducted under Dr. Delfina Dominguez (CLS Faculty) and Dr. Jose Rivera (Pharmacy Faculty) entitled *Effectiveness of Antibiotic Combination: Extended Spectrum Beta Lactamase Escherichia coli*. Also in attendance was Elphas Mayo who presented his research on *A Method for Cost Reduction in Phenotyping for Transfusion Medicine in Third-World Countries* under the guidance of Dr. Jacen Moore (CLS Faculty).

Workshop: Positive Deviance to Solve Complex Social Problems Data Driven Inquiry

A workshop on Positive Deviance was held on May 10th and co-facilitated by UTEP faculty and students and representatives from the Volar Center for Independent Living. Positive Deviance (PD) is an approach to solving complex health and social issues, which "flips" this traditional research question on its head. Instead of asking the traditional question, "What factors predict poor outcomes?" PD asks, "Are there individuals in the community with x, y, and z risk factors, who are successfully navigating these issues without additional resources?" The PD approach assumes that within every community lie individuals or groups whose uncommon behaviors and strategies enable them to find better solutions to problems than their peers although everyone has access to the same resources and faces the same challenges (Pascale, Sternin, & Sternin, 2010). These outliers are deviants because their uncommon behaviors are not the norm; they are positive deviants because they have found ways to effectively address the problem, while most others have not (Singhal, 2013). PD aims to uncover solutions that are hidden in plain site, and ultimately amplify these solutions to produce programs that can be offered to the larger community to produce positive change.

MHIRT 2016 Class Selected

Thirteen UTEP students (11 undergraduate and 2 graduate) are busily preparing for their summer 2016 international research experience with the Minority Health International Research Training (MHIRT) program. Selected to participate in the MHIRT 2016 class are Elia Barraza (Biological Sciences), Vanessa Enriquez (Biological Sciences), Lizette Gutierrez (Biology-Biomedical Concentration), Viridiana Saenz (Biological Sciences), Rebeca Perez (Health Promotion), Edith Hernandez (Psychology), Marisol Trujillo (Nursing), Catalina de la Pena Kinesiology), Diana Komiyama (Biological Sciences), Rodrigo Martinez (Microbiology), Alondra Avila (Psychology), Mary Fuentes (Cellular and Molecular Biology) and Norma Daphne Cervantes (Biology-Biomedical Concentration). These students will complete a series of academic courses in Hispanic Health Disparities and Directed Research Methods prior to their departure to one of three international research training sites in Ecuador, Costa Rica and Panama. Their international research experience will cover 7 weeks of intensive research activities followed by two presentations of their research work during summer 2016.



Assistant Dean Letty Paez Elected to Reynolds Home Board of Directors



Reynolds Home is a private non-profit shelter located in El Paso, Texas. A two-story farmhouse, built in 1926 provides shelter for homeless children and their mothers. In 2015, the Reynolds Home celebrated its 25th anniversary having served over 700 women and 1700 children who for some reason or other were forced out of their homes. The mission of the Reynolds Home is to provide shelter, security and basic services to women that teach and encourage mothers to cherish and respect their own dignity and to build on their own strengths which enables them to provide independently for themselves and their children. Paez was elected to the Reynolds Home Board of Directors due to her

extensive and long-standing service to the community of El Paso. She has served on multiple local, state and national boards over her professional career spanning over 30 years.

"I welcome the opportunity to join the Reynolds Home Board of Directors and am honored to serve with fellow board members as we work together to address (and someday overcome) the challenges and stigma of homelessness in El Paso" said Paez. Congratulations Letty for your continued community service.