

2-2016

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

College of Health Sciences

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Recommended Citation

College of Health Sciences, "Salud y Saludos: The E-News of the College of Health Sciences" (2016). *College of Health Sciences*. 52.
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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
February 2016
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Date: Sunday, April 17, 2016

From the Dean's Desk



Don't you love it when you leave a movie and felt uplifted and truly touched by the portrayal of the characters and story? If you haven't seen *Eddie the Eagle*, go see it, soon! The real Michael "Eddie" Edwards participated in the 1988 Calgary Olympic Games. With almost no background in ski jumping, Eddie jumped into the hearts of spectators, while placing last in the Olympic ski jumping competition, as the only member of the Great Britain ski jumping squad. Starring Taron Egerton and Hugh Jackman, this film will leave you cheering for the underdog.

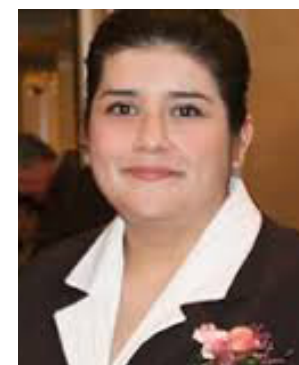
Also watch for the CBS Sports documentary, *1966 Texas Western: Championship of Change*, featuring interviews with players, coaches and supporters of the 1966 NCAA championship team. Filmed on the UTEP campus, this documentary will provide new insights into the hearts and spirit of this history-making group of athletes. Check out the [scheduled showings](#).

My pride for our students, faculty and staff grows with every new accomplishment. Read below about the ways in which our College of Health Sciences community continues to excel in their professional fields and contribute to their community.

Go Miners!
 Kathleen Curtis, Dean
 College of Health Sciences

Michelle del Rio, B.S., MPH, College of Health Sciences Awarded Outstanding Master's Thesis Award

Ms. Michelle del Rio, B.S., MPH, was recently awarded the Outstanding Master's Thesis Award in the College of Health Sciences for her thesis entitled, "*A pilot study of arsenic in young children from two rural West Texas communities: Blood levels, household water levels, and behavioral outcomes.*" Michelle completed her research during 2013 and 2014 and successfully defended her thesis in April 2015.



Ms. Del Rio's research examined arsenic blood levels in children living in two rural towns 10 miles north of the UTEP campus. These child studies followed on findings from a Health Impact Assessment published in 2013 by Dr. William Hargrove, UTEP Center for Environmental Resources Management, which showed higher than acceptable arsenic levels in approximately half of water supplies tested. The important question that was asked in these studies was whether higher than acceptable arsenic levels was present in children dependent on the water supplies previously tested. The findings showed that sixty-five percent of children had blood arsenic levels above the current acceptable limit and that household water levels predicted child levels to a small but significant degree. The findings were shared with the communities and knowledge regarding potential water risk was disseminated within the communities. Studies were initiated to determine the possible sources of exposure. This work also served as the foundation for two follow-up studies to confirm ongoing risk.

The thesis was considered outstanding because it included a large sample representing approximately twenty-five percent of children from two communities, the detection methods used had excellent precision characteristics, and family household information was successfully obtained from most households. Ms. Del Rio helped to guide every phase of this study, she was instrumental in study organization and execution, and she helped to train student researchers for the collection of blood samples, anthropometric data, household water samples and data from parents, while facilitating ongoing communication with the schools.

Time: 2:00pm
Location: Memorial Gym

**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

[UTEP Professor Shows
That Hearing Aids
Improve Memory, Speech](#)

[Occupational Therapy
Students Lend a Helping
Hand](#)

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Ms. Del Rio is currently developing a manuscript for publication. While hundreds of studies have examined higher level heavy exposures, very few attempt to characterize low "unacceptable" levels. While raising awareness among the schools and communities regarding this potential risk, the findings will contribute significantly to the scant literature on low-level arsenic exposure during childhood. UTEP will directly benefit from the scientific recognition that this work will bring. This work laid the foundation for ongoing community collaborations with rural towns in the El Paso Border Region regarding child health and development. Ms. Del Rio was mentored by Dr. Christina Sobin, Associate Professor, Department of Public Health Sciences, College of Health Sciences, who also served as Chair of her Thesis Committee.

**Christi Duette Luby awarded the College of Health
Sciences Outstanding Dissertation Award**

Christi Duette Luby, Ph.D., May 2015 graduate of the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Ph.D. program, has been awarded the College of Health Sciences Outstanding Dissertation award. Her dissertation, *Health assessment for loved ones: Development and validation of a new instrument to measure well-being in military spouses*, focused on the well-being of spouses of deployed and returning US Service members. The purpose of this three-part study was to develop and validate a new instrument (The Health Assessment for Loved Ones or HALO) to assess the well-being of civilian spouses and partners of active and Veteran US Service members who have been indirectly exposed to combat trauma stress.



Dr. Luby's work was novel and focused on an understudied population of spouses of U.S. service members. Over a three-year period she developed and then validated an instrument to measure well-being in this vulnerable population, which often experiences stress from exposure to secondary trauma. This study was able to address a gap in our existing literature. Prior to this study, there was no valid, reliable instrument that specifically addressed the issues that this population faces. Her work established that there are specific phenomena that this population of military spouses experiences, because of their unique personal and intense involvement with the service-member.

Spouses of US Service members reported experiencing multiple symptoms that fit a variety of physical and psychological diagnoses. Professional care providers, although dedicated to serving the Service Member, may be uninformed of the issues that the spouse may experience. Her work provides practitioners and researchers with a valid and reliable quantitative measure to use in family trauma assessment and referral.

Dr. Kathleen Curtis, Professor and Dean, College of Health Sciences, served as Chair of Dr. Luby's doctoral dissertation committee.

**Assistant Professor in Rehabilitation Counseling
Awarded URI Grant to Study Disparities in MS**



Dr. Jennifer Sánchez, an assistant professor in the Rehabilitation Counseling (RC) Program was recently awarded a \$5000 University Research Institute (URI) grant from the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP) to study health disparities in persons with multiple sclerosis (MS). Her study will examine the disparities in health, employment, and quality of life (QoL) between Caucasians and Hispanics with multiple sclerosis.

Congratulations to the UTEP MOT Program SOTA

Congratulations to the UTEP MOT Program Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) for receiving the inaugural AOTA Outstanding Student Advocate Award! The UTEP SOTA will be honored on April 9th during the Awards Ceremony at the 2016 Annual conference and Expo in Chicago. The AOTA Outstanding Student Advocate Award was established in 2015; it recognizes one OT or OTA student or student group who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to advocacy for the profession and raising awareness of OT in new and innovative ways. The SOTA members have initiated and provided on-going volunteering services to several local organizations such as the Rescue Mission in El Paso, a local homeless shelter, and the Sarah McKnight Transitional Living Center of the YWCA.

The students have implemented a variety of services to help the clients and/or their children acquire or develop useful skills. The services they provided range from stress management, self-care issues after orthopedic procedures, to teaching basic skills to succeeding in school and/or finding employments. They provided tutoring or group sessions such as mathematics, resume writing, job application, interview tips, computer literacy.

In addition, the SOTA students participated in a Back-to-School Community Health Fair organized by the local YWCA last summer on August 22, 2015. They raised over \$7,000 dollars of funds, supplies and donated services for the Health Fair including sixty backpacks for children; 7 hair stylists who provided back-to-school haircuts for the children; and joined multiple health professionals who addressed important topics such as mental health, dental hygiene, sexual violence, handwashing and the role of occupational therapy. The SOTA students contacted and secured most of services provided on that day and was pivotal for the success of the event. Congratulations to these dedicated student occupational therapists!

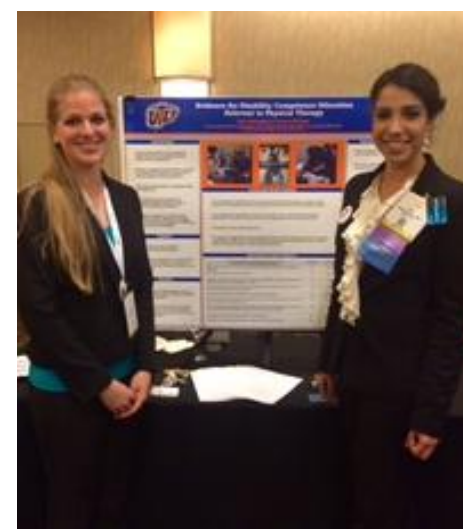


From Left to Right: : Rudy Cedillo, Brenna Perez, Kat McFarlane, Stephanie Gonzalez, Giselle Rooney, Tori Martyn, and Jesse Guerin.

UTEP Doctor of DPT represented at Combined Sections Meeting

The UTEP Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program was well represented at the recent Combined Sections Meeting (CSM), a national physical therapy conference. Many students, graduates, and faculty from the DPT Program joined over 11,000 physical therapy professionals in Anaheim, California February 17-20, 2016. Many UTEP attendees described how inspired they were to be surrounded by top-name researchers and other leaders in the physical therapy profession.

Kiersten Garrand (DPT Class of 2016) and Liliana Jimenez (DPT Class of 2017) presented their research poster on disability competence in physical therapist education at the conference. Kiersten reported, "This was one of the highlights for me at CSM because I had several in-depth, one-on-one conversations with physical therapists who were very interested in this topic. Not only did they provide helpful feedback regarding my poster and online survey, but they offered great advice on how to be a student advocate for people with disabilities at the local, state, and national levels."



Many of our students were able to attend this outstanding conference because they had received some financial support. The DPT Program expresses gratitude to the Dodson Fund, the UTEP Graduate School, and the Greater El Paso District of the Texas Physical Therapy Association for the assistance given to our students.

UTEP Faculty and Student Conduct Positive Deviance Staff Development Workshop for EPCC



On January 15, 2016 nearly fifty staff members serving students with disabilities at El Paso Community College gathered for a staff development workshop. The workshop, led by Dr. Kristin Kosyluk of UTEP's Department of Rehabilitation Sciences (left) (Rehabilitation Counseling), Dr. Lucia Dura (top right) or UTEP's Department of English



(Rhetoric and Writing Studies program), and Department of Communications Graduate Student, Lauren Perez (bottom right), introduced disabilities services staff to the concept of Positive Deviance. Positive Deviance (PD) is an approach to solving complex health and social issues, which "flips" the traditional problem solving approach on its head. Instead of asking "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?" PD aims to uncover solutions that are hidden in plain sight, and ultimately amplify these solutions to produce programs that can be offered to the larger community to produce positive change. Staff in attendance at the workshop represented many different sectors of services to students with disabilities ranging from Educational Coaches who help students with disabilities to navigate the postsecondary experience, to sign language interpreters. Attendees reflected upon how they might use PD to address some of the barriers experienced by students with disabilities in education. Staff provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about the workshop and reported feeling inspired and motivated by the concept of PD.

**Rehabilitation Counseling Faculty and Student Mentor
Sixth Grade Students through Young Achievers Forum**

One thousand sixth grade students from districts across the Paso del Norte region visited UTEP on Saturday, February 20, 2016 to hear about the importance of a college degree and to receive encouragement that they are capable of pursuing higher education. Dr. Kristin Kosyluk of UTEP's Rehabilitation Counseling program, and Ms. Elizabeth Gandarilla, a Rehabilitation Counseling Masters student, spent time with over 100 of these students on Saturday morning. Ms. Gandarilla and Dr. Kosyluk engaged with the students in activities and discussions meant to help them to consider their career aspirations and how college will help them to reach their goals. The bulk of the discussion for these particular sessions centered on the health sciences and rehabilitation counseling. Ms. Gandarilla and Dr. Kosyluk also seized this opportunity to raise awareness regarding disability. Students participated in a True or False game where they learned some of the myths and facts surrounding disability. For instance, students learned that people who are deaf are able to use the telephone and that people with disabilities are able to live independently. The questions and comments raised by these energetic and intelligent youngsters were impressive. Ms. Gandarilla and Dr. Kosyluk hope that the students took away the understanding that higher education is a viable goal for their futures and that the health sciences and rehabilitation counseling are career paths worthy of consideration.



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