A Letter from the CHP Research Committee Chair

The College of Health Professions had another fruitful year of research productivity. Our faculty have mentored student projects, published in high-impact journals, and successfully competed for and won over a million dollars of grant funding to support their excellent work. We are proud to share the research contributions from this past year and encourage you to read and enjoy the below citations.

We would like to acknowledge the wonderful creativity and hard work of Occupational Therapy Graduate Assistant Kaylee Quinn in her assistance in putting together the annual newsletter.

Professor Jacqueline A. Vernarelli, CHP Research Committee Chair
A Letter from the Editor

It has been an honor gathering valuable research information from our very talented faculty and students within the College of Health Professions here at Sacred Heart University to present it in the 2021-2022 Academic Year Research Newsletter. I would like to thank Dr. Lola Halperin for continuously guiding me throughout the process of creating this newsletter for your viewing. I would also like to extend my thanks to the CHP Research Committee for entrusting me with this project as well as giving me the opportunity to expand my passion for research throughout the entire College of Health Professions here at SHU.

Kaylee Quinn, Editor
Graduate Assistant, Occupational Therapy Research
Original Peer Reviewed Publications:


**Book Chapters (Peer reviewed)**


**Grants**

2019-2022 Role: Co-investigator (Bartholdson C, PI) Swedish Rheumatism Foundation

Post-diagnostic support to children newly diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis by implementing and evaluating a ‘New-Diagnose-Clinic’ within paediatric rheumatologic healthcare.

**Scientific Professional Presentations**


2. Iversen MD. Effectiveness of strategies targeting knowledge, attitudes & behavioral skills to enhance adherence in arthritis. American College of Rheumatology Annual Meeting, Convergence (Virtual), November 6, 2021.

3. Iversen MD. When to treat, when to refer, and how to engage physical therapists in RA patient care. American College of Rheumatology Annual Meeting, Convergence (Virtual), November 8, 2021.

**Select Media Interviews**


BS in Communication Disorders & MS in Speech-Language Pathology

Grants, Publications, and Presentations

4 - Avinash Mishra, PhD, CCC-SLP

5 - Rhea Paul, PhD, CCC-SLP
Grants:

2021 CHEFA Grant: Simulation Training in Feeding Premature Infants (Jason Blando, Dr. Ellen Martino, OTD, OTR/L, Dr. Avi Mishra, PhD, CCC-SLP and Dr. Rhea Paul, PhD, CCC-SLP). This grant supported the purchase of high-tech infant manikins, and OT/SLP graduate student training in pediatric feeding.

2022 SPEAK OUT!® & LOUD CROWD® (Cristina Pino). This is the second year that SHU has received complementary training for graduate students and clinical educators. In 2021-22, 77 students and 1 clinical educator received training, allowing 30 individuals with Parkinson’s disease to receive speech services. In 2022-23, at least 40 students and two clinical educators will be trained in this evidence-based speech therapy program.

Dr. Elizabeth Simmons, PhD, CCC-SLP received an NIH R15 grant, titled Behavioral and Neural Measures of Spoken Word Recognition in Late Language Emergence. This grant will support student participation in research that uses cutting-edge neurobiological techniques to study child language development.
Publications:


10 - Nicole Cruse, PhD

11 - Elizabeth Schoen Simmons, PhD, CCC-SLP
Presentations:


Other:

**Professor Marta Korytkowska** appeared on the podcast of The Good News Network as a content expert discussing aphasia. She also appeared on the radio show on WLIS as a content expert discussing Bruce Willis’ diagnosis of aphasia.
Dr. Stephen Burrows, DPM, MBA, CPHIMS and colleagues have published the following article:


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Publication & Paper Presentation:

The Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology, & Religion Annual Conference, November 4 – 7, 2021: Phoenix, AZ.

Poster:

Publication:

BS in Health Sciences

Dr. Rui Liu, PhD, MPH had the following grants, presentations, and publications:

Research Grants

University Research and Creativity Grants (URCG), Sacred Heart University, “The Effects of Sleep and Inflammation on Cognition and Dementia Risk in Middle-aged and Older Adults.”
Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication

Faculty-Mentored Student Research Projects
Chenchen Cui, “The Racial Impact of COVID-19 on Asian Americans’ Mental Health” Honorable Mention, Dean's Prize: College of Health Professions 2022 Award.

Dr. Christina Gunther, EdD had the following grants, presentations, and publications:

Research Grants:

**Davis Educational Foundation**
Global to Local: Virtual Global Immersion in the Local Classroom Setting
Co-PI with Dr. Bronwyn Cross-Denny, Health Sciences.
Awarded $75,000

**Academics for Creative Teaching Grant, Sacred Heart University**
Renee Delahaye & Dr. Christina Gunther, Health Science & Physician Assistant Studies
*Dismantling Bias in Test-Item Construction.*
Awarded $1,459

Publications:


Presentations – Peer Reviewed:


Presentations – Invited:


Dr. Bronwyn Cross-Denny, PhD, LCSW had the following grants, presentations, and publications:

**External Grants:**

**Davis Educational Foundation, $75,000; January 2022 – December 2022**
- Project Title: *Virtual Global Immersion Project: Bringing Global Experiences to the Classroom*
- Principal Co-Investigators and Co-Directors with Christina B. Gunther

**Health Resources & Services Administration, $1,782,290; July 2021 – June 2025**
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) Program for Professionals
- Funding Opportunity Number: HRSA-21-089
- Project Title: *Making IMPACTS – Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care: Training for Social Work*
- Co-Investigator with School of Social Work select faculty
- Curriculum Coordinator and Liaison for College of Health Professions

**Book Chapters:**


**Peer-Reviewed Publications Under Review**

Refereed Presentations:


Dr. Patricia Grace-Farfaglia, PhD, RDN published the following:


Dr. Pat Grace-Farfaglia and colleague Heather Frazier presented "Pandemic Fatigue: Burnout Among Nutrition and Dietetics Program Directors" at the 2021 Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo.

MS in Occupational Therapy

![Dr. Sharon McCloskey](image)

**Dr. Sharon McCloskey, EdD, OTR/L** presented the following at the 2022 AOTA Conference in San Antonio, Texas: McCloskey, S. (2022, Apr. 1). *Understanding the impact of trauma and ACEs on learning and participation in schools*. (Conference presentation) American Occupational Therapy Annual Conference, AOTA Inspire 2022. San Antonio, Texas.

Additional Project:

**Title:** Diversity and Inclusion in Occupational Therapy Education through a Professional Learning Community

**Awardees:** Dr. Christina Gunther & Dr. Sharon McCloskey

**Summary:** The purpose of this project is to address the identified gaps in diversity and inclusion constructs in the OT curriculum through faculty development. It is proposed to design a faculty workshop and collaboratively generate curricular and pedagogical solutions to fill gaps in student
knowledge. The initial professional development (PD) workshop will be followed by a series of monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings during AY22-23. Conversations regarding diversity are not new to occupational therapy (Grady, 1995; Black, 2002; Abreu & Pel oquin, 2004; Clark, 2013). However, these conversations will need enhanced translation into action plans to build and support our student’s development in DEI. Students will benefit educationally from this collaboratively constructed framework on DI in OT education and practice.

Dr. Heather Kuhanek, PhD, OTR/L presented the following at the Annual 2022 AOTA conference:


Dr. Lola Halperin, EdD, OTR/L and Dr. Sharon McCloskey, EdD, OTR/L contributed a chapter to this textbook titled "Play to Promote Mental Health In Children and Youth."

Dr. Heather Kuhanek created a resource that is scheduled for publication this summer called the "Classroom Sensory Environment Assessment" which examines the sensory aspects of school environments and classroom learning activities. Click the link for more information: https://www.classroomsensoryenvironment.com/

Dr. Lola Halperin, EdD, OTR/L presented the following at the 2022 AOTA Conference in San Antonio, Texas:


Dr. Lola Halperin is currently serving as a collaborator with other scholars on a project entitled "The Feasibility of Promoting Health Through Play Opportunities Program in Improving Parent and Child Outcomes for Underserved Families" funded by a Yeshiva University grant:


She has also co-published the following manuscript:


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Dr. Joan Sauvigne-Kirsch, Ed.D, OTR/L, an Assistant Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and Clinical Assistant Professor in the Occupational Therapy Program at SHU, spoke at the World Federation of Occupational Therapists Congress 2022 in Paris, France. Her talk on August 28th was entitled “Overcoming barriers and creating leadership pathways in school-based practice, lessons learned.” The talk focused on the integrating occupational therapists with the emergence of full inclusion of children with disabilities in schools, worldwide. This year, Dr. Sauvigne-Kirsch has interacted with many people across the globe to best understand the widely varying state of occupational therapy in schools. In her talk, she advocated for occupational therapists to become engaged in regional departments/ministries of education to ensure parity in work conditions, pay, job security, credentialing options to maximize occupational therapy’s impact on school children. The talk was in the Leadership, Advocacy and Agents of Change track and yielded a lively discussion with many participants.
Dr. Amanda Wheeler, PhD, OTR/L published the following:


Dr. Wheeler also became a committee member for the AOTA Rehabilitation and Disability Special Interest Section in July 2022 and will be serving a 3-year term on it.

CHP faculty, Professors Ellen Martino, OTD, OTR/L and Avinash Mishra, PhD, CCC-SLP and simulation specialist Jason Blando recently implemented an inter-professional project titled “Simulation Training in Feeding Premature Infants.” Occupational therapy and speech language pathology students participating in the simulation experience practiced assessment and intervention in a Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) setting. The simulation emphasized a neuroprotective environment, infant cue-based feeding, and parent coaching to support a child and family-centered approach. This training was made possible by a Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) grant received by Dr. Martino and Dr. Mishra with Dr. Rhea Paul, Dr. Ciara Leydon, and Jason Blando. The NICU simulation provided students with the opportunity to practice assessment and intervention with newborn and premature infant manikins, learning to observe and interpret infants’ physiological and behavioral responses to determine need for sensory based and positional intervention and readiness for feeding intervention. The NICU simulation project will include an interprofessional problem based learning (PBL) experience for OT and SLP students during the fall 2022 semester.
**Faculty research:**

**Publications:**


**Faculty-Student research:**

**Publications:**


**Presentations:**

Lasto M, Clines SH. The Effectiveness of a Posterior Shoulder Stretching Program in Decreasing the Pain Prevalence in Adults Diagnosed with Subacromial Impingement Syndrome: A Critically Appraised Topic.
Dr. Beau Greer and colleagues from the University of Georgia and the Florida State University investigated the efficacy of calcium collagen chelate supplementation, taken over 12 weeks, on bone density in addition to several markers of bone metabolism in trained cyclists. The article is currently in press at the *Journal of Science and Cycling*.

Dr. Greer also published a paper in the *International Journal of Exercise Science* with colleagues from The University of Tennessee and the Florida State University which documented elevations in resting metabolism rate up to 14-hours post-resistance training or high intensity interval training in aerobically fit females, who are considered an understudied population in this research area.
Exercise & Sport Science Graduate Student Diana Pineda and Pioneer Performance Center's Sport Scientist Jon Hudak presented abstracts at the 16th Annual Internal Coaching and Sport Science College in Johnson City, TN in December. Jon Hudak won the award for best sport science publication.


He also recently published articles on the Incremental Shuttle Walk Test and the Front Squat in the American College of Sports Medicine Health & Fitness Journal.

Additionally, he has recently served as the guest editor of a special themed issue for the American College of Sports Medicine's Health & Fitness Journal, entitled "Field Assessments on the Go" which provides evidence-based and practical recommendations on incorporating client-specific field-based
assessments of physical fitness and functional performance in the exercise program development process from experts in pediatric, adult, geriatric, perinatal, occupational, and post-rehabilitation health and fitness. He has also served as Associate Editor for the ACSM’s Health and Fitness Journal’s Special Issue on Field Assessments on the Go. He wrote the feature article, “Evolution of Field-Based Physical Fitness Assessments”, and co-authored an article entitled, “The Gallon Jug Shelf Transfer Test” with colleague and associate editor and chief, Dr. Paul Gallo, EdD.

Dr. Matthew Moran, former Sacred Heart University student Marissa Lauretti and other colleagues published a paper in Advances in Neurodevelopmental Disorders which investigated the overhand throwing biomechanics of young adults with low-expressive language Autism.
Dr. Christopher Taber and colleagues published a paper in the International Journal of Strength and Conditioning on the short- and long-term effects of Accentuated Eccentric Loading on athletic performance. Additionally, he and colleagues will be presenting five peer reviewed abstracts at the 2022 National Strength and Conditioning Association’s National Conference.

Fourteen undergraduate Exercise Science students either presented their Honor's Capstone or Independent Research at this year's SHU Academic Festival.
Doctorate in Physical Therapy
Grants, Publications, and Presentations

32 - Andrea L. Oberlander, PT, DPT

33 - Wendy Romney, PT, DPT, PhD, NCS
Grants

Dr. Andrea Oberlander, PT, DPT and Dr. Wendy Romney PT, DPT, PhD, NCS received a grant for Implementing a high intensity gait training clinic.

Dr. Jason Grimes PT, DPT, PhD, OCS, ATC received a federal grant for Pre-season Neck Mobility and Risk of Shoulder and Elbow Injury in College Baseball Pitchers.

Dr. Diana Veneri, PT, EdD, NCS received a grant for Avatarizing Tai Chi Chuan to Promote Mind and Body Wellbeing for Individuals with Ambulatory Limitation.
Presentations

Dr. Christopher Petrosino, PT, PhD presented:


Dr. Jason Grimes presented:


- Poster: *Reliability and Validity of the Posterior Standing Overhead Arm Reach (SOAR) Test for Functional Hip Extension* at the American Physical Therapy Association Combined Sections Meeting on February 3rd, 2022.


Dr. Wendy Romney presented:

- Lecture: *Knowledge Brokering: Be the Change Agent* at APTA in February 2022.
Dr. David Cameron PT, PhD, ATC, OCS presented:


Dr. Beverly D. Fein, PT, DPT, EdD presented:

- *Is Your Facility Ready to Develop an Acute Care Residency? Steps and Strategies* at the APTA Academy of Acute Care in August of 2021.
- Lecture: *Why have an acute care residency at your facility? Value to Stakeholders* at the APTA Academy of Acute Care in August of 2021.
- Oral Presentation: *Exploring Acute Care Residency Outcomes: Value to Residents and Institutions* at APTA’s Combined Sections Meeting in February 2022.

Dr. Michelle Wormley, PT, PhD, CLT presented:

- Lecture: *Enhancing Student Learning of Anatomy through Problem-Based Learning: Bootcamps, Cadavers, and More* at the APTA Educational Leadership Conference on October 24, 2021.
Publications

Dr. Jason Grimes:

• **Published Conference Proceeding** in the *Journal of Orthopaedic and Sports Physical Therapy*: Reliability and Validity of the Posterior Standing Overhead Arm Reach (SOAR) Test for Functional Hip Extension.

**Dr. Wendy Romney:**

• **Published Journal Article** in *Journal of Educational Evaluation for Health Professions*: Development of the Clinical Teaching Effectiveness Questionnaire in the United States.

• **Published Journal Article** in *Clinical Rehabilitation*: A knowledge broker facilitated intervention to improve the use of standardized assessment tools by physical therapists: a cluster randomized trial.


**Dr. Diana Veneri:**

• **Published Journal Article** in *Physical Therapy Journal*: Including Arts in Rehabilitation Enhances Outcomes in the Psychomotor, Cognitive, and Affective Domains: A Scoping Review.

• **Published Journal Article** in *Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences & Practice*: Flop to flip: Integrating technology and team-based learning to enhance student engagement.

**Dr. Michelle Wormley published:**

• **Published Journal Article** in *Journal of Educational Evaluation for Health Professions*: Development of the Clinical Teaching Effectiveness Questionnaire in the United States.

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**MS in Physician Assistant Studies**

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1. There were four PA students who had their capstone thesis published in the 2021-2022 Academic Year. Tommy Havens PA’21 and Gaetano Innamorato PA’21 as well as Rabail Altaf PA’20 and Irasema Gonzalez PA’20.


2. A capstone project by Mark Branton PA’19 was nominated for Article of the Year within the International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy.


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**Dr. Eric Nemec** co-authored a book chapter in Advanced Pharmacology for Prescribers which received a 2021 AJN Book of the Year Award by the American Journal of Nursing.

**Publications:**

He also co-published the following manuscript:


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Dr. Renee Delahaye, PA-C SHU MPAS, Director of Clinical Education for the Physician Assistant Program and Adjunct Professor of Physician Assistant Studies, Victoria Ho, PA-C gave a presentation entitled, “Increasing Perceived Knowledge on Healthcare for Sexual and Diverse Populations Through Virtual Programming” at the NCCPA REPRESENT!, a summit designed to address ways to increase racial diversity, equity, and inclusion in the PA profession. This summit was held at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta. The theme of the 2022 inaugural summit was “When They See Us”. The REPRESENT! Summit was by invitation only and was attended by clinically practicing PAs, PA faculty, PA students, leaders of PA organizations, physicians, and employers.
Master of Public Health

43 - Jacqueline A. Vernarelli, PhD

44 - Sofia C. Pendley, PhD
Professors Dr. Sofia Pendley, Dr. Anna Price and Dr. Jacqueline Vernarelli supervised multiple student projects, presented at national conferences, and competitively earned grants and contracts.

Publications:


Presentations:


7 https://doi.org/10.1177/23315024211038947


• Price AE. Minimum distance requirements are not sufficient for preventing the inequitable distribution of liquor stores in a lower-income, large Northeastern City. American Academy of Health Behavior. Key Largo, FL, March 13-17, 2022.


Grants and Contracts:

• Vaccine Equity for Immigrant Communities in Bridgeport and Hartford ($100,000) — Community Catalyst

• Medical Reserve Corps ($6,943) — Public Health Emergency Preparedness — Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) via Connecticut Department of Public Health