Message from the Chair

Welcome to another edition of Forward Motion. Enclosed, you will find articles detailing student and faculty activities that have occurred over the past academic year.

May of 2015 marked the eleventh year of granting the DPT degree; thirty-four graduates were honored continuing the proud tradition of IU physical therapy program excellence. Their departure afforded forty new students the opportunity in August to begin their three-year evolution.

The 2014-15 academic year was another amazing journey with so many student and faculty accomplishments. The most significant accomplishment to date is the Class of 2015 achieving a 100% first time pass rate on the National Licensure Exam. The IU PT Student Outreach Clinic continued to provide monthly clinic hours this past year. Student, faculty, and alumni support for this civic outreach initiative continues to be outstanding. Jethro McConnell was named the 2015 Indiana American Physical Therapy Association Student Scholarship winner, marking the sixth consecutive year that an IU student has won the award. Catherine Collins, DPT and Kunal Shah, DPT were each named recipients of the William M. Plater Civic Engagement Medallion recognizing graduate students who have shown exemplary commitment to their communities. Catherine Collins, DPT was also named the fourth recipient of the Zachary R. Gregory Emerging Leadership Award representing the student who best embodies the characteristics of a young physical therapy professional. The third annual community engagement award was presented to Carolyn Ebbens, DPT and Hilary Nuest, DPT. The faculty also formally recognized Catherine Collins, DPT for her significant contributions to faculty led research. IUPUI initiated a new award - The Elite 50 recognizing the top 50 graduate and professional students at IUPUI. Among those receiving this prestigious honor was Trent Crandall, DPT.

Our alumni spotlight this year features Rick Weber, an alumnus from the class of 1965. Rick has been an outstanding clinician for many years making significant contributions to his patients and representing the profession and our institution with dedication and professionalism. I invite you to read more about his contributions.

There is one other note that I wish to pass along to everyone. As of July 1st, 2015, I became the official Chair for the department. My title these past seven years has been Co-Chair, in part, because I lacked senior status within Indiana University. I am proud to say that I received promotion and tenure this past May and was offered the position as Chair of the Department. I am excited and honored to assume this position in its entirety and welcome the opportunity to lead this program into the future. I am constantly amazed at the evolution of our profession and expect that our institution will be among the leaders and visionaries that will continue to push our profession to provide the most evidence-based, outstanding care for all.

As always, we would love to hear from you and hope that you would make it a point to visit on an annual basis. Remember stay informed about upcoming events by following us on Facebook and Linked IN. I am extremely grateful for all of the dedication our faculty, staff, students and alumni exhibit on a regular basis.

Peter A. Altenburger, Chair

Department Welcomes New Office Manager

Between wrangling two small children and a part-time side gig with Nerium International, this sugar-junky works to keep the IU Department of Physical Therapy working like the well-oiled machine that it is. Ali Cotton, Office Manager and Assistant to the Chair since August 2014, earned a bachelor’s degree in mass communication from the University of Evansville in 1997 and a master’s degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs from the University of South Carolina in 2004.

Cotton is a self-proclaimed cake-artist, grammar nerd and group-fitness fanatic – zumba and step aerobics being her favorites. She currently serves as President of the Alumni Board for the University of Evansville.

What she enjoys most about her job is working with people who are as passionate about learning as she is. “The faculty and staff in the Department of Physical Therapy put their hearts into their work, and the students are the ones who reap the benefits. I love being around learners and people who are continually striving to improve themselves.” She also loves getting to know the students she serves, “I consider them my friends. I work hard to help them, just like I would help a friend.”

When she is not exercising, talking about high end skin-care or wrangling children, you can find her at the front desk in Coleman Hall, room 326. Cotton takes care of day to day operations including departmental publications and special events.

“Life is too short to not have fun every day! We weren’t put on this earth to work and then die. We were put here to impact the lives of others.”

Cotton lives in Brownsburg with her PT husband, Ryan Cotton and her precious and precocious children, Carter, 7 (who finally just lost his first tooth) and Mya, 5 (going on 15). Her motto: There will only be one of you for all times. Fearlessly be yourself.

If Mrs. Cotton can help you with anything, please contact her at 317.278.1875 or cottona@iu.edu.
School News
By Joyce Mac Kinnon, EdD, PT

The School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences began the academic year with our annual Convocation Ceremony in August entitled Coming Together. At the ceremony we welcomed 187 new students from all of our departments and program.

In early September students participated in the IUPUI Regatta. While our students did not win any awards, and the weather initially was not particularly cooperative, all who attended had a great time! Please join us next year for this fun September event.

Commencement occurred on Sunday, May 10, Mother’s Day (again!). At our School ceremony we congratulated 163 students on degree attainment. Graduates included 41 students from the Master of Physician Assistant Studies charter class.

Between the convocation ceremony and commencement, we hosted a new school-wide event - the SHRS Student and Donor Recognition Ceremony. The ceremony took place on a beautiful April evening at the Conrad Hotel in downtown Indianapolis. This event provided us the opportunity to celebrate and recognize student success and donor support.

The School hosted its annual SHRS Interdisciplinary Research and Education Conference in November. If you have never attended this event, we encourage you to do so. There you will find vendors, student posters and experts presenting on various aspects of the health sciences. CEUs are available.

We continue to fully enroll all of our capped programs including Nutrition and Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies, and have a robust pool of undergraduates and graduate students. This fall the Department of Occupational Therapy admitted 8 students into their new post professional OTD (Occupational Therapy Doctorate) program; a degree option for students who hold either a bachelor’s or master’s degree in OT.

Finally, in September our School was awarded a $1.9 million federal grant focused on increasing diversity in the health professions. Drs. Austin Ago, Dean of the School and Rebecca Rebman, Director of the Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program, are the co-directors of this project, which is designed to provide disadvantaged students with the academic and social skills to be admitted and successfully graduate from health professions programs.
Physical Therapy Month was celebrated through a variety of great events this year. This service learning project for 2nd year DPT students was a free four-week clinic held on Thursday and Friday mornings for patients with stroke, brain injury, Parkinson disease, and multiple sclerosis. The clinic specifically targeted patients who might benefit from additional therapy visits. Many of the patients who participated a) needed a “therapy tune-up,” b) had new physical or mobility goals since completing traditional physical rehabilitation or c) were limited in access to traditional therapy services.

Twelve patients with neurological conditions were recruited from the community for the project. Each patient was assigned to a group of three or four DPT students, and participated in four physical therapy visits. Students worked under the supervision of faculty, but were fully responsible for designing patient evaluation and treatment. With this format, students were given autonomy to assess and treat patients using their own clinical reasoning, while having instructors present.

Evaluation of the project revealed important benefits for both students and patients. For students, the clinic facilitated application of classroom skills to patient care, which allowed students to grow in confidence and skill proficiency. One student summed up:

“I loved the opportunity to have independence with designing a plan of care for someone, and I loved being able to directly incorporate what I learned in class to a real patient.”

All 12 patients demonstrated measurable improvement on at least one standardized physical performance measure. In addition, patient-reported data also revealed important benefits as demonstrated by the sample quotes below:

“It was quite uplifting. It gave me hope.”

“It helped me with [the] quality of my walking.”

In the final assessment, the neuro-wellness clinic was considered a success. The 2016 neuro-wellness clinic will begin on March 31, 2016 and run for four weeks on Thursday & Friday mornings. Clinicians and patients may contact Kristine Miller, PT, PhD (317-274-3534, kkmiller@iu.edu) for information or to make a referral.
2015 Student Awards & Accomplishments
Special thanks to our generous donors & alumni who make these scholarships possible!

Katherine Belzer Scholarship
Carrie Swartz, SPT ’17
Micah Whitted, SPT ’17
Nathan Bundy, SPT ’17

Patricia Evans Fellowship
Abby Walker, SPT ’18

PT Faculty Choice Award
Catherine Collins, DPT ’15

Constance Brown Scholarship
Andrew Wiseman, SPT ’17

Zachary H. Gregory
Emerging Leadership Award
Catherine Collins, DPT ’15

SHRS Dean’s Academic Excellence Recognition Award
Colleen Quigley, SPT ’18
Elanor Bolles, SPT ’18

2014 IN-APTA Scholarship
Jethro McConnell, SPT ’16

Steven O. Jones Scholarship
Katherine Bridgeman, SPT ’17

National APTA Mary McMillan Nominee
Trent Crandall, DPT ’15

William Porter Scholarship
Hilary Nuest, DPT ’15
Alicia Schwipps, DPT ’15

PT Student Community Engagement Award
Carolyn Ebbens, DPT ’15
Hilary Nuest, DPT ’15

IU Student Outreach Clinic Continues to Thrive
by Sarah Cruser, SPT ’16 and IU SOC Board Co-Chair

The Indiana University Student Outreach Clinic (IU SOC) saw much change and activity in 2015. A free, student-run, inter-professional health clinic, IU SOC was founded in 2009 by the IU School of Medicine and is located on the near eastside of Indianapolis in an underserved neighborhood. The clinic’s mission is to meet the healthcare needs of uninsured and underinsured individuals.

This fall, the clinic successfully implemented an electronic medical records system to improve patient care and inter-professional communication. This was an accomplishment requiring significant coordination among disciplines and generous community support to secure the required technology.

Additionally, IU SOC PT student founders and current IU SOC board chairs Lydia George, DPT ’14 and Kathryn Goncalves, DPT ’14 stepped in as faculty supervisors, demonstrating the essence of commitment and dedication to service through community engagement.

In April, Christine VanArsdall, SPT ’16 and Bryan Gezon (UIndy) presented at a central district Indiana APTA (INAPTA) meeting about the general clinic operations. At the Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) last February, former IU DPT students Carolyn Ebbens ’15, Hilary Nuest ’15, and Caitlin Stevenson ’15 had a platform presentation titled The Impact of Required Participation in a Student-Led Community Outreach Clinic on Perceived Value and Participation. In October at the INAPTA conference, Hannah Enochs ’16 and Sarah Cruser ’16 discussed a poster about OT and PT IPE research, which sparked many conversations.

IU SOC is able to help the underserved only with outside support and can always benefit from the community generosity in the form of canes and walkers, computers, and general financial donations. For more information about the clinic, please contact physical.therapy@
Focus on Faculty Research

Thompson Studies Vibration Therapy Helping Breast Cancer Patients

by Robyn Fuchs, PhD

Dr. William Thompson, DPT, PhD spent the past year setting up his new Molecular Biomechanics Lab and securing funding to support his work evaluating novel therapies to improve bone health. His research focuses on the effect of mechanical loading on bone cell signaling. The skeleton is dependent on mechanical information to help guide cells that are capable of both building and repairing bone tissue. His research spans all levels, from the organ, tissue, cell and molecular levels to help improve our understanding for how the skeleton adapts to internal and external mechanical cues.

Recently, Thompson received a $1.6 million, 3-year Breast Cancer Research Program Breakthrough Award from the U.S. Department of Defense to fund a study evaluating the effect of low-intensity vibration therapy on bone health in women with breast cancer. This work will be done in collaboration with Dr. Theresa Guise, M.D., who is the Jerry and Peggy Throgmartin Professor of Oncology at the IU School of Medicine. Current breast cancer treatments can be very damaging to bone tissue and cause associated muscle weakness which leads to increased fall risk. Taken together, the patient has a greater risk of both traumatic and non-traumatic fractures.

At this time bisphosphonates are commonly given to patients with osteoporosis and cancers that have the potential to metastasize to bone tissue. For a patient with breast cancer they are designed to minimize the spread of bone tumors that have migrated to the skeleton, and minimize the destruction of the bone tissue, which leaves the bone tissue weak and fragile. While these drugs are effective in preventing bone loss they do little to help with the problems of muscle loss and fall risk.

In pre-clinical and clinical trials low-intensity vibration therapy has been found to have a positive effect on bone and muscle, and thus may have the potential to reduce fracture. The vibration treatment may also help prevent breast cancer from spreading to the bone tissue, and help reduce the growth of the damaging tumor cells.

Thompson explained that while exercise helps prevent muscle weakness and bone loss, most patients experience severe fatigue and are at an increased risk of fracture from strenuous activities. It is theorized that low-intensity vibration therapies may provide breast cancer patients with the same benefits of exercise. The research will first be performed in an animal model. Mice with breast cancer will be given low-intensity vibration therapy alone and in combination with bisphosphonate treatment to determine the most effective treatment protocol. The results from this important study will help formulate interventions that can be used in patients with breast cancer.

The vibration therapy would be easy to do: only about 10 minutes, three to five times per week. The results from this study will help provide guidelines for dosing in clinical trials.

Thompson’s research will be completed with the help of an important team of students including two second year DPT students, Kevin Herald and Alex Bahney, and 6 undergraduate students involved in the Life Health Science internship program and Multidisciplinary University Research Initiatives program. Thompson feels it is important to expose students to a rich learning environment, allowing them to learn a variety of molecular and in vivo animal techniques.

DPT student Alex Bahney said, “It’s an exciting time in the realm of physical therapy practice as the push to gain more evidence for a certain treatment increases. Dr. Thompson’s research on bone has allowed me to be part of this. I’m thankful for the opportunity, and I believe that this experience will make me a more well-rounded therapist for the future.”

Alumni Updates Wanted!

We would like to hear from YOU, our alumni. Please send any news and photos you have - professional or personal - to be included in our next newsletter. Updates may be emailed to Ali Cotton at cottona@iu.edu.
IU PT Faculty & Students in Print


http://shrs.iu.edu/academics/physical-therapy/index.html
Faculty Updates

The Indiana University Faculty Handbook recommends that all faculty in their sixth-year take some time to relax and enjoy the fruits of their labor after earning tenure and promotion. In an attempt to accommodate this suggestion, Peter Altenburger, PhD, PT spent a portion of his summer taking his family to multiple places along the I-95 corridor including: Universal Studies, Kennedy Space Center, and Charleston, SC. Dr. Altenburger will spend most of the next year working to prepare for program reaccreditation.

In 2015 Keith Avin, PhD, DPT, PT and his family spent time fishing in their pond and playing outside. This is their family at Pumpkin Fest, one of their favorite fall traditions.

Amy Bayliss PT, DPT had a busy and fun summer. She worked on her Achilles tendinopathy research and covered clinical hours at the Community Health Network, Physical Therapy & Rehab clinics. But the best part of her summer was a trip back home to New Zealand in June, where she was married in a beautiful setting at Cable Bay winery on Waiheke Island. To cap off a wonderful summer, Baxter - a very cute beagle mix who is not spoiled at all- was added to her family.

Last June the Brown family celebrated the wedding of Chad’s oldest son, Justin with twins Audrey and Mack serving as big brother’s flower girl and ring bearer. In August, Beth Brown, PT, ATC, PhD swam her longest open water swim race to date, 17 miles from Manhattan to Coney Island in 5 hours and 32 minutes. Also in August, Chad was recruited away from Roche to the molecular diagnostics company Qiagen.

Beth and Chad had fun celebrating the 10 year anniversary of their wedding with a trip for two to Kauai in October. Lastly, the twins got to meet Rapunzel and Pluto (their picks) during a Disney World visit in November to celebrate their 4th birthdays.

Tracy Dierks, PhD and his wife, Tricia welcomed their second child last April, a son Cade, joined by 6 year old big brother Luke. They spent the summer watching Cade grow; at his 4-month check-up he was in the 100th percentile for weight and head circumference, and 99th percentile for length! Dr. Dierks was also busy conducting research with St. Vincent Sports Performance. He and his team completed data collection on a large study training cross country runners on the Alter G anti-gravity treadmill. Other projects included examining the association between reaction time and concussions, assessing the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary training program for elite football players and examining injury risk factors in high school baseball and softball players. Dr. Dierks presented some of his work at a conference in St. Louis in June, where his wife and 2 sons also made the trip making it the first big trip as a family of 4. Currently, the Dierks family is awaiting the release of the new Star Wars movie!

Kristine Miller, PhD, PT had a busy and exciting 2nd academic year at IU. Her research team successfully implemented adapted-yoga (phase 1) for people with stroke and brain injury at the YMCA, and she along with the 2nd year DPT students-launched the first annual neuro-wellness clinic as part of the neurorehabilitation curriculum. Dr. Miller enjoyed a wonderful trip to Wyoming and Colorado with her husband, Bob, where they spent time with family & friends. She and her equine partner, Scout, have now logged over 800 riding hours in the AQHA horseback riding challenge.

Between celebrating her joint publication on research into student empathy with Dr. Bayliss in the Journal of PT Education this spring and preparation for IU DPT’s reaccreditation visit next year, Professor Valerie Strunk, PT, MS got away with her family for a road trip across California this summer. As a result, daughter Kate is already planning her future in Hollywood.

William Thompson, DPT, PhD just completed his first full year at IU, where he and his family are greatly enjoying their new home and community. When not teaching or conducting research, Dr. Thompson enjoys spending time with his family, making frequent trips to local parks, the Indy Children’s Museum, and playing golf with his oldest son Kellen.

Stuart Wärden, PT, PhD, FACSM continues to enjoy a busy career balancing his role as associate dean for research within the school and his own research and teaching activities. This year he counts his 100th publication and contributed to a number of phase II clinical trials exploring novel agents for bone and muscle health. He was also appointed as section editor for Current Osteoporosis Reports and associate editor for Journal of Orthopaedic and Sports Physical Therapy. At home, Dr. Wärden enjoys teaching his kids new life skills, teaching Cam (8) and Ellie (5) how to sew, build a campfire, cook, and more.

Robyn Fuchs, PhD, FACSM had a wonderful summer spending time with her family at Walt Disney World. She also spent time working on her research, getting papers published and writing new grants.

Terry Loghmani, PT, PhD and her husband, Zia taking a break from a cooking class together at Fontonaro Villa in Tuscany last summer. They learned to make pasta ravioli, spaghetti and homemade sauce.

This year he counts his 100th publication and contributed to a number of phase II clinical trials exploring novel agents for bone and muscle health. He was also appointed as section editor for Current Osteoporosis Reports and associate editor for Journal of Orthopaedic and Sports Physical Therapy. At home, Dr. Wärden enjoys teaching his kids new life skills, teaching Cam (8) and Ellie (5) how to sew, build a campfire, cook, and more.
Clinical Educator of the Year
Michael Williams, PT
by Valerie Strunk, PT, MS

Indiana University Department of Physical Therapy pauses each year to recognize one outstanding PT educator that goes above and beyond to contribute to the clinical education of our students. This year, we would like to recognize Michael Williams, PT, OCS, COMT, FAAMOPT as the IU DPT Clinical Educator of the Year. Williams is an outpatient PT for Indiana University West Hospital in Avon, Indiana. As a 1998 Physical Therapy graduate of the University of Maryland at Baltimore who is currently working towards his DScPT degree at Andrews University, Williams was nominated for the award by his Class of 2015 student, Ben Weller. Since graduating in May, Weller is also practicing at IU Health West. According to Weller, “Mike makes a major effort to maximize the student’s learning experience. During each patient evaluation, Mike will step out of the treatment room with the student to discuss the patient’s presentation and determine the best plan going forward. He asks questions to get an idea of what you are thinking and provides his thoughts based on many years of experience if he believes you are not fully grasping the patient’s condition. He does all of this without a shred of ego or pride. He always maintains a good balance by being fully engaged in the student’s treatment of the patient while not being overly controlling. You will not ever catch Mike documenting or being distracted during the treatment session.”

Williams is fully invested in the clinical education of IU DPT students by serving in various clinical education roles. He has mentored full time IU DPT interns at every level of their training, from first year experiences to final internships. Even as he juggles full time students, he serves as Clinical Faculty for second year students in the IU DPT Integrated Clinical Education program each spring. It is his goal to begin to assist in classroom teaching roles at IU in the spring of 2016.

Williams is reflective when asked why he chooses to participate in so many different ways as a PT educator. “I have been fortunate to have many exceptional mentors, and I feel it is a great way to give back to the profession and share my experience with a new generation of therapists. Students bring fresh perspective into the clinic and explaining why we are doing what we do not only benefits the students, but makes us better clinicians.”

The IU DPT program applauds Mike Williams for his commitment to clinical education excellence and his own lifelong learning, along with all other IU DPT Clinical Educators who dedicate their time to serve the profession and our students through clinical teaching.

Thank you!

2015’s IU Clinical Educator of the Year

Congratulations Nominees!

2015’s IU Clinical Educator of the Year

Melissa Barnes, PT
St. Vincent Hospital

John Barton, PT
Sportworks

Ursula Booth, PT
ATI Physical Therapy

Jason Bracco, PT
Frazier Rehab Outpatient

Liz Brown, PT
Children’s Therapy Connection

Brennon Deike, PT
IU Health

Audrey Dizon, PT,
Clark-Lindsey Meadowbrook

Lori Feldmeyer, PT
IU Health Arnett

Nick Kelp, PT
Meadowood

Abby Kettler, PT
IU Health

Andrea Kuenstler, PT
Good Samaritan Hospital

Rachel Michael, PT
Indiana Physical Therapy

Gary Mohler, PT
Hancock Regional Hospital

Michelle Nicholson, PT
Community Howard Replay

Paula Peters, PT
Kindred Southpointe

Srinivasan Sankaran, PT
Putnam Co. Hospital

Jill Seary, PT
IU Health

Donna Shoton, PT
St. Vincent Hospital

Agnes Quiambao, PT
Kindred Bridgewater

Miranda Vogel, PT
Pediatric Specialty Associates

Kelsey Walker, PT
Pediatric Specialty Associates

Melissa Watson, OT &
CCCE, Hancock Regional Hospital

2015 ICE III Clinical Partners

Indiana University Health, Indy
Athletico/Accelerated
ATI Physical Therapy
Community Health Network
Concentra Physical Therapy
Eskenazi Hospital
Franciscan St. Francis Hospital
Hendricks Regional Health
Indiana University Health, West Hospital
Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana
Riverview Hospital
Select Physical Therapy
St. Vincent Hospital
VA Hospital of Indianapolis
Alumni News

10

Boasting a career including computers, football, doggie daycare, multiple areas of physical therapy (PT), and beyond, the one thing that has remained constant in April Priest’s professional life is teaching. Priest embodies a passion for teaching that is integral to the Indiana University Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

After becoming an All-American national champion in swimming at Clarion University in Pennsylvania, a shoulder injury and subsequent rehabilitation prompted her to change her major from pre-Med to pre-PT. She transferred to Slippery Rock University to enroll in the pre-PT, athletic training and health program. She finished her PT degree at the University of Indianapolis in 1991 and has never looked back. She began her professional career at Methodist Sports Medicine. After some self-reflection and a series of coincidental events, she found herself developing a Workers Compensation program. She started playing for a women’s football team — the Indy Crash — in 2003, became an owner in 2004, and has just finished her second year of coaching in 2015. Her favorite part about playing football? “Hitting people.” On top of this, she explains that playing football has given her “an incredible journey of learning. I have given women an opportunity to do something different in an area of life that they may not have been able to experience.”

Truly, for Priest, football has been an integral part of her life and also a seamlessly integrated component of her professional identity by informing and being informed by PT and teaching. A connection with her mentor drew April into teaching. Since the start of her PT career she has been passionate about it, knowing that she is guiding students through critical thinking and educating future colleagues. An instructor for IU’s Biomechanics course as well as the Health Promotions and Community Outreach course, her favorite part about teaching is, “When a student gets it. When you see the light bulb or the ‘a-ha’ moment come on. It is one of the most gratifying things as an instructor.” Priest feels teaching both at IU and Marion University forces her to stay current and carry her teaching skills into patient care.

As an experienced instructor, Priest has seen students at all stages of their studies. She highly encourages PT alumni to become clinical instructors to give back to new students and to give themselves a different perspective to encourage growth. For current students, she says, “It only gets better. It always gets better.”

Adjunct Faculty Spotlight: April Priest, PT

by Sarah Cruser, SPT ‘16

Despite her vast experience preventing and rehabilitating injuries, as any of her biomechanics students would attest, Priest has experienced a multitude of injuries first hand. For each lecture, it seems, Priest has a football injury story. She started playing for a women’s football team — the Indy Crash — in 2003, became an owner in 2004, and has just finished her second year of coaching in 2015. Her favorite part about playing football? “Hitting people.”

April Priest, PT

2004, and has just finished her second year of coaching in 2015. Her favorite part about playing football? “Hitting people.” On top of this, she explains that playing football has given her “an incredible journey of learning. I have given women an opportunity to do something different in an area of life that they may not have been able to experience.”

Truly, for Priest, football has been an integral part of her life and also a seamlessly integrated component of her professional identity by informing and being informed by PT and teaching. A connection with her mentor drew April into teaching. Since the start of her PT career she has been passionate about it, knowing that she is guiding students through critical thinking and educating future colleagues. An instructor for IU’s Biomechanics course as well as the Health Promotions and Community Outreach course, her favorite part about teaching is, “When a student gets it. When you see the light bulb or the ‘a-ha’ moment come on. It is one of the most gratifying things as an instructor.” Priest feels teaching both at IU and Marion University forces her to stay current and carry her teaching skills into patient care.

As an experienced instructor, Priest has seen students at all stages of their studies. She highly encourages PT alumni to become clinical instructors to give back to new students and to give themselves a different perspective to encourage growth. For current students, she says, “It only gets better. It always gets better.”

Alumni Reunion Numbers at an All Time High

by William Thompson, DPT, PhD

The Combined Sections Meeting of the APTA was hosted in Indianapolis this year, providing a fantastic opportunity to bring together nearly 300 current IU DPT students, faculty, staff, and alumni under one roof. Reuniting at the JW Marriott, alumni from all eras had the opportunity to see the growth of the physical therapy department, be introduced to the ongoing service and research, and to relive memories from their time as IU PT students.

As past and present students enjoyed light fare, table centerpieces decorated with photos from classes representing each decade, sparked conversation. The Dean of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Dr. Austin Agho, and the Chair of the Physical Therapy Department, Dr. Peter Altenburger gave welcoming remarks highlighting both the significant contributions of alumni and the ongoing work of the department.

The event provided an exceptional opportunity to bring together the past and the future of the IU Physical Therapy Department, sharing in accomplishments spanning many decades.
In 1965, Rick Weber graduated from the IU PT program. Since then, he has dedicated 50 years to an impressive career in physical therapy.

Weber started his career in the wake of the Vietnam War, and enlisted in the armed services. He served 4 years working for the United States Public Health Service, and travelled across the US to practice in New York City, New Orleans, Detroit and Miami. In New Orleans, Weber met a nurse named Jean, and has been married ever since.

After his time in the service, Weber practiced with an outpatient clinic in Holland, Michigan. Years later he and his wife decided to return to Indiana where Weber’s career really blossomed. Initially he contracted with a local hospital, but within five years he opened up his first outpatient clinic. In the years that would follow, he moved to Indianapolis and opened several more outpatient clinics under the name TherapyWorks. He also started Health Mark a company that contracted rehabilitation professionals to rural hospitals and nursing homes in Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. Weber’s businesses saw enough success that at one point he employed over 60 people.

As Weber’s practice expanded, he transitioned into an administrative role. However, he always made sure to maintain his clinical skills. “I did the vacation coverage myself,” he stated. And despite the business success experienced over the years, Weber cites the reward of a patient saying ‘thank you’ as his favorite part of being a PT. Weber’s enjoyment of practicing as a clinician is still evident today. Even though he has retired, he provides therapy free of charge to family and friends.

Weber’s impact on the practice of PT in Indiana has not gone unnoticed. He is honored to have received awards throughout his career, including a Sagamore of the Wabash, awarded by the governor, and the Frances C. Ekstam Award, awarded by the Indiana Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association.

With a 50-year career under his belt, Weber has valuable advice to offer both students and young PTs. Reflecting on the early stages of his career, he shares, “It was rewarding to be in the service and to treat injured service-men.” Weber encourages PTs to consider dedicating a few years to the service. In addition, he has advice for PTs interested in opening up their own practice. He stresses the importance of making and maintaining relationships with physicians in order to support a substantial referral base. Weber encourages PTs to be active in their professional organization. A member of the APTA since 1968, Weber still maintains his membership even after retirement.

Having recently celebrated his 50-year reunion with other Indiana University Physical Therapy Program alumni, Weber shares the different paths he and his classmates took with their careers. From this insight, he offers a final piece of advice, “Take your time. Everybody does something different, and when you find something you like you’re a lucky person.”
Alumni Updates Wanted!

We would like to hear from YOU, our alumni. Please send any news and photos you have - professional or personal - to be included in our next newsletter. Updates may be emailed to Ali Cotton at cottona@iu.edu.

Make a gift at http://shrs.iu.edu/alumni-donors/give.html.

Or send a check to
IU Foundation, PO Box 6460
Indianapolis, IN 46206-6460

Or contact Christine Baldwin at
(317) 274-5151 or chrbaldw@iu.edu.