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# Physical Therapy Department Newsletter for Spring 2016

URI Physical Therapy Department

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THINK BIG  WE DO™

# PHYSICAL THERAPY



University of Rhode Island  
Doctor of Physical Therapy Program

## Spring arrives at URI



This semester sees students and faculty hitting the ground running; in fact, some students began their broadening learning before the semester even commenced. URI's PT program begins another season with a number of exciting conferences, learning opportunities, and distinguished alumni.

Those in the class of 2016 are winding down their clinical rotations and preparing to graduate in a few short months. The class of 2017 are working on their last semester of coursework as they prepare to disperse to clinical sites from Florida to Alaska. The class of 2018 is eager to finish their first year as PT students so that they can mentor the next wave of eager learners.

The program wishes good luck to the students as they continue forward in their goals and transition to the next stages of their academic and professional careers.

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## Words from the Director



Welcome to another edition of our departmental newsletter! Once again, I am indebted to our outstanding students who have put this together. During the past three years, through the newsletter we have attempted to keep you informed as best we can about happenings related to the URI PT family. Our goal is to include as many people as we can in the sharing of information. Please send us news about yourself, your job, your family, your travels—anything! Inquiring minds want to know! Enjoy the reading and thanks for all that you do to support our program.

Jeff Konin  
Professor and Chair  
Ph.D, PT, ATC, FACSMT, FNATA

## URI visits Tampa, FL

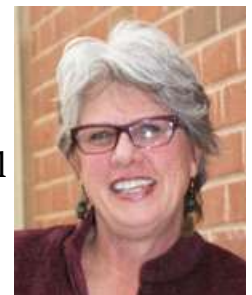
Nine students from URI's PT program traveled to Tampa, Florida, with Dr. Jeff Konin over the winter break. The trip was packed with many exciting events, including: visiting the Detroit Tigers and Houston Astros spring training complexes, touring the IMG academy for extraordinary student-athletes, attending UConn women's basketball practice at the University of South Florida, volunteering at the Disney marathon, experiencing NASA's Kennedy Space Center, and exploring the Tampa Bay Lightning hockey arena. The students enjoyed learning about physical therapy and sports medicine in such diverse settings, and they appreciated meeting experts who were so willing to share their knowledge.



URI students pictured with  
Nova Southeastern University DPT students

## Travel grant awarded to URI Faculty

Dr. Janice Hulme is part of an inter-professional health care team that has recently been awarded a grant from funds given to URI by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to facilitate global faculty travel and promote international partnerships. Dr. Hulme's team seeks to explore Cuba's national public health system, which is unparalleled in its region and has achieved considerable success in maximizing the lifespan of its citizens. The target date for departure is June of 2016, and the PT program eagerly awaits Dr. Hulme's assessment of her findings.



## Joining the College of Health Sciences

Welcome to the new College of Health Sciences! Beginning July 1, 2016, the Department of Physical Therapy will be joining this brand new college at URI. Other departments such as Behavioral Sciences, Psychology, Human Development and Family Sciences, Kinesiology, Nutrition and Food Sciences, Speech/Language Pathology, Communicative Disorders, and Health Studies will join the PT department on this new adventure. What do all these departments have in common? All are health-based fields that treat people. All of these various departments work toward a common goal of preventing and treating illness and disorders. The change came about because the University wanted to better align the health care departments into one college. By doing so, it fosters collaboration among the departments academically, clinically, and in the community. The University hopes that bringing the various health care fields together into one college will better unify all health sciences into one mighty health care system. The Department of Physical Therapy welcomes this change and is excited for future interdisciplinary collaborations.



### Unique Clinical Experiences

Anna Skaggs is one of three URI graduates who participated in Evidence In Motion's (EIM) Clinical Excellence Network (CEN) for students. Through the CEN, students are paired in twos or threes with one CI at an EIM-affiliated clinic. CEN has an online curriculum that students work through during their clinical, and students log-on their site once a week to participate in a virtual student-run Grand Rounds case. Skaggs was drawn to the opportunity because of the structured environment and a desire to reinforce everything she had learned in the classroom. The 2:1 student/CI ratio also appealed to her because of the advantage of being able to bounce ideas off another student and learn from each other. She and classmate Matt Heckel were placed at Butte Premier Physical Therapy (BPPT) in Chico, CA. The third program participant, Mary Kelley, was apart from her classmates as she completed her clinical in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Another appeal of this program was the concentration in manual orthopedic work. While the curriculum covered wide ground, its heart was for outpatient PT. The CEN also encouraged at least 6-8 months at one clinic (and more if possible). Heckel and Skaggs completed their in-patient requirement at a SNF and then stayed at BPPT for about nine months until graduation. Skaggs commented that the length of the program gave her the opportunity to really grow from a student into a therapist in a way that was most conducive to her learning style. She was immersed in the OP orthopedic mindset and really refined her skills and clinical reasoning abilities.

## URI at the Boston Sports Medicine Conference

In the beginning of October 2015, a dozen of the first year URI DPT students attended the annual Boston Sports Medicine Conference held at Northeastern University. The day-long conference consisted of seven lectures on topics related to sports therapy and treatment. The lecturer lineup consisted of physical therapists and medical doctors, each of whom presented on a particular athletic population and its commonly related injuries. The conference “...was very interesting. They covered the whole body through various sports,” said student Alex Dien. He saw topics ranging from Concussion Management in the Young Athlete, presented by Michael Beasley, MD, to Running Related Injuries and Current Evidence, & Gait Retraining, presented by Pierre d’Hemecourt, MD.

A reoccurring theme concerning injury in the represented athletic populations was treatment outcomes, specifically those associated with surgery vs non surgery. Embedded in all the lectures was the concept of managing patients individually and maintaining function within their activity in relation to strength, range of motion, and dynamic movements. First-year Glenda Vasquez said that the most important thing she learned at the conference was that “when rehabbing athletes, you don’t have to fix everything, just focus on what they need to return to function.” Glenda went on to describe hip injuries in dancers,



For example, the external and internal hip rotation found in dancers exceeds normal limits and would be considered abnormal among the general population. However, their performance as dancers depends on this excess range of motion. Therefore, after injury, we as physical therapists need to get these patients to surpass normal range because it is what is required for their function.”

All the students agreed that attending conference put what they were currently learning in classes such as Basic Evaluation and Biomechanics into perspective. Attendee Hannah Walton also stated, “it was nice to be in a multidisciplinary setting of different professions, expertise, and experience.”

## Broadening Experiences: PT around the globe!

Over the winter break, several second-year students completed broadening trips overseas in India, Peru, and New Zealand. Future trips this school year are happening at the end of the semester to Guatemala, Italy, Key Largo, and Ireland.

### India

Students Nicole Waskiewicz, Coral Hines, and Phillip Chang traveled to Vellore, India, which is part of Tamil Nadu in the southern part of the country. During their stay, they spent eight days at Christian Medical College and Hospital, a well renowned educational and research institute, where they learned about the practice of physical therapy in India. After their time in the hospital, they traveled to Kerala, a beautiful mountainous region further south. There they enriched themselves in India culture and geography through hiking and exploring some of the lush tea plantations. They also enjoyed the beach and treated themselves to an elephant safari. Overall, they describe the trip as an enriching experience that enabled them to form an appreciation for Indian culture and physical therapy abroad.



### New Zealand

Second-year Erin Johnson arrived in Auckland, New Zealand, the day after Christmas with her husband Craig. They worked their way south to Wellington, stopping to sightsee along the way. Craig left NZ shortly after the New Year, and Erin stayed for another 3 weeks, living with Kiwi friends while immersing herself in NZ physical therapy. She observed at two outpatient orthopedic clinics—one in Wellington and one in Petone (a suburb of Wellington). She described the clinic in Wellington as especially interesting because it was a PT practice (including pelvic health) combined with a Pilates/yoga studio. She appreciated the opportunity to see socialized medicine in action. Some of the most striking differences she noticed were that all PTs there can prescribe ultrasound and MRI. They also cannot be sued, and their treatment approach uses manual therapy and exercise with minimal modalities.

## Broadening Continued: Peru

In January, second-years Marissa Smyrski and Cammie Marler ventured to South America for the first time to experience physical therapy as it is practiced in Peru. The DPT students spent most of their time with a chronic pain PT, Ana, at the Hospital Almenara de EsSalud. Smyrski commented, “We were so grateful for the opportunity Jenny and Ana created for us to spend time at EsSalud, and Ana seemed really appreciative of having students visit and share any new information that we could. I think the exchange was beneficial for both parties.” The students found that PT interventions were quite similar to interventions in the United States, but what stood out to these budding clinicians was the resourcefulness of the PTs and the differences in insurance, documentation, and patient privacy.

In the U.S., practitioners have become accustomed to buying new therapy toys and throwing out equipment that is old or doesn’t work. With a limited budget, the PTs in Peru wasted little and recycled as much as possible. For example, a normal road bike was used to create an arm bike that was mounted to the wall. The clinicians aren’t the only ones that are resourceful. The large exercise equipment (such as bikes) in the chronic pain unit was not paid for by the hospital: it was financed via a patient-run fundraiser. The students felt that the chronic pain unit was more like a community than an in-and-out medical clinic.



Smyrski and Marler encountered a different mentality for documentation than they had ever experienced. Documentation at the chronic pain clinic in Peru didn’t have the same strict requirements as settings within the U.S. The documentation is not sent back to the physician or insurance companies, is not necessarily updated with every visit, and is handwritten on half sheets of paper kept in binders by year. It proved to be an intriguing discovery process for the students to witness the effects of health policy on the daily actions of health care professionals in other countries.

Outside of their clinical adventures, Smyrski and Marler made good use of their time to see as much as possible. Some of their favorite places included an Incan temple located in the middle of Lima, beautiful ocean views in Mira Flores, the ancient capital of the Incans, majestic cathedrals in Cusco, and of course, Machu Picchu. Marler remarked, “The history and culture of the indigenous people of Peru are captivating, and there resides a deep connection of the locals to their ancestors. All the Peruvians we spent time with were welcoming, friendly, and just overall lovely people. I would love to go back one day.” Both students have memories from the trip that will last a lifetime as well as an expanding perspective of world health and how PT is practiced in the States.

## Alumni Spotlight: Bert Reid, PT, DPT

Bert chose PT as a career while coaching high school sports. He became interested in taking care of the injured players and developing their varsity sports skills. The connection between the physiology and the cause of injury intrigued him. Bert graduated Cum Laude in '87 from Tulane University for his undergraduate where he was captain of the golf team and an Academic All-American.

After graduating with his Master's in PT from URI in 1993, he was hired at South County Hospital full time and worked evenings at Prehab in Warwick. Bert later completed his doctorate (DPT) at MGH IHP in 2008. He is a firm believer in providing care based on functional research and outcome measures. He believes that a functional approach to treatment will uncover the source of the problem causing the symptom and treat the kinetic-chain dysfunction. The most vital element in PT is to retrain the proprioceptors in a functional way. He keeps in mind the question, "Without finding where the problem starts or without training the proprioceptors to do their job, have you really treated effectively?"

Bert completed a yearlong Fellowship through the Gray Institute on advanced kinetic chain biomechanics and sports performance as part of his continuing education. "Fascinating and rewarding, it revolutionizes how we treat. And, again, the care is measurable and backed by real and functional evidence." He has been able to expand his clientele to treat Olympic medalist runners, sailors, professional baseball players and professional golfers, among other athletes.

In 2000, he opened Olympic PT in Middletown (later renamed OPT Physical Therapy), collaborating with fellow URI graduate Don Levine, PT, DPT. Bert and Don have now expanded their business to seven offices of OPT around southern RI and in Westport, MA. It is a healthy business full of hand-picked, smart and self-motivated workers. Bert commented that the business team has "learned to run with extreme efficiency due to the new health care limits and reimbursement cutbacks." He imagines back to his days of coaching in high school: "Running a PT Private Practice is very much like coaching a sports team. If every teammate is headed in the right direction, and if everyone is creating a value (for the patient/consumer visit), then success will continue."





## URI DPT at Combined Sections Meeting

Second-year student Marissa Smyrski accompanied many of URI's professors to the Combined Sections Meeting in Anaheim, California. The four-day event featured a variety of lectures, workshops, and educational events for all Sections of the APTA. Smyrski remarked that her two favorite lectures were on the examination of visual and vestibular function in home health and mobility in geriatric populations. She enjoyed learning about the experience and knowledge of all the APTA sections and the passion that the specialists have.

Smyrski also commented on all the opportunities to meet PTs who are usually geographically dispersed--from California to Massachusetts to Canada. She met people throughout the event--sometimes simply waiting in line for lunch and sometimes during lab portions of educational sessions. In the middle of the conference, she ran into people whom she had met last year at the Global Health Summer Institute at Duke University. She was excited to represent the future of URI at CSM.



## Behind the Scenes

The graduate assistants for our Fall and Spring semesters have put in hard work to make these articles possible. Producing a newsletter of the program's accomplishments each semester is only one job on top of their commitment to the first year class pairing. To recognize their dedication, the GAs from this year are listed below:

### Fall 2015

- Brendan Boyle
- Kate Cleverdon
- Coral Hines
- Patrick Motel
- Paige Madison
- Marissa Smyrski
- Lacey Young
- Cammie Marler

### Spring 2016

- Julia Sliwkowski
- Karl Busch
- Desiree Santaniello
- Sandy Maliangos
- Michelle Brown
- Lacey Young
- Cammie Marler





# Upcoming Events

April 14th & 21th

Interprofessional Education Day at Brown

April 22nd

TeamSTEPPS Program for Interprofessional Collaboration in Patient Safety and Healthcare Delivery

May 3

9 am – Noon High School Day

May 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>

Wrap-up week for 3<sup>rd</sup> year students

May 21

URI Graduate School and Hooding Ceremony

- Location: Swan Hall, Kingston Campus
- Time: 9 am starting with brunch served

June 28

Comprehensive Exams for second-year students

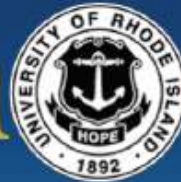
Fall 2016

Distinguished Lecturer Series: Dr. Irene Davis on the Biomechanics of Running

- Exact date TBD



## Mission



URI  
PHYSICAL  
THERAPY

The Physical Therapy faculty is dedicated to graduating doctors of physical therapy competent in providing physical therapy to a variety of patient/client populations in Rhode Island and nationwide; who value the need for and use of evidence in practice; who are committed to professional development through life-long learning; and are active contributors to their professional and social communities. The faculty aspires to advance the theory and practice of physical therapy and provide service to the University, State, and Nation, through works that promote the profession, interacting communities and related disciplines.

The program is highly selective and seeks candidates who exhibit a combination of success in the sciences, a broad understanding of physical therapy practice, dedication to their community, and potential for success in the Program. The curriculum is designed to challenge students toward excellence in clinical practice, professional behavior, and service.