



# MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF

# Health Sciences Education

Annual Newsletter  
Spring 2021

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MISERICORDIA  
UNIVERSITY

## WELCOME TO OUR 2021 CHSE NEWSLETTER!

This has been a difficult and challenging time for everyone. I wanted to take a moment to salute all of you and let you know that the faculty and staff of the College of Health Sciences and Education have remained here and continue to be here for you. EVERYONE, including our fantastic students, in our college have shown resilience, perseverance and endurance during this past year and have demonstrated the utmost professional work ethic during this challenging time.

Our students and faculty have adapted to the changes and challenges of the COVID-19 crisis and all should have an extra sense of pride in all that has been accomplished.

If there's one thing I know, it's that our students and faculty are creative problem-solvers. Although some of our plans may have been dampened by the current crisis, we have found new ways to adapt, innovate, achieve, and overcome! Please enjoy what we were able to accomplish and highlight this year within this newsletter!

Please continue to take care of yourselves and those around you by continuing to be good citizens of public health. I am proud to be your Dean.

Most Sincerely,

*Barbara*

(**Dr. Barbara Schwartz-Bechet**, Dean of the College of Health Sciences and Education)



# UNDERGRADUATE NURSING

## DEPARTMENT OF NURSING HOLDS PINNING CEREMONY FOR NURSING GRADUATES

The Department of Nursing at Misericordia University held a pinning ceremony on August 13, 2020 to recognize the students who completed the Part-Time Evening Accelerated Bachelor of Science Degree Nursing Program and the RN to BSN Degree Program. During the ceremony, undergraduate nursing students received the Misericordia University Nursing Pin, a symbol of achievement in the nursing profession. While the ceremony was held in Lemmond Theatre for the students, family and friends attended the event virtually. Also featured in the ceremony was the recital of the international pledge for nurses and

the international prayer for nurses. The Department of Nursing recognized outstanding academic and clinical achievements by the students. **Crystal Lee** received the Academic Excellence Award, which is presented to the student who attained the highest academic standing overall, and **Teresa Worth** received the Clinical Excellence Award for administering superior nursing skills in clinical practice and achieving a GPA greater than 3.0. The Kaplan Secure Predictor Award, given to a



student who has attained the highest score on the comprehensive National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses review examination, was presented to **Irina Arriaga**, in addition to the Daisy in Training Award for providing compassionate care to patients.

## ABSN PROGRAM GRADUATES FIRST CLASS

Misericordia University has graduated the first class of ABSN students from the Pittsburgh learning center. The undergraduate nursing program recently expanded by offering an accelerated path to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree, which began in August, 2019. With a nursing learning center in Pittsburgh, Misericordia University's Department of Nursing has offered a 16-month Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program, building upon the University's nearly century-long tradition of graduating nurses. The ABSN program allows qualified students to leverage their prior non-nursing education to earn a BSN in as little 16 months. In December 2020, 14 students earned the BSN with the first graduating class from this program.



## NURSING STUDENT NAMED OUTSTANDING ADULT LEARNER OF THE YEAR

The Center for Adult and Continuing Education at Misericordia University recently named **Crystal Lee** of South Abington Twp., as the university's 2020 Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year. She was one of five students recognized by the Luzerne County Council on Adult Higher Education for overcoming obstacles and demonstrating perseverance, innovation and extraordinary dedication to reach their educational goals.



Crystal Lee

Lee, a single mother of an 11-year-old daughter, works full time as a private duty home health and hospice aide, and volunteers in her community. As a part-time student at Misericordia University, she has achieved academic excellence while balancing work, education and family responsibilities. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree in August 2020. Lee plans to further her education by earning a Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree and specializing in women's health. "If we want to see positive change in this world, we need to start with helping mothers because they are the ones raising the next generation," she stated.

## COVID IMMUNIZATION CLINICS AT WBGH

Professors **Michelle Hawkins** and **Vanessa Mayorowski** took their clinical students to Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, where they helped to immunize community members against COVID. Thank you for helping vaccinate NEPA!





## WHITE COAT CEREMONIES HELD FOR ABSN STUDENTS AT MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY'S PITTSBURGH SITE



The Department of Nursing at Misericordia University's Pittsburgh Center cloaked 14 students on October 14, 2020 and 22 nursing students on April 14, 2021 who recently began the nursing program at the Arnold P. Gold Foundation and American Association of Colleges of Nursing White Coat Ceremony for Nursing. An international nonprofit, the

Arnold P. Gold Foundation established the ceremony in 1993 as a way to welcome new students into the profession of medicine and to underscore the importance of humanistic and patient-centered health care. At the outdoor White Coat Ceremonies, the ABSN students took an oath that acknowledges their essential role as caregivers, with an emphasis on the

Religious Sisters of Mercy's charisms of Mercy, Service, Justice and Hospitality. Students also received white coats and lapel pins that feature the Arnold P. Gold Foundation's logo, a stethoscope in the shape of a heart surrounded by the words, "humanism in medicine," to remind them that compassion and empathy must be the hallmark of their clinical practice.

**Jordyn Wynder**, Pittston, Pa, a junior nursing student at Misericordia University, has been named the 2021 recipient of The George F. Speace, MD, FACS Pre-Med/Nursing Scholarship. Wynder was presented a \$500 scholarship. The George F. Speace Scholarship Fund of The Luzerne Foundation, established in 2020 by the family, colleagues and friends, of Dr. George F. Speace, honors Dr. Speace's memory, and preserves his spirit of giving to others as well as his passion for the science and practice of healthcare. Dr. Speace was a highly respected member of the medical community and mentored medical students at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Scranton, Pa. He practiced in several Luzerne and Lackawanna county hospitals and specialized in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeries. This scholarship is awarded annually to ascending junior medical science or nursing students at Misericordia University and is limited to undergraduates. Award recipients must be in good academic standing with a grade point average of a B or higher. The award shall be renewable annually and will follow the student(s) to graduation, assuming satisfactory undergraduate academic performance.



## WHITE COAT CEREMONY VIRTUALLY RECOGNIZES STUDENTS ENTERING PROFESSIONAL PORTION OF PROGRAM

The Department of Nursing at Misericordia University virtually cloaked 69 nursing students who began the professional portion of the nursing program at the sixth annual Arnold P. Gold Foundation and American Association of Colleges of Nursing White Coat Ceremony for Nursing on April 18, 2021. Students in the traditional and part-time evening academic programs began the professional portion of the program in the fall semester. An international nonprofit, the Arnold P. Gold Foundation established the ceremony in 1993 as a way to welcome new students into the profession of medicine and to underscore the importance of humanistic and patient-centered health care. At the virtual Misericordia University White Coat Ceremony, family and friends, as well as faculty and administration watched as 46 traditional students and 23 part-time evening nursing students took an oath that acknowledges their essential role as caregivers, with an emphasis on the Religious Sisters of Mercy's charisms of Mercy, Service, Justice and Hospitality. Students received white coats and lapel pins that feature the Arnold P. Gold Foundation's logo, a stethoscope in the shape of a heart surrounded by the words, "humanism in medicine," to remind them that compassion and empathy must be the hallmark of their clinical practice.

**John W. Mullen**, R.N., A.D.N., P.H.R.N., C.F.R.N., a registered nurse in a cardiac intensive care unit, delivered the keynote address. Mullen began his career in health care as an orderly, while he continued his education in nursing. Through the years, he has worked in various roles in the nursing profession, including over 15 years as a flight nurse with the Geisinger Medical Center's Life Flight program. He is currently a registered nurse working in Geisinger Home Care.

## COVID TESTING ON CAMPUS

**Dr. Brenda Hage and Dr. Lisa Shustack** and student volunteers assisted with COVID testing of returning students in the Anderson Sports Center in January 2021.



# GRADUATE NURSING

- 100% of the graduates from the Spring 2020 cohort passed the American Academy of Nurse Practitioner's Family Nurse Practitioner Certification exam
- MSN Award Winners Spring 2020

Excellence in Evidenced-Based Practice Award –  
**Alyssa Kasheta**

Clinical Excellence Award – **Kelly Worsnick**

- DNP Award Winners December 2020

Excellence in Policy, Activism, and Advocacy DNP Award, conferred annually to a graduating DNP student in good academic standing who best exemplifies a commitment to health policy change, patient advocacy, and community activism, is presented to: **Jessica Lee**

DNP Award for Excellence in Evidence Based Practice Change, given annually to a graduating DNP student in good academic standing who demonstrates excellence in evidence-based practice change, is awarded to: **Ashley Welliver**

- Initially, when the pandemic shut the world down, faculty were scrambling to restructure and reorganize courses. Some courses, such as the on-campus intensive courses for the Nurse Practitioner students, were initially postponed due to the classes' typical in-person nature. However, to successfully allow students to advance in their program tracks and not delay graduation, other avenues had to be explored. The faculty successfully transferred all the course content to an online format that includes hands-on skills with standardized patients, suture workshops, and simple procedure workshops. Family members who resided with the students were huge contributors (including their children!) and acted as the standardized patients to perform their assessment skills on while faculty analyzed techniques via Zoom. Special kits for the workshops were mailed to the students individually to give them access to everything they needed, from the comforts and safety of their own home (see photo). The faculty were very pleased with the student's ability to adapt to the online environment with ease, and the "on-campus" intensives went off without a hitch!



BSN to DNP student, **Jessica Neare** and Dr. **Brenda Hage**, Director of DNP programs recently met with **Senator Lisa Baker** to discuss a policy brief written by Jessica to propose a bill that would provide tax credits as an incentive for preceptors of graduate advanced clinician students. Lack of graduate preceptors can delay graduate APRN student progression and may add additional preceptor fees to their total tuition costs. The policy brief proposes tax credits in lieu of preceptor fees. Following this discussion, Senator Baker has referred the issue to the legislative researcher at the Pennsylvania Senate for further review with the potential for drafting a legislative proposal as a next step if supported by the Senate researcher findings and applicable tax law. We appreciate Senator Baker's willingness to hear and explore this issue and for her encouragement of our Misericordia DNP students!



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NURSING



# SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

In the spring of 2020, fifth-year student **Cara Imbalzano** was awarded the Von Drach Memorial Scholarship from the Pennsylvania Speech-Language and Hearing Association (PSHA). Misericordia University speech-language pathology students have received 12 out of the last 13 Von Drach Scholarship awards. The scholarship is awarded annually to one student studying speech-language pathology or audiology from Pennsylvania who has demonstrated a desire to grow professionally, strong leadership abilities, outstanding academic performance, and exceptional clinical skills within the profession.

Misericordia University's Chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) participated in an Online Storybook Reading last fall. Members recorded videos of themselves reading children's books which were sent to parents and guardians of children receiving therapy at Misericordia University's Speech-Language and Hearing Center. Many children have not been in their traditional school setting due to the pandemic. These videos allowed children to experience familiar aspects of school while being in the comfort and safety of their own homes.

In January, three students in the Speech-Language Pathology Department presented their research virtually at the 12th Oxford Dysfluency Conference under the mentorship of **Dr. Glen Tellis**, Ph.D., CCC-SLP. Graduate students **Quinn Kelley** and **Jillian Scanlon**, as well as undergraduate student, Faith Foster, presented their research titled, "Does prior exposure to stuttering affect perceptions of eye contact while stuttering?" The Oxford Dysfluency Conference has a reputation as one of the leading international scientific conferences in the field of fluency disorders.

In 2020, graduate student, Madison Shelley, and undergraduate students, Molly Clemson, **Megan Florio**, and **Jacob Thomas** attended the virtual Fall Voice Conference to present "A Different Take on Vocal Effort," and "Perspectives on the Assessment and Treatment of Paradoxical Vocal Fold Motion Disorder (PVFMD)." **Megan Florio**, **Molly Clemson**, **Jacob Thomas**, and **Stephanie Maines** will also attend the virtual Estill World Voice Symposium in July to present "Integrated Implicit-Explicit Voice Therapy Approach Applied to Voice Therapy Cases."

In the fall of 2019, **Reethee Antony**, Ph.D., CCC-SLP was welcomed as a faculty member to the Speech-Language Pathology Department. She received her bachelor's and



Cara Imbalzano  
"Eating" by Alexandra Woodward

master's degrees in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology from Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute in Chennai, India. She also received her MPhil (Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences) from the Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY). This past December, she completed her doctoral program in Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences at the CUNY Graduate Center. She successfully defended her doctoral dissertation titled, "Encoding and perception of voicing and aspiration in native and non-native listeners in quiet and in background noise." Dr. Antony reported that, "The most important finding is that our brains encode the speech sounds even if they are not present in our native language and cannot be used for further processing." In her first year-and-a-half at Misericordia University, she has taught both undergraduate and graduate classes, including Speech and Hearing Science, Audiology, Anatomy and Physiology of Speech and Hearing, Adult Communication Disorders, Motorspeech, and Aphasia.

Misericordia University's Operation Smile Student Club has continued its mission this year by funding cleft lip and cleft palate surgeries for individuals in underprivileged areas around the world. Each year, the club holds various fundraisers to raise money for

the surgeries. With each surgery costing about \$240, the club has a goal of sponsoring two surgeries every year. In addition, the club is also donating children's toothbrushes to those in need.

**Alexandra Woodward**, a junior undergraduate student, completed a series of oil portraits for her Honor's Capstone Project. She displayed her work this semester in a virtual art gallery consisting of original oil paintings that depict the true essence of the field of speech-language pathology. The paintings reveal the scope of a speech-language pathologist as well as the remarkable impact that treatment has on patients. She will present her gallery at the 2021 Pennsylvania Speech-Language-Hearing Association (PSHA) virtual convention.



**MISERICORDIA**  
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SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY



# TEACHER EDUCATION

## TED FACULTY AND STUDENTS PRESENT AT STATE CONFERENCE

Faculty and students from Misericordia University's Teacher Education Department presented this fall at the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators 49th Annual Teacher Educators Assembly. The theme of this year's conference was PAC-TE 2020: Sharpening the Focus of Teacher Preparation. It was attended by 277 education professionals who are engaged in the preparation and development of professional educators in Pennsylvania.

"International Collaboration in Teacher Preparation: Lessons Learned" was co-presented by **Dr. Colleen Duffy**, Assistant Professor of Education, and **Dr. Jodi Loughlin**, Associate Professor of Education. The session shared the Teacher Education Department's experience as members of an international community of practice through **MySchoolsNetwork.com**. Since the 2019-20 academic year, Misericordia Teacher Education students have participated in an online course, Sharing Workplace Dilemmas, with pre-service teachers from NHL Stenden: University of Applied Science in the Netherlands; Middle East Technical University, Turkey; Tampere University of Applied Science, Finland; and an international cohort of Teacher Education students participating in the Erasmus Programme.

Through peer consultation or "intervision", they engage in professional discourse centered on shared experiences and dispositions and make evidence-based recommendations with the goal of knowledge co-creation and empowerment. Drs. Duffy and Loughlin

discussed the program and how it can support pre-service teachers' development of digital literacy, global citizenship, and authentic language learning while increasing students' opportunities to engage in diverse and cross-cultural experiences.

**Dr. Jodi Loughlin**, Associate Professor of Education co-presented with two senior Early Childhood and Special Education students. Their presentation "What a Novel Idea! Teaching Language Arts Methods Using Newbery Novels" highlighted the use of Newbery novels to teach the six components of language arts: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and thinking- through the creation of student-developed literature guides. Dr. Loughlin explained how the student-centered learning experience enabled the pre-service teachers to apply their knowledge of language arts to create effective instructional strategies that they will be able to use in their future classrooms. The pre-service teachers, **Amanda Curcio**, of Larksville, PA and **Marena Horan**, of Dunmore, PA, shared the learning resources they developed and explained how the materials can be modified and accommodated for learners who are gifted, below-level, on-level, and English learners.

**Dr. Steve Broskoske**, Associate Professor of Education presented a session entitled "Using Games to Create a More Active and Engaged Classroom." While the use of play for the purposes of learning is not new, the growth of digital games among youth prompts the question of how teachers can take advantage

of games for educational purposes. The session showed teachers how to utilize games and game-based learning in the classroom to improve learning and students' motivation to learn.

PAC-TE is dedicated to providing strong advocacy for professional educator preparation within the commonwealth and acts as the voice for professional educator preparation in Pennsylvania. The professional organization's goal is to promote quality professional educator preparation programs and to provide opportunity for individual professional growth for all persons in Pennsylvania engaged in professional educator preparation.



## VIRTUAL REALITY PERFORMANCE BASED ASSESSMENTS

The Teacher Education Department used Mursion, a virtual reality based performance assessment tool to provide virtual field placements for our Sophomores during the pandemic. TED students teach in a live, virtual classroom in order to be better prepared to face the challenges of today's classrooms. Students are able to practice delivering content, establishing classroom routines, handling challenging classroom management scenarios, collaborating with families, and more.

To allow students to practice collaborating as a member of a multi-disciplinary team, TED

Faculty, **Dr. Colleen Duffy** and **Dr. Roberta Yeager**, worked with Mursion to create a custom virtual reality scenario. Special education candidates must lead an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting and collaborate with a regular

education teacher, a speech-language pathologist, and a special education student's parent to establish three annual goals and 2 specially designed instructions (SDI). This learning opportunity is a great benefit to special education majors.





## YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Misericordia University's TED was a member of the second cohort in PA to be awarded funding to participate in the Youth Mental Health First Aid Initiative, sponsored by the McDowell Institute. Through this funding, **Dr. Molly Vitale**, Professor Emerita, **Lindsey Riddell**, MU Community Outreach Coordinator, and **Dr. Barbara Schwartz-Bechet**, Dean of the CHSE have been trained as YMHFA training facilitators.

YMHFA training is an 8-hour course that gives people the skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. By building mental health literacy, pre-service teachers are better able to identify and address non-academic barriers to learning. Participants are also introduced to risk factors and warning signs for mental health or substance use problems, engage in experiential activities that build understanding of the impact of illness on individuals and families, and learn about evidence-supported treatment and self-help strategies. All TED faculty have been certified in Youth Mental Health Awareness and we have committed to ensuring that all TED student teachers will be certified in YMHFA prior to their student teaching experience.

## KAPPA DELTA PI INDUCTION

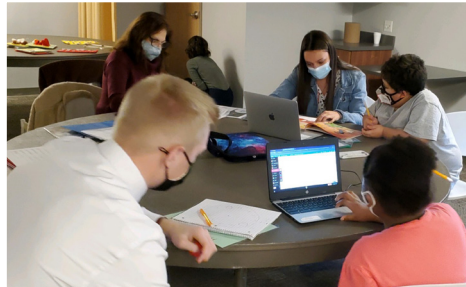
On April 28, 2021, MU Teacher Education Department students were inducted into Kappa Delta Pi, the International Honor Society in Education. In order to be considered for nominations, students must be a Junior or Senior Education Major, have already been on the Dean's List at least twice, have a current overall GPA of at least 3.4 and thus are situated to graduate with honors, successfully passed Basic Skills Assessments in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics (through all accepted PDE methods), have been formally admitted into the Teacher Education Program, have met the current policies and procedures outlined in the Teacher Education Guidebook, and have been involved in professional activities. This year's inductees are: **Mikayla Simanski, Kailee Carroll, Gabrielle Giandrea, Maura Cosimo, Sean Boylan, Elizabeth Vespucci, Lauren Devens, Alyssa Cheseck, Margaret Ryan, Kaitlin Bigos, Margaret McGovern, Erin McCawley, Jennifer Regan, and Leah Malarkey, and Nora Tracey.** Congratulations to all!

## TED SEC ED STUDENTS ATTEND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD) PRESENTATION

In April, **Dr. Steve Broskoske** and the students of TED 369 Curriculum and Methods in Secondary Education welcomed guest speaker, Cammie Anderson, Drug & Alcohol Prevention Education Coordinator at the Robinson Counseling Center of Children's Service Center, who presented several presentations. Topics included current drug trends, stages of Substance Use Disorder (SUD), understanding families who are out of balance as they deal with SUD, manifestations of SUD in the classroom, how teachers can help students dealing with SUD, and how to reduce stigma attached to students/families dealing with SUD.

## WOMEN WITH CHILDREN TUTORING PROGRAM

This year pre-service teachers from MU provided bi-weekly tutoring services for the children of the mothers in the Women with Children program. The service provided individualized academic support to the children as they navigated their new online learning environments and provided some much needed time for the Moms to catch up with their studies or get a much needed break.



## TED STUDENTS ENGAGE IN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

TED students and faculty participated as members of **MySchoolsNetwork.com**, an international community of practice. Together with teacher preparation students from the Middle East Technical University, Turkey; NHL Stenden University, The Netherlands; Tampere University of Applied Science, Finland; and an international cohort of Teacher Education students participating in the Erasmus Programme, TED students engaged in knowledge co-creation and empowerment around shared classroom dilemmas as they developed digital literacy, global citizenship, and authentic language learning.

## DRS. BRAGUE AND YEAGER PRESENT WITH TED STUDENTS AT NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF MATHEMATICS

**Dr. Bobbi Yeager, Dr. Michele Brague**, and senior TED students, **Amanda Curcio** and **Marena Horan**, presented virtually at the Spring 2021 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics regional conference. The presentation title was "Differentiating Math Instruction Using Stations". The presentation focused on defining differentiated learning, introduced strategies for use with elementary students of varying abilities, and demonstrated the implementation of stations as an approach to teaching mathematics.



## SOCIAL WORK

Social work student, **Kendra Mattice**, submitted her proposal, The Relationship between the Number of Arrests and Drug Treatment Court Completion, that was accepted for presentation at NCUR 2021 @Home on April 12-14, 2021. **Dr. Viviana Lucabeche**, associate professor of social work, served as Kendra's research mentor, advisor, and contributor.

The purpose of the study was to examine the number of arrests that occur before an individual is referred to a Drug Treatment Court (DTC) program for alcohol or substance use for the first time and the relationship this has on successful completion of a DTC program. The relationship was also examined to determine if there is any influence from variables such as gender and race/ethnicity.



Accelerated BSW student, **John Fabiseski** was named the PRO-A's 2020 Recipient of the Individual Champion of Service Award. He was honored at the Leadership in Recovery Event on November 18, 2020.

John Fabiseski is a person in Long Term Recovery. John's substance use condition has been in remission since January 26th, 2014. John is currently a Certified Recovery Specialist in the Administration of Luzerne County Community College for the AllOne Recovery Educational Institute. John is Region Three Lead for the Pennsylvania Recovery Advocacy Project and a Contracted Trainer for the Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance.



## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

### OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY RESEARCH PUBLICATION

Misericordia University Occupational Therapy Class of 2020 alumni **Jessica Grab, Meghan Green, Julianna Norris, and Kristen Pilchik**, along with their professor **Dr. Grace Fisher** from the OT Department, recently learned of the publication of their research report "Exploring Occupational Therapy Student Stress: Professor and Student Perspectives" in the Journal of Occupational Therapy Education. The report can be viewed at: <https://encompass.eku.edu/jote/vol5/iss1/3>



### Onboarding Occupational Therapy Faculty:

#### A Program for Transitioning Clinicians to Academicians



Jennifer R. Washko MS, OTR/L  
Lori A. Charney OTD, OTR/L



### ONBOARDING OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FACULTY PROGRAM DEVELOPED

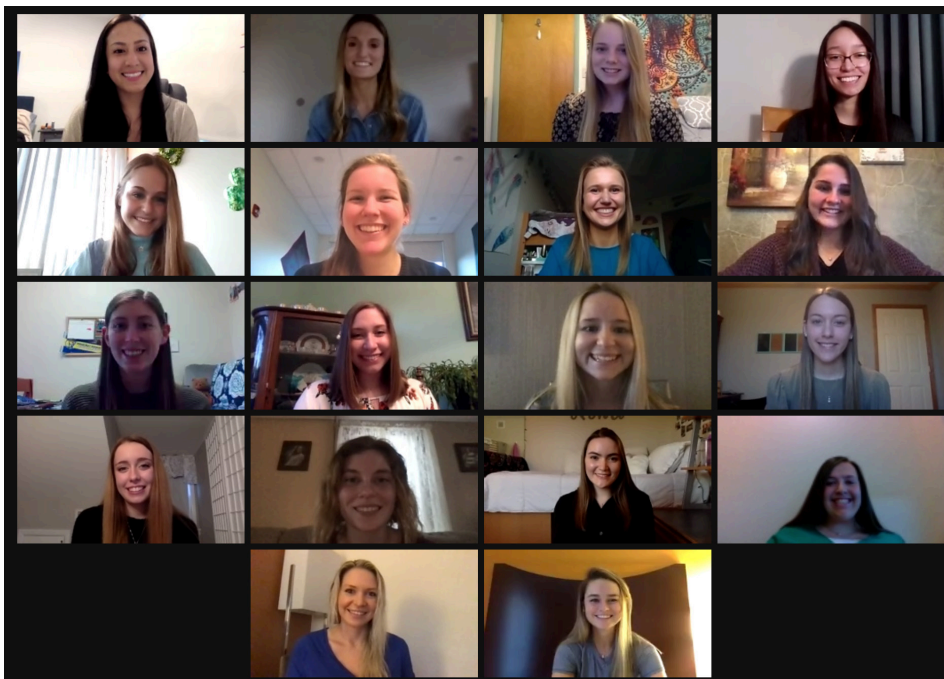
Post Professional Doctoral capstone student and OT department adjunct coordinator, **Jennifer Rugletic-Washko**, developed a program for onboarding new academic faculty into the OT department as part of her doctoral capstone. This program is now embedded in the mentoring process of the OT department and functions as a library of video resources for first time academic instructors who are transitioning from a primary role of clinical OT. She, along with her capstone mentor, **Dr. Lori Charney**, presented this program development project at the AOTA Education Summit in October 2020. Jennifer was also invited to present her program at the interdisciplinary University of New Mexico Mentoring Institute in October 2020 and had a paper published in the Chronicles of Mentoring and Coaching in December 2020.



# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

## VIRTUAL HANDWRITING CAMP

MUOT faculty members, **Dr. Lori Charney** and **Dr. Orley Templeton**, along with MSOT Level I fieldwork students provided a 3-week Virtual Handwriting Camp for children in summer 2020. Due to Covid-19 restrictions last year, many students did not have classroom handwriting instruction and practice in a traditional classroom. This program provided a much needed OT service to children in Pennsylvania through a telehealth delivery model. They used the Handwriting Without Tears program and fine and gross motor exercise to assist children in handwriting remediation. The MUOT students who were involved are pictured here: **Samantha Sweizer**, **Jessica Knisely**, **Madison Tumini**, **Rachel Eckert**, **Brigid Dolan**, **Peyton Breinich**, **Megan Oldak**, and **Alyssa Yniguez**.



## OT STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO PI THETA EPSILON

Eighteen occupational therapy students were inducted into the Misericordia University Psi Chapter of the O.T. Honor Society Pi Theta Epsilon on March 13, 2021. Misericordia's Chapter has been active to promote research in our profession for over 35 years.

## OT HONOR SOCIETY

### Top row L to R:

Kelly Henriquez, Lauren Stover, Elizabeth Fry, Emily Chee. **2nd row:** Alexa Thompson, Kaitlyn Furr, Erica Golik, Aubrey Blasiak. **3rd row:** Mikayla Levkolic, Katie O'Hagan, Kaitlyn Rincavage, Maura Lundy. **4th row:** Jessica Knowles, Taylor Maas, Nicole Angelini, Kimberly Tomaino. **5th row:** Ashley Ryno, Lauren Lea.

# MEDICAL IMAGING

## FACULTY BRIEFS

**Lynn Blazaskie**, was named Outstanding Club Advisor of the year for 2020.

**Gina Capitano** and **Laurie Brogan** facilitated TeamSTEPPS - Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety at The Northeast and Central PA Interprofessional Education Coalition (NECPA IPEC) Faculty Development event.

**Mari King** After over 40 years of service to Misericordia, Mari King will be retiring at the end of May. Mari was recognized by her faculty colleagues at the December 2020 Commencement ceremony where she received the Pauly and Sidney Friedman Excellence in Service Award. She was also granted emerita status by the Board of Trustees in February of this year.

Dr. King, Professor Emeritus, retires after over 40 years of service to Misericordia.



**Paula Pate-Schloder** presented a lecture at the Virginia Society of Radiologic Technologists annual conference in April 2021 titled "Caring for the transgender patient."

**Lorie Zelna** completed her 2nd term (6 years) as a member of the Board of Directors for the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) in April 2021. During that time, Lorie served as second and first vice chair of the board; and chair of the Bylaws Committee and chair of the Standards Committee. Lorie also coauthored chapter 17, Medical Imaging in Athletic Training and Therapy Foundations of Behavior and Practice. Kahanov, L & Payne, E. (2022). Athletic Training and Therapy Foundations of Behavior and Practice. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics

## MI CLUB NEWS:

The MI Club participated in "Cougars Connect for Cancer" throughout the month of October to raise awareness about breast cancer within the MU community. Between selling pink ribbons and conducting a Krispy Kreme fundraiser, the Medical Imaging Club was able to donate \$868.00 to Candy's Place in Forty-Fort.

May 2020, the Medical Imaging Club was presented with Outstanding Academic Organization for the university. This fall the club adopted a family for Thanksgiving through Campus Ministry. We collected food items and made a Thanksgiving basket, which was delivered to the family. They also sold bracelets during the month of November to raise awareness and money for epilepsy research. Proceeds from this fundraiser will be donated to The Dravet Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to aggressively raising funds for research.

The MI Club volunteered on 10-17-20 at The Commission on Economic Opportunity to help with COVID-19 emergency food relief. Packaged over 250 boxes of non-perishable items for those in need within the community.



This spring students collected non-perishable food items for the McAuley Market during the month of February 2021. Pictured above is the food delivery. They also participated in Krispy Kreme Fundraiser; proceeds will benefit the Dravet Foundation.

## STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Nine students were inducted into the Lambda Nu National Honor Society for Radiologic and Imaging Sciences. December 2020 graduates inducted were **Lauren Fink** and **Shannon Wittreich**. May 2021 inductees included **Mariah Ambrosio**, **Cierra Bannon**, **Jaqueline Dotter**, **Kelsey Little**, **Emily Morahan**, **Emily Pellam**, and **Emily Wentzel**.



Left to right: Emily Morahan, Emily Wentzel, Shannon Wittreich, Lauren Fink, Mariah Ambrosio, Cierra Bannon, Emily Pellam, Kelsey Little, and Jacqueline Dotter.





# PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

The Misericordia University Physician Assistant Cohort of 2022 is working with external volunteer supports from Residential Home Health, Palliative Care & Hospice and the MU Service Learning Department. COVID-19 has not allowed them to participate in the “Tuck-In Service” they have volunteered for in the past. The students still wanted to do something for this community partner. They have been creating care packages and hand-written letters for the patients and care-takers of those receiving hospice and palliative care. This project allows our PA students to get a deeper understanding of home health/palliative/hospice care and this could potentially become a specialty the PA student would like to pursue as a career.



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PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

## SALUS UNIVERSITY - OPTOMETRY

**Dr. Ashley M. Wolanski-Wagner**, graduate of Misericordia and Salus who practices optometry in NEPA recalls her career path. “Shortly after receiving my first pair of eyeglasses at 4 years old, I knew that optometry and helping others was what I wanted to do; what I didn’t know at that time was the vast impact I could have on patients. Being an optometrist is not just about glasses and contacts, but is also about co-managing systemic conditions like diabetes and hypertension and possibly diagnosing potential tumors or other life threatening ailments. Misericordia University’s intense hands on curriculum prepared me for the rigors of optometry school. The one-on-one practical and human cadaver labs were great resources and experiences to prepare me academically for optometry school.”



Photo courtesy of Salus University

Advancing avenues for Misericordia graduates to pursue professions in the medical fields: An agreement between Misericordia and Salus University was finalized. This establishes a pathway for graduates from various majors including Health Science-Medical Science to pursue a career in optometry via Salus University. Beyond the usual agreement to interview all applicants, Salus will hold three seats for Misericordia graduates who achieve the requirements for admission.

Misericordia’s strong presence in the education of health care professionals is key to supporting the delivery of healthcare in NEPA and in building healthy communities throughout the region. The ability to support the development of optometrists expands Misericordia’s influence on the residents of NEPA. The first informational session for interested Misericordia students is planned for the fall of 2021.

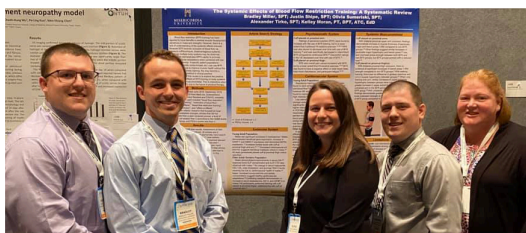


Photos courtesy of Salus University

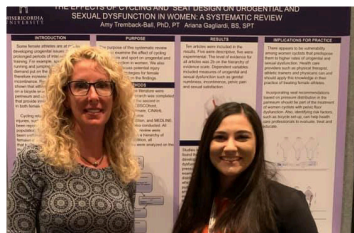


## SCHOLARSHIP

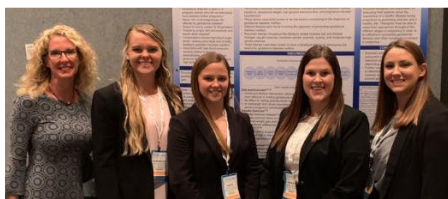
In March of 2020, third year DPT students and recent graduates presented their work at the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation World Congress; Orlando Florida



Bradley Miller, Alexander Tirko, Justin Shipe and Olivia Sumeriski, with faculty mentor Dr. Kelley Moran presented their poster "The Systematic Effects of Blood Flow Restriction Training: A Systematic Review"



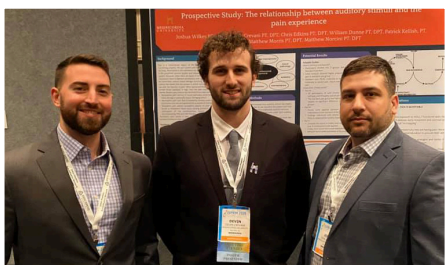
Arianna Gagliardi and Dr. Amy Tremback-Ball presented their poster "The Effects of Cycling and Seat Design on Urogenital and Sexual Dysfunction in Women, A Systematic Review"



Amanda Sheehan, Amy Sokol, Gabrielle Freed, and Haley Stack with faculty mentors Dr. Nicole Evanovsky and Dr. Amy Tremback-Ball presented their poster "The Effectiveness of Exercise in the Prevention of Gestational Diabetes: A Systematic Review"



Arianna Gagliardi, Stephanie Oliviero, Lauren Parretti, and Kayla Stephani, along with faculty mentor Dr. Kristen Karnish presented their poster "Effectiveness of Physical Therapy Interventions in the Treatment of Urinary Incontinence in Older Women: A Systematic Review"



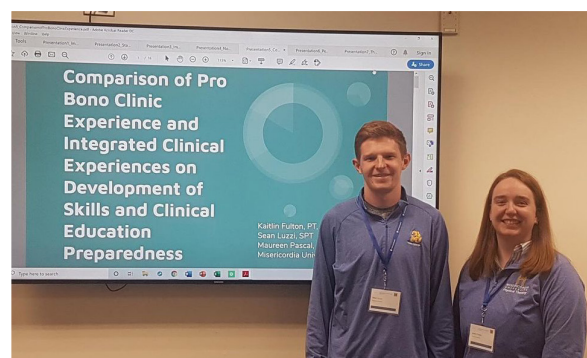
Devin Crevani, William Dunne, Patrick Kellish, Matthew Morris, Matthew Norcini, Chris Edkins and research mentor Joshua Wilkes presented "The Effects of an Auditory Stimulus on Nocioceptive Stimuli"

- The DPT Class of 2020 presented their research virtually at the 7th Annual Misericordia Student Research Symposium in November 2020 as well as on a digital platform in May of 2020.
- Dr. Laurie Brogan and Dr. Kristen Karnish along with Lisa Shustack, MU assistant professor of nursing published their research in the February 2021 edition of the Journal of Interprofessional Practice and Education. Their published research topic was "Perceptions of Socialization in Interprofessional Practice among Health Science Students and First-Year Practicing Professionals"
- "Effect of the Menstrual Cycle on Athletic Performance in NCAA Division III Collegiate Athletes" was published in the January 2021 issue of Journal of Women's Health. Authors were Dr. Amy Tremback-Ball, Kaitlin Fulton, Nicolet Giampetro, Megan Gibbons, Arielle Kneller and Hayley Zelinka



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PHYSICAL THERAPY

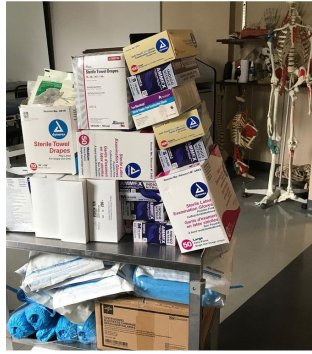
- The work of recent graduates was presented virtually at the 2021 World Physiotherapy Conference in Dubai. The poster titled: Investigating Hippotherapy from the Perspective of Parents of Children with Physical Disabilities: a Qualitative Study was presented by **Maureen Rinehimer** PT, Ph.D.MS.MHS, representing co-authors **Megan Collins** DPT, **Lindsay Bratingson** DPT, **Mackenzie Yurko** DPT
- Two groups under the direction of **Dr. Maureen Pascal** represented the MU Pro Bono Clinic with presentations at the Pro Bono Network Conference.
- In March 2020, recent graduates **Sean Luzzi** and **Kaitlyn Fulton** presented their poster "Comparison of Pro Bono Clinic Experiences and Integrated Clinical Experiences on Development of Skills and Clinical Education Preparedness"
- Second and third year DPT students **Coleby Charlier**, **Emily Hammond**, **Jenna Hiryak**, **Grace Nikolsi** presented a virtual platform "Providing Pro Bono Services in the Pandemic and Beyond" in November of 2020





## SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES

- March, 2020 In an effort coordinated by **Brenda Hage** from the nursing department, departments from the College of Health Science and Education including PT, OT, ST, nursing, sonography and physician assistant programs donated their personal protective equipment (gowns, gloves, face shields, etc.) to local hospitals



- December, 2020-In lieu of a face to face hooding ceremony, a virtual hooding ceremony was held. "Hoods" were packaged and hand delivered to 46/47 MUDPT class of 2020 grads across PA, NJ and NY this week.



- March 2021-DPT 3 students and faculty participated in the annual interprofessional event with Wilkes Pharmacy. DPT students shared information about assistive device fitting. Both disciplines participated in a case study and shared experiences about their clinical rotations.
- March 2021- DPT3 students and faculty and Wilkes University Pharmacy dept collaborated on alternative and complementary PT ideas and to dispel common myths.
- The PT Club continues to be active in service opportunities and fundraising events. In the fall of 2020 and in the spring of 2021, the club members wrote and sent cards and letters to the residents living in local nursing homes. Members maintained 2 Adopt-a-Highway locations in Dallas. They have participated in fundraising opportunities that benefited the local chapter of the Alzheimers' Association, the MU Pro Bono Clinic and the McAuley Market Food Bank. Club members continue to volunteer in the Dallas community, as well as their home communities, in unique ways that support the MU charisms of service and hospitality.
- The Student-Run Pro Bono Clinic continued to see patients during COVID via telehealth and is currently open several days per week. Students, faculty, and alumni provide services to adults and children who are uninsured or underinsured. A special thanks to our students and volunteers. We are always looking for new licensed volunteers to help supervise our students!

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In November 2020, the Commission on Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education affirmed the program's accreditation for 10 years, following review of a self-study conducted by the program and a virtual visit by a team of accreditors.
- The ultimate pass rate on the National Physical Therapist Exam for the DPT Class of 2020 was 97.8%, higher than the national average. Graduate performance on the exam was above the national mean in 6 out of 8 content areas.
- Congratulations to DPT Class of 2020 student award winners:



Catherine Perry  
Wilkinson Award:  
Trevor George



PT Student  
Achievement Award:  
Victoria Ciszak



Outstanding PT  
Student Award:  
Sarah Stevens





# DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHY

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography Department is very proud of each and every one of their students for which they showed great resilience and flexibility during this entire time of COVID. Our sophomore class who were freshman in spring 2020 and our new freshman who entered in fall of 2021 have shown great acceptance in college life, knowing it not quite what they had anticipated during their college search during the junior year of high school. Our junior and senior class were well acclimated to hybrid and online learning; thus, they didn't skip a beat in their class work. The faculty can be commended for being open and honest with the students and keeping them moving in a positive direction. Our senior class of 2021 were the most affected due to the ceasing of clinical hours just as they had begun their clinical education. But, wow, once they returned to clinical in the fall, their determination and excellent skills truly accelerated their learning. Throughout their time of not being in clinic education, we all continued to keep our clinical sonographers and healthcare workers in thought and prayer as they were in the midst of providing care to all patients.

On March 20, 2021 the faculty celebrated with the students and recognized their achievements. While the celebration was smaller than usual, we were all so excited to be together again after not seeing each other on campus for nearly 4 months.

**Sheryl Goss and Karen Klimas** recognized the eight graduates who earned their Certificate of Completion. The Sonography Certificate program requires 18 months of dedicated classroom and clinical time.

Back row: **Alyssa Acker, Kelsi Rosh, Giana Tondora, Samantha Coleman**  
Front Row: **Alexis Jasman, Kaelyn Sess-Sarver, Mikayla Girard, Ashley Scicutella**



We also recognized our eight students who will receive their Bachelor of Science Degree in Diagnostic Medical Sonography on May 15, 2021.

Back row: **Myah King, Bailey Klein, Madison Swire and Michelle Anderson**  
Front row: **Ashley Warner, Haley Bechdel, Sierra Pettit**

Absent from photo: **Gabriella Pane**



Every student works very hard to succeed in our programs. They develop excellent time-management skills, teamwork, communication and the skills to create high quality sonographic (ultrasound) images. Each year the program recognizes a few students who have excelled while in the program.

The Academic Excellence Award is presented to the student in each program, Certificate and BS degree, who earned the highest GPA in their respective program. The Clinical Excellence Award is presented to the student who demonstrated exemplary skills in the clinical setting. The WAVE award is presented to the student who exhibits Willingness to go above and beyond, Altruism, Volunteerism, and Clinical Excellence. The St. Gabriel's Angel Award is presented to the student who collected and delivered the most water bottle for the DMS recycling program to benefit this charity.

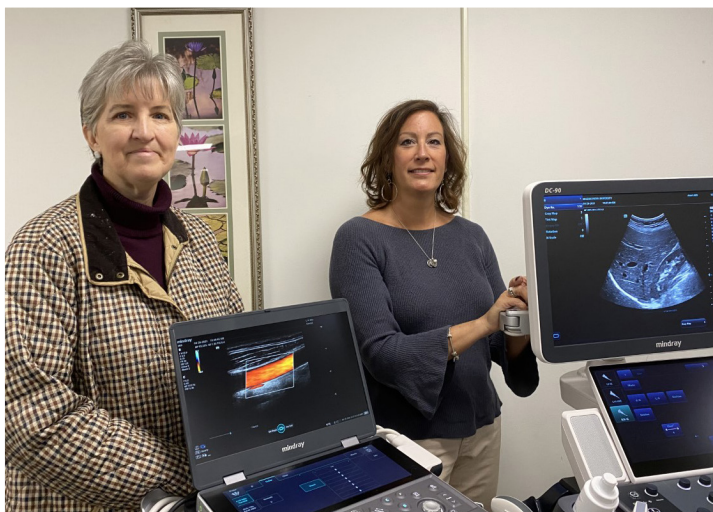
Left to Right: **Sierra Pettit**, Clinical Excellence Award; **Michelle Anderson**, Sonography WAVE Award; **Alexis Jasman**, Academic Excellence Award for Certificate Program; **Ashley Warner**, St Gabriel's Angel Award and Academic Excellence Award for the Bachelor of Science degree program.



**Megan Rembish and Kristina Horan** organized the baby item drive.

The DMS students live the Mercy charism of service. Our students are very generous in their time and donations to support organizations within our communities. Some of the organizations that benefited from our students' generosity are: Thanksgiving dinner for a family in need, St. Vincent dePaul, Broome County animal shelter, and over 200 items collected for St. Joseph's Baby Pantry.





## SONOGRAPHY LAB RECEIVES GRANT TO FUND EQUIPMENT

The Sonography Department was awarded a \$70,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to purchase equipment for their scanning lab. The department greatly appreciates the support from ARC and Misericordia University Administration to enhance student learning through the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment. The department recently received two new Mindray sonography machines and one laptop machine. The addition of the equipment will enhance the sonography students' transition to clinical placement and allow greater interprofessional education experiences with other health science students.

## SENIOR STUDENTS PRESENT CASE STUDIES

Students **Haley Bechdel** and **Sierra Pettit** presented case studies during the December and February Northeastern Pennsylvania Society of Ultrasound (NEPASU) virtual meetings. Haley's presentation was on Neuroblastoma and Sierra's was Adult Polycystic Disease.

## ALUMNI WINS IN POSTER COMPETITION

Congratulations to alumni **Cara Hill**, BS, RDMS, RVT, RT(R) for earning 2nd place in the Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography Sonographer Poster Competition during their 2020 annual conference. Cara's presentation was titled

**Go With The Flow: VCUG vs. Ce-VUS in Diagnosing Vesicoureteral Reflux in Pediatric Patients**



**MISERICORDIA  
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DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHY

## AUTISM CENTER

With the support of the AllOne Foundation and Misericordia University, the Autism Center has been working to provide support and services for individuals with autism and their families. With Covid keeping us from having in person trainings and events, we have had to shift our thinking and create virtual opportunities.

We started our Best Buddies Chapter,

which is a friendship group that matches individuals between the ages of 18-26 with autism and other developmental disabilities and Misericordia students. Since we were unable to meet in person, the Best Buddies leadership team worked to create fun and interactive online events for our buddies to participate in.

We are also excited to start our Integrated

Studies Program in the fall. In this program students with autism and/or intellectual disabilities will complete an inclusive, two-year certificate program. They will have the opportunity to audit two Misericordia course per semester, while also taking specific courses at the Autism Center to address the typical areas of difficulty.

## MAJORS

### TRADITIONAL AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS

- Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Education
- Health Science: Exercise Science
- Health Science: Medical Science
- Health Science: Patient Navigation
- Medical Imaging
- Nursing (BSN, MSN, DNP)
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Physician Assistant
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Social Work

### CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

- Addictions Counseling
- Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Education
- Family Nurse Practitioner Post-Master's Certificate
- Geriatric Care Manager (graduate certificate)
- Nursing (RN to BSN)
- Occupational Therapy
- Patient Navigation Specialization (online for Certificate)
- Post-Professional Pediatric Certificate (OT & PT)

### ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:

- Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Nursing
- Patient Navigation Specialization
- Post Professional Pediatric Certificate in OT



## MISERICORDIA INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE (MIPEC) COLLABORATES WITH XAVIER UNIVERSITY

Since Fall 2020, the Misericordia InterProfessional Education Committee (MIPEC) has had the tremendous privilege to collaborate with Xavier University of New Orleans, Louisiana. This coaction kickstarted through the interaction of Misericordia's College of Health Science and Education (CHSE) dean, Barbara Schwartz-Bechet, with the administrators at Xavier University.

Monthly meetings with three Xavier University Pharmacy department IPE representatives occurred with the officers of the MIPEC - Chair, Maureen Rinehimer, PT PhD, MS, MHS; Secretary, Christine German OTD, OTR/L, ATP; and Chair elect, Reethee Antony, PhD, CCC- SLP - to discuss IPE activities and how to join Xavier University students with the students from Misericordia University. During these meetings, our partnership flourished with sharing ideas of topics and methods of integrating the two universities. Ongoing meetings will continue during the summer to prepare for the Fall 2021 semester. Xavier University would like to develop

an activity for involvement of both universities in the Spring 2021.

During the 2020/2021 school year, Misericordia's IPEC hosted 2 Grand Rounds, Mosaic of Care, and 2 guest speakers on Domestic Violence and Ethics in Covid 19 with Xavier University faculty and students participating.

Due to COVID restrictions, all MIPEC activities in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 were virtual. This provided some challenges but more advantages in that more students were able to participate in all the activities and also be virtually present from 2 or more states if students were not on his/her campus. Interaction of the students from both universities in the break-out rooms developed a team spirit with diversity of thoughts and discussions from different medical networks. The Xavier faculty and students reported that the activities sponsored by the MIPEC were challenging and promoted students to freely share ideas. Our faculty and students indicated that the Xavier students added a richness and diversity to the discussions.

Xavier University invited the faculty of the MIPEC to attend their panel discussion event for their students in April 2021. It was an event for students to hear people from various healthcare disciplines discuss their field of expertise. Misericordia Faculty who attended were: Gina Capitano, medical imaging; Christine German, occupational therapy; and Maureen Rinehimer, physical therapy. Xavier University IPEC are investigating the addition of inviting other disciplines of faculty and students for future events.

In Fall 2021, our initial event, the paper chain, will be a face to face event of Misericordia University students with virtual presence of the Xavier University students. The Xavier students will do the same activity at their university and come together at the end for discussion with the Misericordia students. We anticipate a fun filled year of collaboration with Xavier for 2021-22. It has been a fantastic learning experience for both Universities.

Respectfully Submitted:

Maureen Rinehimer



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*Founded by the Sisters of Mercy.*

