

On the Cover

With the College of Journalism and Communications and other research partners, UF's Clinical and Translational Science Institute is forging unusual and innovative partnerships that could change health care.



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UP FRONT

Safety through simulation



Emergency medicine residents tested a new UF-developed mixed reality simulator in September that lets the user get valuable experience in a safe way. Residents practiced on a subclavian central venous access simulator by injecting the tip of a needle directly into the subclavian vein of a digital dummy while avoiding its artery and lung. A sensor tracks and records 3-D images of where the needle moves in the body and tells the user whether he or she has hit a vital organ or the desired vein. Sem Lampotang, Ph.D., director of the Center for Safety, Simulation & Advanced Learning Technologies, said UF has applied for a patent for the technology. Al Robinson, M.D., (left) is studying whether the simulator is an effective teaching tool for residents. “The preliminary results show that it seems to be making a difference,” Lampotang said. “The residents’ performance is getting better.” — *Meredith Rutland*

WALK FOR BREAST CANCER

A woman's chance of developing breast cancer in her lifetime is a little less than one in eight. The American Cancer Society's annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk aims to help in the fight against this devastating disease by raising awareness and funding. The event, which is sponsored by UF&Shands, will be held at 9 a.m. Oct. 22 in downtown Gainesville. UF physicians Karen Daily, M.D., and Christiana Shaw, M.D., are the co-chairs. To register or obtain more information, please visit <http://makingstrides.acsevents.org/gainesville> or call 352-376-6866.



SMILES ACROSS AMERICA

Children in Collier County have something new to smile about. On Sept. 13, Oral Health America awarded a \$20,000 Smiles Across America grant to CHS Healthcare in Collier County to start an elementary-school-based dental sealant program. The grant will be carried out in cooperation with the UF College of Dentistry's dental center in Naples, Fla., the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center. Last year, Alachua County received the same grant, and the sealant program helped protect about 2,500 students' teeth from cavities.



FROM THE HOUSE TO UF&SHANDS

Adrian Tyndall, M.D., chair of the department of emergency medicine and Shands Critical Care Center Emergency Department medical director, and U.S. Rep. **Corrine Brown** paused for a photo on the helipad during Brown's recent tour of the Shands Cancer Hospital at UF. During her visit, she also attended meetings with UF Shands Cancer Center faculty and leaders and toured the Cancer/Genetics Research Complex. The congresswoman has been supportive of UF and Shands and graduate medical education funding.

THE POST ONLINE

We know you love the print edition of *The POST*, but have you checked out our website? This month, visit post.health.ufl.edu for an exclusive feature on Jennifer Reingle, the first Ph.D grad from the College of Medicine and College of Public Health and Health Professions' joint epidemiology program. Also click on "Take our survey" to let us know what you think of *The POST*.



KNOW A SUPERIOR EMPLOYEE?

Does someone on your team deserve a little extra recognition this year? Well, put back the "Way to go!" stickers and nominate your all-star faculty or staff members for a UF Superior Accomplishment Award. The awards honor academic personnel and TEAMS and USPS employees who contribute outstanding service in their field or to UF. The work must have occurred between August 2010 and July 31, 2011. The awards also seek to recognize employees who have made exceptional contributions to UF's efficiency and economy or to the quality of life provided to students, faculty, alumni and employees. Nominations will be accepted through Oct. 31. For more information on the awards and categories, visit www.hr.ufl.edu/awards/saa.

A place to help kids

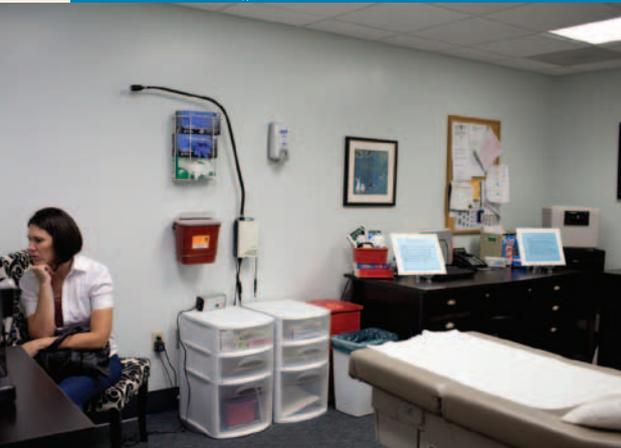


PHOTO BY JESSE S. JONES

Community members got a sneak peek of the UF Child Protection Team's renovated space inside the Children's Medical Services building in September.

Renovations were made to the unit to make it more child-friendly and to increase security, said Debra Esernio-Jenssen, M.D., medical director of the Child Protection Team, which works with the Department of Children and Families, law enforcement and other officials on alleged cases of child abuse and neglect.

The unit is now located on one floor and has two exam rooms instead of one. The interview room was moved and has been soundproofed. Child-friendly art is now on display, and Disney cartoons are available for children to watch in the newly expanded waiting room.

The Child Protection Team, which is part of the College of Medicine department of pediatrics, provides medical evaluations to help determine what happened in instances of alleged abuse and neglect. The team also assesses risk and protective factors related to child abuse, makes recommendations on specific cases and offers interventions to protect children. In 2010, child protection teams in Florida received more than 26,000 cases of child abuse and neglect. — *April Frawley Birdwell*

PHOTO BY MARIA BELEN FARIAS



A model

For Family Medicine

UF&Shands breaks ground on Family Medicine at Main

By Lindsey Robertson

UF&Shands leaders joined with city of Gainesville Mayor Craig Lowe and Gainesville City Commissioner Scherwin Henry in September to break ground for UF&Shands Family Medicine at Main, a new University of Florida Physicians medical practice that will improve access to primary care for East Gainesville residents and better address the needs of the community.

The two-story, 24,200-square-foot facility at 1707 N. Main St. will replace the existing Family Medicine at Fourth Avenue practice and will have nearly 40 percent more space. The new practice will open July 1.

Serving adult and pediatric patients, UF&Shands Family Medicine at Main will contain 24 exam rooms — five more than the current practice — two procedure rooms and designated rooms for group visits and counseling.

“We are committed to creating a model of family-centered primary care that promotes health and reduces the need for hospital admissions,” said David S. Guzick, M.D., Ph.D., UF senior vice president for health affairs and president of the UF&Shands Health System. “We are thrilled to break ground for this new community-based facility in which UF faculty and staff will provide truly comprehensive health care close to where people live and work.”

UF&Shands Family Medicine at Main will be staffed by 10 UF College of Medicine physicians, 26 residents, two sports medicine fellows, a faculty member from the College of Pharmacy, a licensed clinical social worker and a nurse midwife.

They offer adult and pediatric comprehensive care; orthopedics and sports medicine; dermatology; podiatry; OB/GYN, including prenatal care and ultrasound; pharmacy education; social services; behavioral health care; lab tests; stress tests; X-rays and OB ultrasound. The team also performs minor surgical procedures.

“This new facility will allow us to expand our medical care for the Gainesville community, providing our patients with a medical home and using the latest technology to emphasize comprehensive medical care as part of the UF&Shands system,” said R. Whit Curry Jr., M.D., chairman of the department of community health and family medicine. “We are also excited that it will allow us to optimally train more family physicians for Florida and our community, as well as provide a clinical site for educating a variety of health professional students.” **P**

Family Medicine in Macclenny

UF recently opened its first primary care center in Macclenny, Fla. The UF Crossroads Family Medicine Center opened Aug. 22. Kenneth Obijaja, M.D., M.P.H., will serve as the medical director and provider for the practice. “We welcome members of the Macclenny community to our growing UF family,” said Nipa Shah, M.D., chair of the department of community health and family medicine at the College of Medicine-Jacksonville.

A new health home for veterans

Malcom Randall VA Medical Center dedicates new bed tower



On Sept. 24, the Malcom Randall Veterans Affairs Medical Center dedicated a new 245,000-square-foot bed tower in front of its existing facility on Archer Road. College of Medicine Dean Michael Good spoke at the event.

By Heather Frebe

Four decades after opening its doors, the Malcom Randall Veterans Affairs Medical Center entered a new era Sept. 24 with the dedication of a new 245,000-square-foot bed tower located in front of the original hospital on Archer Road.

“Approximately 44 years ago Malcom Randall, first director of this facility, stood somewhere close to where we are sitting today to dedicate a new medical center,” said Thomas Cappello, M.P.H., director of the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System. “Today’s dedication continues his dream of providing veterans with the very finest health care available.”

The upgraded building was necessary to continuing to provide veterans with the best care possible and to meet growing needs, such as an expanded emergency area and additional inpatient space for psychiatric services.

“Throughout its history, this facility has expanded to meet the needs of our growing veteran population,” Cappello said. “What originally started as a VA hospital in 1967

has grown into two medical centers and 11 outpatient clinics. Last year we cared for over 130,000 veterans throughout our system, and of those, approximately 110,000 received some care here at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center.”

The 245,000-square-foot, five-story bed tower will provide 226 private rooms and space for veterans and their family members. The first floor houses specialty clinics including ophthalmology, urology and the ear/nose/throat clinic. The new laboratory area also is housed on the first floor and provides a large waiting room and additional blood and specimen draw areas. An expanded emergency room accommodates 10 patients.

“It is really an honor to be here today to dedicate this great new building,” said U.S.

Rep Cliff Stearns, who provided the keynote address at the dedication ceremony. “We are here because of our veterans and their work. This building provides resources for our veterans to have the hope and medical treatment they need.

“This new patient bed tower represents this nation’s commitment to meeting our obligations to those who served our nation, and I am proud of my support for this project.”

In addition to enhancing health care for veterans directly, the new space also provides a modern space to train the next generation of physicians and health care professionals. About 500 UF resident physicians rotate through the VA each year, as do students in the UF colleges of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy.

“The University of Florida has been a key partner with the VA in terms of our academics in the Health Science Center in Gainesville,” said Michael Good, M.D., dean of the College of Medicine. “We have a long, strong and rich tradition of working together to educate the next generation of health care professionals.” **P**

Speech-language pathologist Jessica Obermeyer leads a discussion during an aphasia book club meeting.

RECOVERY, by the book

SPEECH- LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS START BOOK CLUB FOR PEOPLE WITH APHASIA



PHOTO BY MARIA BELEN FARIAS

By Laura Mize

UF speech-language pathologist Jessica Obermeyer, M.S., CCC-SLP, works full time helping patients who are striving to recover or retain the ability to speak as they battle conditions such as cancer, brain injury and stroke.

But many people, she said, need help beyond formal therapy, especially those who suffer from the language disability aphasia.

“Because of the nature of aphasia, a lot of the people who are discharged still have some language deficits,” said Obermeyer, a speech-language pathologist in the College of Public Health and Health Professions.

Aphasia, which is a common result of stroke, inhibits a person’s ability to comprehend language and use it to express him or herself.

Severity of the condition varies widely. In the most extreme cases, aphasia renders a person unable to speak or write coherently, or to understand what he or she reads or hears. Patients with less severe cases struggle with these activities to varying degrees.

“We wanted to create something where people with aphasia could come, whether they’re our patients or not ... and be with other people with aphasia, but also be participating in something fun and social,” she said.

Obermeyer and Shands Rehab Hospital clinical speech-language pathologist Kerry Lenius, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, founded a book

club for patients with aphasia several months ago. The club held its first meeting in July, and still meets every other week at Shands Rehab Center at Magnolia Parke. About five aphasia patients, some accompanied by caregivers, attend the group to discuss *A Dog’s Life*, by Peter Mayle. The book is a fictional memoir written from the perspective of a dog living in France.

Participant Wilmer White, a dog lover, found plenty to relate to in the group’s first discussion. But expressing his thoughts didn’t come as easily. A stroke left White with aphasia and another condition, called apraxia, which inhibits his ability to speak, even when he knows what he wants to say. The two conditions often go hand-in-hand.

White worked with Lenius to relearn basic communication skills while he was a patient at Shands Rehab Hospital after his stroke. Now, he sees Obermeyer for continued speech therapy.

“One is a ...” White said before a long pause, trying to remember the breed of one of his four pet dogs.

After several failed attempts, he motioned

with his hands to demonstrate the dogs’ size. Obermeyer started guessing dog breeds to jog his memory.

“Chi-hua-hua,” White finally uttered slowly. “One little ... poodle, one of those, and three chihuahuas.”

These are the kinds of interactions Obermeyer says can help people with aphasia feel better about their communication skills and remain active in life.

Several months into the group, Obermeyer said the participants, including White, “are much more willing to initiate conversation and share their stories.”

“He’s making comments and answering questions and just attempting to talk a lot more, not without difficulty, but he is making that attempt,” she said.

Without formal testing, she can’t tell if participants’ reading skills have changed. And some people remain active in formal therapy, making it impossible to measure exactly how much of a difference the book club is making.

But Obermeyer said she knows it’s helping them.

“It’s all about functional interaction and socialization, getting these people to interact more in their environment,” she said.

“Because, I’m sure you can imagine, having a communication disorder really affects how well we engage with other people and with our environment.” **P**

Welcome to the new Sun Terrace

By Meredith Rutland

When first-year College of Medicine student Brittany Sorensen takes a much-needed coffee break from her classes, she goes to the Sun Terrace and its new Starbucks, where she can relax in a sunny, cheery spot.

Health Science Center students, faculty and staff celebrated the Sun Terrace's recent transformation Sept. 1 with a dedication ceremony complete with free samples from the various eateries.

"What we've made here is a destination, a place people want to be," said Ed Poppell, vice president for business affairs and economic development.

As part of the project, a full-service Starbucks, Panda Express and Salad Creations were added. The Communicore Building lobby and seven lecture halls on the building's first floor, which seat between 80 to 180 people, also were renovated. **P**



PHOTO BY JESSE S. JONES

Faculty, staff, students and guests celebrated the completion of the renovations to the Sun Terrace and Communicore lecture halls Sept. 1.



A new look

College of Medicine and College of Dentistry lobbies to get modern update

By Meredith Rutland

More physical improvements to UF's College of Dentistry and College of Medicine are on their way.

Both colleges are undergoing renovations to create a fresh new look in their lobbies and a more comfortable place for patients to wait for appointments.

Dennis Hines, associate director of medical and health administration for the Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Affairs, said the projects started at the beginning of September and will be finished sometime after February 2012.

In the meantime, he said, the

construction shouldn't bother patients or pedestrians too much. Every consideration has been made to make sure people can walk safely through the area, such as keeping construction mainly to nighttime hours and renovating one side of the lobby while leaving the other side free for foot traffic.

The College of Medicine's new lobby between the Founders Gallery and the Sun Terrace will create an identifiable entrance

with a glass front. The inside will have wood paneling and new furniture that will create a high-end look for students, faculty and staff to enjoy.

The College of Dentistry's new lobby will also have an identifiable front entrance. The inside, with its comfortable chairs and large waiting foyer, will have a modern, welcoming feel. There will be large, easy-to-read signs that will direct patients around the building, and the ceilings will be designed to help patients easily find their way. There will also be personal seating areas so patients can have a sense of privacy while they wait,

and several facets of the lobby will be rearranged to make it easier for patients, such as moving the check-in and check-out counters closer to one another.

Both lobbies will have energy-efficient lighting installed.

The project is being managed by UF's Facilities, Planning and Construction department. Oelrich Construction Inc. is doing renovations to the College of Dentistry, and Charles Perry Partners Inc. is doing construction at the College of Medicine.

"It's just going to be a fresh, new look for both lobbies," Hines said. **P**

At a Glance:
Pa Houa Vang

Favorite ingredient:
Vanilla

Specialty:
Bread pudding

Baking tip:
Always grease the pan

Why she loves baking:
It settles her mind and she loves working with her hands



PHOTO BY MARIA BELEN FARIAS

Sweet hire

Pastry chef brings new treats to Shands at UF

By Allyson Fox

Pa Houa Vang has vivid memories of growing up and baking cookies with her mom and her sisters. It all started when she was 5, and she would sneak tastes of batter when her mom was not looking.

Though she loved baking, Vang didn't take a formal cooking class until her last year of high school.

"I was good at it," she said.

From there, she pursued a culinary career, attending Johnson & Wales University for bakery and pastry arts.

Now, Vang is the first pastry chef Shands at UF has ever hired, and her specialty brings changes to the cafeteria.

"We're starting to do everything from scratch," Vang said.

She knows baking from scratch is a big task, but the result is better taste.

"You put more love into it," she said.

Prior to coming to Shands, she worked in restaurants, so Vang is used to starting with just flour and sugar. The difference at Shands is she knows exactly how much she needs to bake each day. There are no

surprises.

A pastry chef's schedule doesn't follow the traditional 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. workday. Vang's workday starts at about 5:30 a.m.

When she arrives people have already started baking biscuits. The key is to stay a day ahead, so she preps desserts for the next day. Some days are hectic, and others are more laid back. One day she may make about 100 baked goods, but other days she bakes 300 to 400.

But Vang doesn't do it alone. She has a team to help her bake treats like banana muffins, cookies, cupcakes and cakes for patients.

"It's a team atmosphere," she said. "Everyone is willing to help."

Her favorite baking ingredient: vanilla.

And when the treats come out of the oven, Vang works on the presentation.

"Baking is such an art form," she said. "You have to make it look good too."

But Vang is excited to take on the challenge.

"It's been a challenging transition," she said. "I think it's really something amazing."

Scott Erker, a catering manager at Shands, said Vang's pastries are exceptional.

"It looks good and tastes awesome," Erker said. "She's not limited."

The big thing in the Shands cafeteria is quality, Erker added. Shands is moving toward using more natural ingredients, and there will be changes to the cafeteria coming in January, including more food options.

"It's going to be an upgrade in food and atmosphere," Erker said.

And Vang believes desserts are an important part of every meal.

"It's the last thing you eat. It's the one thing you always remember," she said. "It's the best way to end a meal, whether it's with a savory dessert or a sweet one." **P**

What a patient sees

PHHP alumnus helps students see through the eyes of patients

By Jill Pease

The idea for the medical student documentary film project came to Dan Shapiro, Ph.D., when he was editing video from a family vacation.

“As I was editing I saw a lot of little things that I hadn’t noticed while I was living the trip,” he told the audience at the College of Public Health and Health Professions’ Distinguished Scholar Lecture Series talk Sept. 14.

Shapiro, a 1994 graduate of UF’s clinical and health psychology doctoral program, is the Arnold P. Gold Foundation Professor of Medical Humanism and the chair of the department of humanities at Penn State University’s College of Medicine.

While on faculty at the University of Arizona, Shapiro developed the film project “Video Slam” to help medical students capture

those aspects of the patient experience that they might not see in clinic encounters. Students record dozens of hours of footage of individual patients and their families at home, at clinical appointments and throughout the course of their daily lives. Students are asked to pay particular attention to issues such as disease impact, treatment adherence, financial impact and innovative adaptations by patients or caregivers. The resulting 7- to 10-minute films are moving portrayals of the lives of children and adults with cystic fibrosis, neuromuscular disease, AIDS, Type 1 diabetes and cancer, to name a few. Shapiro has since brought the Video Slam program to Penn State, where 70 students annually apply for the opportunity to produce a patient documentary. Their films are in use in medical schools around the country, including UF’s College of Medicine.

As a cancer survivor Shapiro is in a unique position to help physicians in training understand the patient experience. His memoir *Mom’s Marijuana*, which details his personal cancer experience, is required reading at many medical schools. His second book, *Delivering*



DAN SHAPIRO, PH.D.

Doctor Amelia, focuses on Shapiro’s psychological treatment of a physician. His writings about the patient experience and physician-patient relationships have appeared in *The New York Times*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Salon.com, and *Academic Medicine*, and have been featured on “The Today Show.” Shapiro is also a regular weekly consultant to the television shows “Grey’s Anatomy” and “Private Practice.”

For more information on Video Slam and to view the medical students’ documentaries, visit pennstatehershey.org/web/humanities/home/projects/medicalstudentfilms. P

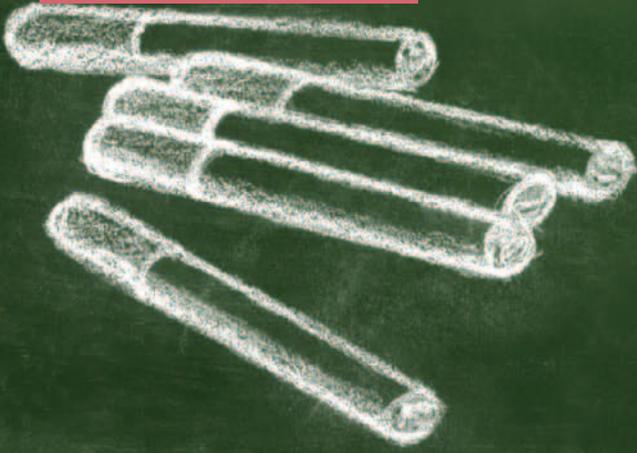
Keeping seniors active

Shands program will offer services at new Senior Recreation Center



PHOTO BY JESSE S. JONES

City, county and state officials joined ElderCare of Alachua County and Shands HealthCare leaders on Sept. 22 at a ribbon-cutting event for the new City of Gainesville/Alachua County Senior Recreation Center. This new recreation and activity center for seniors is the first of its kind in the community. ElderCare of Alachua County, a service of Shands HealthCare, will provide diverse programming for seniors at the new center. The 17,000-square-foot recreation and activity center, located at 5701 NW 34th Street in Northside Park in Gainesville, was completed this summer and features nine classrooms, a teaching kitchen, a large multipurpose room available for rent, a courtyard and patio, a fitness room and a computer lab. While the entire center will be open and operational Jan. 2, some programs have already begun. The calendar is available at alachuacountyactiveseniors.net. P



AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Health professions students to educate middle school students about tobacco risks

By Allyson Fox

About 820 health professions students came together for the UF Area Health Education Centers 14th annual ATTAC-IT program Sept. 1 to learn about their roles in tobacco prevention and to receive training on how to effectively promote the anti-tobacco message.

Later in the year, the health professions students will attend middle schools and teach students about the harmful effects of tobacco.

Participants in this program were not limited to one sect of the health field. Students from the colleges of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health and Health Professions and Health and Human Performance participated in the training program.

"Students from all health care professions deal with the effects of tobacco use," said Venita Sposetti, D.M.D., associate dean for education in the College of Dentistry. "When you think of tobacco, no one health care profession owns it."

The program was split into two parts: a lecture portion and a small-group discussion.

During the lecture portion, students listened to experts discuss why tobacco is addictive, how to talk to a smoker about quitting and recent trends in tobacco.

This year's keynote speaker was Mark Gold, M.D., a UF



PHOTO BY MARIA BELEN FARIAS

Elizabeth Warren, a pharmacy student, talks to her teammates, medical student Jason Ludlow and nursing student Larissa Moon, during the AHEC ATTAC-IT program in September.

distinguished alumni professor and chair of psychiatry in the College of Medicine.

Gold discussed some of the dangers of smoking and why tobacco is so addictive.

The shocking truth: Cigarettes kill more Americans than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, fires, illegal drugs and murders combined, he said.

"It's like injecting a drug without a needle," Gold said. "You know it's bad for you, but still, you're stuck with it."

He left the students with this: "Prevention is the only treatment that is absolutely safe and effective without risk."

During the second part of the program, students broke into small groups to discuss how they would execute an anti-smoking program for middle school students.

"It's good background information about learning how to tell patients why to stop smoking," said Sergio Jacas, a student in the College of Dentistry.

Although Jacas knew prior to the training that tobacco isn't good for you, he said he learned new teaching methods that will help the message stick.

Buddy Valenti, a student in the College of Medicine, said he believes it is important to note different approaches to communicating tobacco information.

"Most of us know smoking is not good for you, but the biggest thing is communicating that well," Valenti said.

The program gave students the opportunity to work with people who have different educational backgrounds.

Jennifer Pillsbury, a student in the College of Pharmacy, said, "It's nice to interact with people whom I would potentially be working with later on."

Pillsbury said she thinks teaching middle school students the things she learned will not only help them, but also will be an important learning and growing experience for her.

"The main thing is this program has been around for over a decade. We should be proud of it," Sposetti said. "We have a group of people who are so different but continue to work together to pull off a successful program." **P**



Winter's tale

UF veterinarian plays key role in real-life care of "star" dolphin

By Sarah Carey

Anyone paying attention to entertainment news these days knows about the new movie "Dolphin Tale," which opened Sept. 23 in theaters and tells the true story about Winter, a dolphin who survived entanglement in a buoy line and has been outfitted with a prosthetic tail.

What's perhaps less commonly known is that the character of Winter's veterinarian, played by Harry Connick Jr., is partially based on UF's Mike Walsh, D.V.M.



MIKE WALSH, D.V.M.

Walsh, associate director of the College of Veterinary Medicine's Aquatic Animal Health program, also performs veterinary services at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, where Winter has resided since being rescued in 2005.

Winter lost her tail because the blood supply to it had been cut off when she was tangled in the buoy line, Walsh said. Aquarium staff contacted Walsh, then director of veterinary services at Sea World in Orlando, to ask his advice about how to best obtain blood samples from the impaired dolphin. Blood samples are typically taken from the tail.

"I first had contact with Winter when she was a baby. Because she was missing her tail, there was confusion as to how to get blood samples from her on a regular basis to keep track of what was happening with her," Walsh said. "The probability of infection was high, so we needed to monitor blood on a regular basis."

A year or so later, Walsh was serving as the park's veterinarian. Many companies and individuals had approached the park about creating some type of prosthetic tail, but deciding what the safest approach was and whether a prosthetic was a feasible option took some time, Walsh said. Eventually the park wound up working with a company called Hanger Prosthetics and Orthotics.

"They had the best idea for achieving the goal without hurting Winter's skin or causing other problems," Walsh said.

Five years later, Winter is doing well, Walsh said. Walsh credits much of Winter's success to Janine Cianciolo,

D.V.M., who nursed the dolphin after her injury, and other members of the aquarium's team. However, he cautions that managing her tail is an ongoing, lifetime issue.

"We still have a great need to continue to make progress and to make things even better over the long run," he said, adding that as Winter grows, the needs of her tail change also.

Winter's prosthetic fin is "like a sock made for a certain sized shoe," Walsh said.

"Her tail has been modified many times by the Hanger group team, and we have gone through numerous prototypes as a result," he said. "Each time we introduce a new tail, we have to go through a readaptation process, depending on how well it fits and the degree of propulsion she gets from it.

"The challenge with Winter is coming up with solutions to a problem that no one has dealt with before. This is where the College of Veterinary Medicine excels."

When filming took place for the movie, Walsh spent a day at the park with Harry Connick Jr., talking to him about various medical issues experienced by animals there, including showing the star how some stranded sea turtles were being treated.

Carolina Medina, D.V.M., chief of the college's acupuncture and rehabilitation service, and Nicole Stacy, D.V.M., a clinical pathologist, have also played a role in Winter's care. **P**



By April Frawley Birdwell

Found in translation

UF's Clinical and Translational Science Institute is forging unusual partnerships that could change health care

The premise sounds simple. For \$100 — and a test tube full of spit — the website promises to look into the genetic crystal ball and reveal your chances for developing diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and a slew of other conditions. Even baldness. Or what a child's IQ might be, revealed in one quick cheek swab

It's an enticing prospect and entirely believable in a world where DNA is a household name. It's also misleading.

"These websites are way beyond where the science is right now," says Debbie Treise, Ph.D., a researcher in the UF College of Journalism and Communications. "People get these results back, and they don't understand them. The research shows people are making horrible decisions based on these tests. Whether or not they get married, whether or not they have children."

As part of a Clinical and Translational Science Institute project to understand more about companies offering direct-to-consumer genetic testing, Treise and fellow communications researcher Norman Lewis, Ph.D., teamed with experts in the College of Medicine. They conducted a content analysis study, reviewing the sites to find out everything from what sorts of promises they made to customers and whether they offered genetic counseling to

how they conducted their tests and whether the industry was regulated. Their findings reveal a landscape that falls woefully short of disclosing the information required for consumers to fully understand the validity and utility of the tests being sold.

"It turned out (these sites) failed utterly," says Stephen Hsu, M.D., Ph.D., the R. Glenn Davis associate professor of clinical and translational medicine, and a molecular geneticist who worked on the project. "In some sense, you cannot escape your genetics, but how your genes get expressed depends on so many other factors. At each turn, we are discovering increasing levels of complexity that are independent of the DNA sequence and clearly argue against strict genetic determinism. Card-carrying molecular geneticists are appalled by (online services offering direct-to-consumer genetic profiling) based on a very simplistic understanding of the role of genetic variation in predicting



PHOTO BY MARIA BELEN FARIAS

College of Journalism and Communications researchers Norman Lewis and Debbie Treise collaborated on a project with molecular geneticist Dr. Stephen Hsu and other Clinical and Translational Science Institute researchers. Their research may play a role in whether the FDA regulates direct-to-consumer genetics testing companies.

with any certainty complex human traits such as IQ or risk for heart disease. Yet it's a huge cottage industry and completely unregulated."

For patients, the extent to which they encounter information about these companies online or in the news is likely to affect whether and how they consider genetic testing options in a clinical or research setting — which, for example, might help determine the safest and most effective medication or dosage for a patient.

The study, which is in press for publication in the journal *New Genetics & Society*, is just one of the ways Treise and colleagues in the College of Journalism and Communications are using their expertise in mass media to make a difference in health care and science as part of the CTSI. The partnership may seem unusual — its experts have vastly different areas of expertise and methodologies — but Hsu says it is these differences that make the collaboration potentially revolutionary. It also makes UF unique. Of the 60 institutions who have received the Clinical and Translational Science Award in the country, UF is the only one with a communications college on board at the program level.

Like epidemiology, communications research is not the type of science that can be conducted in a laboratory, there are no white coats and beakers, but it is just as crucial when it comes to bringing scientific discoveries to the people who need them, says Hsu. And that is what the CTSI is all about.

"Translating what we learn from research into actual health advances is a long and complicated process. At nearly every turn, that process is affected by our ability to inform and motivate others — whether colleagues, patients, policymakers or communities," says David Nelson, M.D., director of the UF CTSI. "Collaborating with

health communication researchers presents an enormous opportunity to better understand and navigate these real-world dynamics."

Making the connection

Until the CTSI was established in 2008, finding collaborators in the Health Science Center wasn't always easy for Treise and other communications researchers. In some ways, it still isn't, though they are making progress through the CTSI.

Part of the challenge has been getting physicians and health scientists to understand not only how communications research can enhance their own studies, but also that the College of Journalism and Communications has researchers.

"Typically what happens is they say we need a press release or public service announcement, without thinking about how we should have been involved on the research part of it," Treise says. "There is so much research that goes on to craft the appropriate message."

Ronald Shorr, M.D., found Treise when he was searching for information on health communication at UF prior to joining the university and the Malcom Randall Veterans Affairs Medical Center in 2007. In the Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center, Shorr and colleagues Rebecca J. Beyth, M.D. M.Sc., and Connie Uphold, Ph.D., A.R.N.P., are focused on finding new ways to improve patient care, particularly helping people become more informed consumers of health care. To them, teaming with Treise was a logical step — and has already yielded results.



PHOTO BY MARIA BELEN FARIAS

Staff members of the CTSI Biorepository Rosia Kizza, Antony Higgs, Melissa Rawley-Payne, Dhane Stomp and Eric Elmadani (from left) stand in front of new robotic freezers that were recently installed.

The CTSI Biorepository

For many investigators, obtaining and studying human tissue samples are critical steps on the path to discovery. But procuring and maintaining those samples can be a challenge in terms of time, space and resources.

The UF Clinical and Translational Science Institute Biorepository was established to serve as an institutional resource, giving researchers a place to obtain high quality specimens that can be used in studies that will lead to better care for patients, says Melissa Rawley-Payne, M.A., assistant director of the Biorepository.

Housed in the College of Medicine department of pathology, the new Biorepository is equipped with the latest technology, including a robotic freezer that stores samples at a chilly 80 degrees below zero, Rawley-Payne said.

"It is a new technology that really improves the quality of tissue," Rawley-Payne says. "The advantage of the robotic system is it is completely enclosed, you don't have to open it at all."

The CTSI Biorepository works closely with the UF CRU Processing Laboratory and the Molecular Pathology & Immunology Core. But as staff members have worked to get the Biorepository running, they did take on one other more unusual partner as well — students from UF's Warrington College of Business Administration. Business students from the college's GatorNest program helped the Biorepository by completing a market analysis. — April Frawley Birdwell

"The future of research is going to depend on these unique combinations of points of view. Team science," says Shorr, director of GRECC. "The fact is that the traditional science has only taken us so far, and study after study has shown people are not receiving optimal care. All the lab work in the world is not going to solve that problem."

Working together

Shorr has a term for Treise and her fellow communications researchers. He calls them "the basic scientists of persuasion." And he Beyth and Uphold hope that incorporating the strategies and skills of advertising and mass media into their own work will help change how patients approach health care.

"A lot of people know much more from *Consumer Reports* about what widescreen TV they should get versus what medicine they should be on," Beyth says. "They need to be informed consumers."

The team's first project with Treise involved ways to educate patients with the cardiovascular disease atrial fibrillation about the benefits of taking the drug warfarin, which can reduce stroke risk by two-thirds. But first they needed to know why patients weren't taking it already and how to best reach out to them and their doctors. The end product was a video they plan to test soon.

At a time when patients are exposed to messages from all directions and doctors have less time to communicate one-on-one, coming up with new ways to provide accurate information in an understandable way is more important than ever, Beyth says.

"One of the skills mass communication professionals have to have is translation — that is, we've learned how to gather information from one group, which often is speaking in a 'language' only that group's members can fully understand, and then to translate that information into language tailored for the specific audiences with whom we're communicating," Treise says.

As part of her doctoral work, College of Journalism and Communications student Yukari Takata, M.P.H., is working with the CTSI Biorepository to study the informed consent process. The Biorepository collects tissue samples to be used in research, but patients must give consent to be part of a study first. Takata is working with the CTSI to enhance that process and help patients more fully and easily understand their consent and make an informed decision.

"My research looks at how patients make decisions and how they are influenced, especially with informed consent for research and procedures," Takata says. "We know if someone is wearing a lab coat they are seen as more credible and people are more likely to say 'OK.' That can be a problem for decision-making, because they might say 'OK doc, do whatever you want.'"

As part of her project, Takata aims to look at how user reviews and recommendations can affect this process. Her research has shown that an online expert review outweighs the review of an average person, like the kind you see when you are shopping on Amazon. But when the number of user opinions start to mount, climbing between 100 and 300, the scale tips.

"Taking that 'collective intelligence' concept into the informed consent process, here is this long document, what happens if we have different users discover and share parts they thought were important?" Takata says. "We are trying to see the positive side of user influence. Even if a lot of people highlight something, will people pay more attention and make a better, more informed decision?"



About the CTSI

The UF Clinical and Translational Science Institute helps investigators translate scientific discoveries into medical practice. Now in its third year, the institute supports 140 faculty and staff across 10 programs managing CTSI services, resources and projects.

Research services

The CTSI offers more than 40 services addressing consultation, informatics, laboratory, clinical, recruitment and other needs, including:

- Research project consultants who help researchers navigate the research process and identify resources, tools and collaborators
- REDCap, a free data management platform that enables secure web-based data entry, storage and retrieval
- IRB, regulatory and other consults
- Research coordinator services
- Study design and data analysis
- A centralized biorepository as well as biobehavioral, biomedical mass spectrometry, genotyping and metabolomics core labs
- A network of 13 clinical research units — including the UF Clinical Research Center and the Shands Jacksonville Clinical Research Unit — managing clinical trials across numerous specialties and populations.

Funding

Each year the CTSI awards funding to support pilot projects. The CTSI expects to release its next request for applications this fall.

Professional development

The CTSI supports the training and advancement of clinical and basic science investigators. Numerous opportunities are available for faculty, fellows, Ph.D. students and research personnel. CTSI trainees and scholars represent all six colleges of the UF Health Science Center.

How to access CTSI resources?

- Call the CTSI's research project consultants at 352-273-8700 or email info@ctsi.ufl.edu, and they'll connect you to the resources that best meet your needs.
- Visit the CTSI website at www.ctsi.ufl.edu



PHOTO BY MARIA BELEN FARIAS

College of Journalism and Communications doctoral student Yukari Takata talks with adviser Debbie Treise.

Takata, who studies persuasion theories, has been working with CTSI researchers to enhance the informed consent process.

Opportunities, opportunities

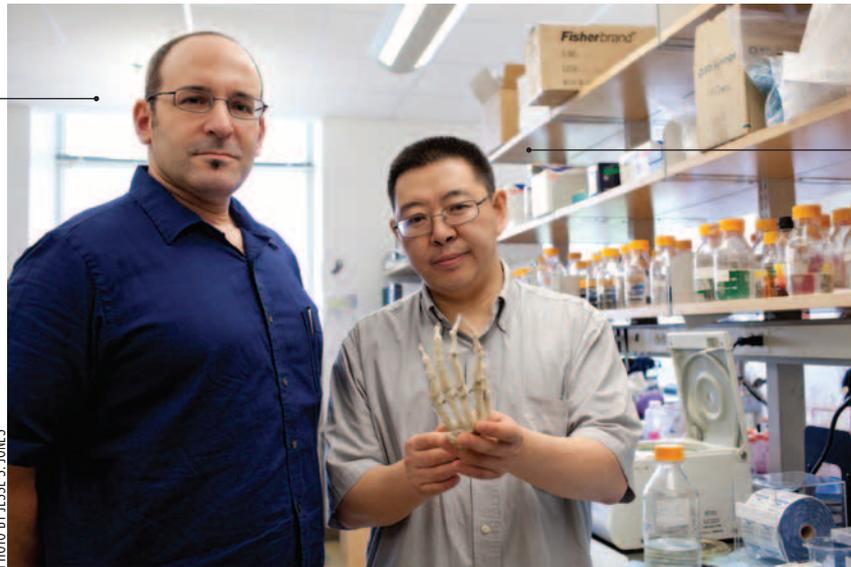
And there are far more prospects for collaboration between communications and the health sciences, Treise says. The college has the country's only public interest communications program, which health science researchers could tap into. Also, Treise says the addition of newsroom and strategic communications laboratories at the College of Journalism and Communications will offer a place for new communications research concepts to be tested.

"There are all kinds of people here who are interested in the communications functions of health and science," she says.

Treise's collaborator Hsu, sees collaborations between disciplines like communications and medicine as being beyond multidisciplinary, thinking of them instead as "transdisciplinary."

"We have to be more holistic and see how different and seemingly unrelated disciplines can come together to create new disciplines with new capabilities. We need all these skillsets. That kind of perspective and paradigm is being explored now but somewhat cautiously," he says. "It is at the interface between science and society. For me it has brought me into domains of creative activity I otherwise would not have had if Debbie had not invited me to join one of her collaborate research efforts." 

MARTIN COHN, PH.D.



ZHENGUI ZHENG, PH.D.

PHOTO BY JESSE S. JONES

What your fingers say about you

Ring finger proportions tied to sex hormones in embryo, may offer health insights

By John Pastor

UF biologists have found a reason why men's ring fingers are generally longer than their index fingers — and why the reverse usually holds true for women.

The finding could help medical professionals understand the origin of behavior and disease, which may be useful for customizing treatments or assessing risks in context with specific medical conditions.

Writing in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, developmental biologists Martin Cohn, Ph.D., and Zhengui Zheng, Ph.D., of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the department of molecular genetics and microbiology at the UF College of Medicine, show that male and female digit proportions are determined by the balance of sex hormones during early embryonic development. Differences in how these hormones activate receptors in males and females affect the growth of specific digits.

The discovery provides a genetic explanation for a raft of studies that link finger proportions with traits ranging from sperm counts, aggression, musical ability, sexual orientation and sports prowess to health problems such as autism, depression, heart attack and breast cancer.

It has long been suspected that the digit ratio is influenced by sex hormones, but until now direct experimental evidence was lacking.

“The discovery that growth of the developing digits is controlled directly by androgen and estrogen receptor activity confirms that finger proportions are a lifelong signature of our early hormonal milieu,” Cohn said. “In addition to understanding the basis of one of the more bizarre differences between the sexes, it’s exciting to think that our fingers can tell us something about the signals that we were exposed to during a short period of our time in the womb. There is growing evidence that a number of adult diseases have fetal origins. With the new data, we’ve shown that that the digit ratio reflects one’s prenatal androgen and estrogen activity, and that could have some explanatory power.”

Cohn and Zheng, also members of the UF Genetics Institute, found that the developing digits of male and female mouse embryos are packed with receptors for sex hormones. By following the prenatal development of the limb buds of mice, which have a digit length ratio similar to humans, the scientists controlled the gene signaling effects of androgen — also known as testosterone — and estrogen.

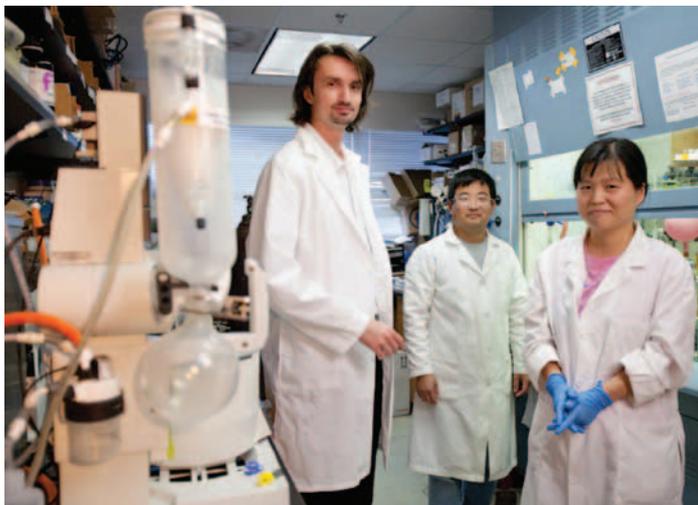
Essentially, more androgen equated to a proportionally longer fourth digit. More estrogen resulted in a feminized appearance. The study uncovered how these hormonal signals govern the rate at which skeletal precursor cells divide, and showed that different finger bones have different levels of sensitivity to androgen and estrogen.

Since Roman times, people have associated the hand’s fourth digit with the wearing of rings. In many cultures, a proportionally longer ring finger in men has been taken as a sign of fertility.

“I’ve been struggling to understand this trait since 1998,” said John T. Manning, Ph.D., a professor at Swansea University in the United Kingdom and author of the seminal book *Digit Ratio*. “When I read this study, I thought, thank goodness, we’ve attracted the attention of a developmental biologist with all the sophisticated techniques of molecular genetics and biology.” **P**

Toxin, take two

Medicinal chemists modify sea bacteria byproduct for use as potential cancer drug



Hendrik Luesch, Qi-Yin Chen and Yanxia Liu, researchers with the UF College of Pharmacy, found how a byproduct of cyanobacteria can be modified for potential use as a cancer therapy.

By John Pastor

UF researchers have modified a toxic chemical produced by tiny marine microbes and successfully deployed it against laboratory models of colon cancer.

Writing in *ACS Medicinal Chemistry Letters*, UF medicinal chemists described how they took a generally lethal byproduct of marine cyanobacteria and made it more specifically toxic — to cancer cells.

When the scientists gave low doses of the compound to mice with a form of colon cancer, they found that it inhibited tumor growth without the overall poisonous effect of the natural product. Even at relatively high doses, the agent was effective and safe.

“Sometimes nature needs a helping human hand to further optimize these products of evolution to treat human diseases,” said Hendrik Luesch, Ph.D., an associate professor of medicinal chemistry in the College of Pharmacy. “Based on what we learned about apratoxins’ mechanism of action, we knew this compound class had great potential for use in anticancer therapies; however, the natural product itself is too toxic to become a therapeutic.”

The researchers synthesized several apratoxin compounds that were similar to the original except for slight differences in composition, designing one that proved to be extremely potent against the cancer cells in cultures and in mice, but without the overwhelming toxicity.

Apratoxin is produced by cyanobacteria, microbes that have evolved toxins to fend off predators and cope with harsh conditions in a marine environment. Collectively known as blue-green algae — a misnomer because the single-celled organisms are not algae or members of the plant kingdom — a wide variety of cyanobacteria species exists in both sea and freshwater environments. **P**



Sea smarts

Scientists studying mollusks discover there is more than one way to make a brain

By John Pastor

Seemingly simple animals such as the snail and squid have ransacked the genetic toolkit over the last half billion years to find different ways to build complex brains, nervous systems and shells, according to an international team of researchers, including a neuroscientist with the UF Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience.

Using genomics and computational approaches, the scientists reconstructed the evolutionary history of the entire phylum Mollusca, which includes more than 100,000 living species, ranging from giant squid to microscopic marine worm-like creatures.

One of the surprising outcomes of the study, recently published online in *Nature*, suggests that the formation of a complex brain in mollusks has independently occurred at least four times during the course of evolution — a finding that may prove useful to regenerative medicine scientists trying to develop new ways to help people with degenerative brain diseases.

“Nature did many experiments for us over the past 500 million years, using different molecular tools to build complex brains by independently centralizing smaller neuronal structures,” said Leonid L. Moroz, Ph.D., a member of the department of neuroscience with the UF College of Medicine. “The octopus, for example, is very intelligent. It can learn by watching, and it has one of the most complicated brains of any animal without a backbone. And it evolved completely independently from us, using different genes, gene regulators and, in part, different neuronal signaling molecules.”

By looking at the genomic data, the scientists were able to better understand the relationships between aplousophorans, which are worm-like creatures; gastropods, which include slugs and snails; cephalopods, such as octopuses and squids; and a variety of other shell-producing creatures. **P**



PHOTO BY JESSE S. JONES

Understanding innate immunity

UF researchers have identified two key steps required to activate the body's innate immune system, its first line of defense against infection. Researchers, including **Matthew Delano**, M.D., (left) and **Lyle Moldawer**, Ph.D., say understanding the chemical signals that help direct immunity may lead to improved therapies for patients with suppressed immune systems, who need extra help fighting infections. In an article published in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*, the scientists describe how B cells, a specific type of white blood cell, release a chemical called CXCL10 to trigger inflammation and the deployment of cells designed to fight any pathogens or foreign matter. In a separate study published in the *Journal of Immunology*, researchers identified a protein called stromal cell-derived factor 1, which directs the release of neutrophils from the bone marrow to the site of infection. Neutrophils will attack any pathogen and are one of the body's first weapons used to fight infection. — *Laura Mize*



PHOTO BY JESSE S. JONES

Predicting DUI

Sipping the occasional glass of wine may seem relatively harmless, and could even be beneficial to the drinker's health. But for parents, even moderate drinking can result in one unintended consequence: an increased risk their children will drive under the influence as adults. Writing in the journal *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, UF researchers found that about 6 percent of adolescents whose parents drank even sporadically reported driving under the influence at age 21, compared with just 2 percent of those whose parents did not imbibe. "The main idea is that parents' alcohol use has an effect on their kids' behavior," said **Mildred Maldonado-Molina**, Ph.D., an associate professor of health outcomes and policy with the UF College of Medicine and the lead author of the paper. "It's important for parents to know that their behavior has an effect not only at that developmental age when their kids are adolescents, but also on their future behavior as young adults." — *April Frawley Birdwell*



PHOTO BY MARIA BELEN FARIAS

Dr. Brian Hoh and Dr. Michael Waters discuss their findings as they walk down the hallway of the neurosurgery clinic.

Stopping strokes

Aggressive medical therapy could help prevent stroke

By Czerne M. Reid

To prevent a common type of stroke, intensive medical therapy could be better by itself than in combination with surgery that props open affected arteries. But it remains to be seen whether the apparent advantage will prove true over the long term.

The findings, from a national clinical trial conducted by UF researchers and colleagues, was published online in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in September.

Against expectations, the short-term risk of stroke and related death was twice as high in some cases for patients whose diseased arteries were widened via balloon angioplasty and stent insertion, compared with patients who received medical therapy alone. Although the 30-day risk of stroke for the stenting patients is concerning, long-term results could be more favorable, the researchers said.

"Five years from now, who will be doing better — the patients who are being medically managed, or those who received a stent?" said study co-author Michael F. Waters, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Shands at UF Stroke Program, who along with Brian L. Hoh, M.D., the William Merz associate professor of neurological surgery in the College of Medicine, led the UF portion of the trial.

Patients with the type of stroke known as symptomatic intracranial atherosclerosis do not respond well to existing treatments. One-quarter of those patients have another stroke within 12 months.

The study will have a substantial impact on clinical practice and research, the researchers said, because it is the first randomized stroke trial to pit stenting against nonsurgical treatment for symptomatic intracranial atherosclerosis, a type of stroke caused by artery blockage in the brain. Early results clearly show that intensive medical management is key to improving health, the researchers said.

Every 40 seconds, someone in the U.S. has a stroke. Almost 800,000 people a year have a new or recurring stroke, according to the American Heart Association. **P**

Welcome to Jacksonville

New vice president, Medicine dean named for UF's Jacksonville campus

By John Pastor

After an extensive national search, Daniel R. Wilson, M.D., Ph.D., has been named vice president of the UF Health Science Center-Jacksonville and dean of the UF College of Medicine-Jacksonville.

Wilson, chairman of psychiatry at Creighton University for the past 11 years, was chosen for his leadership, international reputation and sustained academic excellence, announced David S. Guzick, M.D., Ph.D., UF senior vice president for health affairs and president of the UF&Shands Health System. He will begin Feb. 1, replacing Robert C. Nuss, M.D., who is retiring.

"Dr. Wilson is highly skilled in patient care, research and teaching," Guzick said. "Combined with his extensive leadership and management experience, which ranges from department chair to medical director of a large hospital system, he will serve the Jacksonville campus well and continue the tradition of excellence that Dr. Nuss established during an incredible 40-year career of medical leadership and clinical excellence."

Wilson, also a professor of psychiatry, neurology and anthropology at Creighton University, has a strong research track record, with more than 50 grants as principal investigator, including two current National Institutes of Health awards. While his primary focus is forensic psychiatry, Wilson's research agenda ranges from pharmaceutical development to treatment of mood, psychosis and posttraumatic stress disorders.

Prior to his appointments at Creighton, Wilson served as a professor of psychiatry at the University of Cincinnati, where he directed the University Institute for Medicine & Law.

Wilson received his undergraduate degree in anthropology from Yale, his medical degree from the University of Iowa and a diploma in mental health leadership from Case Western Reserve University. He completed residency in psychiatry as a joint appointee of Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts General & McLean Hospitals. He subsequently earned a Ph.D. in biological anthropology at Queens' College, Cambridge University in Cambridge, England.



DANIEL R. WILSON

Wilson has been named a Sleyster Scholar of the American Medical Association, a Falk Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, a Rotary Fellow for Cambridge University, Life Fellow of the International Society of Police Surgeons, and Overseas Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute. He is currently president of the American Neuropsychiatric Association and a councilor of the World Psychiatric Association.

Wilson will follow Nuss, who has been dean of the Jacksonville campus since 2002. A professor of obstetrics and gynecology, with certification in the specialty of gynecologic oncology. During his tenure, he worked with hospital leaders to develop a mature and financially stable academic health center at UF&Shands Jacksonville. In addition, he created a vibrant practice plan with more than 600,000 outpatient visits and more than 34,000 inpatient admissions annually. In the past five years, externally funded research has grown by 200 percent at the Jacksonville campus, which now enjoys full partnership in UF's Clinical and Translational Science Institute.

"I have been privileged to enjoy a strong working relationship with Dr. Bob Nuss during his 10 years as dean. I look forward to having the same with Dr. Dan Wilson," said James R. Burkhart, president and chief executive officer of Shands Jacksonville. "We are all excited about the experience and background that he brings to UF&Shands and look forward to the same vital partnership that has allowed us to excel over the past 10 years."

David J. Vukich, chair of the search committee and senior associate dean of hospital affairs at Jacksonville, said Wilson was exceptional among a field that contained dozens of highly qualified candidates.

"Dr. Wilson was the standout, bringing a great combination of insight, experience and maturity. It will be a pleasure working with him," Vukich said. "This campus has gained so much under Dr. Nuss' strong leadership that we will never be able to thank him adequately. Many of us have benefited personally by his mentoring and teaching, and it is indeed a great legacy that he leaves. Dr. Wilson is up to the task, however." **P**



PHOTO BY JESSE S. JONES

Chair appointed for pediatrics

An international expert on pediatric endocrinology, developmental biology and the prevention of brain injury in preterm infants has been tapped to lead the College of Medicine department of pediatrics and serve as the physician leader for Shands Hospital for Children. **Scott A. Rivkees, M.D.**, currently at the Yale University School of Medicine, will take on his new role Jan. 3. Rivkees, whose research has been continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health for 25 years, is also a leading clinician whose work has led to new treatment guidelines for children with thyroid disease and Graves' disease. "It is an honor to join the University of Florida, and I hope to build on the tremendous strengths of the department of pediatrics and the university," Rivkees said. "Working together, we will continue the department of pediatrics' evolution into a destination site of fantastic patient care, a center of discovery for the benefit of children, and a hub for training the next generation of pediatricians and physician-scholars." At UF&Shands Rivkees aims to expand the number and breadth of centers of excellence that improve health care for all of Florida's children. Rivkees succeeds Richard Bucciarelli, M.D., who has served as chair of the department of pediatrics since 2008.

COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

INDRANEEL BHATTACHARYYA,

D.M.D., M.S., an associate professor of oral and maxillofacial diagnostic sciences, was recently appointed as coordinator of international education programs. Bhattacharyya will work closely with faculty and students to coordinate the college's international efforts, including outreach programs in other countries that involve students and faculty.



Indraneel Bhattacharyya

FRANK CATALANOTTO,

D.M.D., a professor and chair of community dentistry and behavioral science, joined Oral Health America's Vice President Liz Rogers on a trip to Alaska to observe the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's Dental Health Aide Therapist program.



Frank Catalanotto

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation invited a group of dentists to visit the consortium's dental therapist program to create a better understanding of the training and practice of these new oral health professionals.

OZLEM YILMAZ, D.D.S.,

Ph.D., has been selected as a 2011-2012 fellow for Drexel University's Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine program. Yilmaz, an associate professor of periodontology and oral biology, is one of 54 women faculty from across the United States who were selected for the competitive program. ELAM prepares senior women faculty for leadership positions at academic health centers.



Ozlem Yilmaz

JACKSONVILLE

SANDY BARATA, an

administrative director for the department of pediatrics, recently received a Health and Safety Award at the Ebony and Ivory Gala. The award, presented by the Women of Color Cultural Foundation, honored Barata's dedication and work in health care to improve the quality of life in Jacksonville. Barata was among more than 1,000 people nominated for the awards.



Sandy Barata

LINDA EDWARDS, M.D.,

an associate professor and associate chair in the department of medicine, was named the Karl B. Hanson Sr., M.D., professor of internal medicine. Edwards is the second faculty member to hold the endowed professorship, created in 1997 by Hanson's family. The fund supports a position in internal medicine on the Jacksonville campus.



Linda Edwards

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

BRITTANY HENSLEY,

Au.D., a doctoral student in the department of speech, language and hearing sciences, received Starkey Laboratories' 2011 William F. Austin Scholarship, a \$10,000 award designed to recognize strong candidates pursuing clinical, teaching and research careers in audiology. She is mentored by James Hall III, Ph.D., a professor in the department.



Brittany Hensley

Honor roll

In August, the UF Chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha, the national medical honor society, recently held its annual fall election, completing the selection process. Eleven students were selected during their junior year: **Adam Bennett, Paige Comstock, Christopher Favilla, Candace Glenn, Christopher Matthews, Adam Mecca, James Melotek, Saad Mir, Sean Timpane, Lauren Van Eldik and Ana Velez-Hurtado.** Twelve students in the fourth-year class were selected for membership: **Patrick Buchanan, Chelsea Connor, Aaran Drake, Suraj Kabadi, Tessa Landa, Christa Matrone, Christopher McAdams, Melissa Parsons, Joshua Solano, Kathryn Stinson, Houtan Taba and Joshua Vickers.** Matthews and Velez-Hurtado are serving as co-presidents.

Robert Hatch M.D., M.P.H., and David Feller, M.D., both of the department of community health and family medicine, were elected as faculty members. **Andres Acosta, M.D., Ph.D., and John Massini, M.D.,** both of the department of medicine, and **Samantha Winterrowd, M.D.,** of the department of obstetrics and gynecology, were elected as resident members.

AOA is the only national medical honor society, and election to this organization is considered to be one of the highest academic honors a student can receive. UF established the beta chapter of AOA in 1960.



UNDER THE orange AMPERSAND

UF&Shands names new chief quality officer, chief communications officer



RANDY HARMATZ

Randy Harmatz, M.B.A., formerly the vice president of the quality program at University Hospitals Case Medical Center in Cleveland, has been named the chief quality officer for UF&Shands, the University of

Florida Academic Health Center.

As part of her role, she will oversee the Sebastian Ferrero Office of Clinical Quality and Patient Safety at UF&Shands. The quality and safety programs implemented through this new office, named in honor of 3-year-old Sebastian, will benefit all patients, not just children.

“Ms. Harmatz is a results-oriented health care leader with a proven track record for facilitating change and sustaining improvement,” said David S. Guzick, M.D., Ph.D., senior vice president for health affairs and president of the UF&Shands Health System. “The addition of Ms. Harmatz to our team is an extremely important step. Job 1 for UF&Shands is to ensure safe, high-quality care for our patients. She will galvanize our efforts to establish a culture of quality and safety that extends to every member of our academic health center community.”

Since 2004, Harmatz has been responsible for all aspects of the quality program, including clinical performance improvement, for the 947-bed UH CMC. During her tenure, the institution’s ranking rose from 74th to ninth in the University HealthSystem Consortium, an alliance of 114 academic medical centers and 255 of their affiliated hospitals.

At UF&Shands, Harmatz will develop and implement the vision and strategy for academic and clinical programs in quality and patient safety, working collaboratively with Shands HealthCare Chief Executive Officer Timothy Goldfarb, College of Medicine Dean Michael Good, M.D., Shands at UF Chief Medical Officer Timothy Flynn, M.D., and UF Physicians Chief Executive Officer/Chief Medical Officer Marvin Dewar, M.D.

“We are extremely proud of the commitment and great strides UF&Shands has made, under Dr. Guzick’s leadership, to ensure safe, high-quality care for all patients,” said Horst Ferrero, founder of the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation. **P**



MELANIE FRIDL ROSS

Anationally recognized medical writer and public relations practitioner has been named chief communications officer for UF&Shands, the University of Florida Academic Health Center.

Melanie Fridl Ross, M.S.J., E.L.S., formerly the director of the UF Health Science Center Office of News & Communications, will oversee integrated strategic marketing, communications, public relations and public affairs efforts for UF&Shands across the two academic health center campuses in Gainesville and Jacksonville, six health-related colleges, various UF research centers and institutes,

Shands at UF, Shands Jacksonville and UF faculty practices.

“Ms. Ross is extremely well-qualified to serve as chief communications officer,” said David S. Guzick, M.D., Ph.D., UF senior vice president for health affairs and president of the UF&Shands Health System. “For the past two years, she has increased integration and cooperation in communications across the academic health center, and she has helped with the strategy and promotion of a number of efforts, beginning with ‘Forward Together,’ the strategic plan we announced in May 2010 to more closely align the university and the health system.”

Ross’ duties include oversight of internal and external communications programs, media relations, news and publications, public information, donor and alumni communications, issues management and crisis communications, public affairs, communications-related web strategy efforts, and a variety of other outreach activities.

She joined UF in 1992 after working as a reporter for The Tampa Tribune. She holds a master’s degree from Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism and is a board-certified editor in the life sciences. She is president of the American Medical Writers Association.



All about INTERNSHIPS

Pharmacy students can find summer internship opportunities through professional newsletters and national pharmacy organizations. The UF College of Pharmacy is also positioned to offer a wide range of research opportunities to its student-pharmacists. "The availability of research experiences for Pharm.D. students is mandated in the college's accreditation standards and is required criteria for graduating students seeking academic honors," said William Millard, Ph.D., an associate executive dean at the college. "We are especially proud when students like Ryan are successful in earning a research or internship experience in a highly competitive national program like Johns Hopkins."

Ryan Haumschild (center) shares his summer internship experience. Haumschild was one of only 15 students selected for a competitive pharmacy internship at Johns Hopkins.

summer AT JOHNS HOPKINS

By Ryan Haumschild

Third-year pharmacy student Ryan Haumschild successfully competed for a coveted summer internship opportunity at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. Selected through an application and interview process, he was one of 15 pharmacy students selected for a summer pharmacy internship from schools throughout the country. He encourages his UF classmates to seek competitive internships with a report from his experience:

The pharmacy internship program at The Johns Hopkins Hospital was very structured in that we had clinical pharmacy discussion forums every Monday and journal club every Wednesday. We also had several opportunities to have lunch with the director of pharmacy, who had just won the 2011 Harvey A. K. Whitney award from the American Society of Health System Pharmacy. It was interesting learning what the clinical pharmacists did on a daily basis in therapeutic practice areas such as critical care, internal medicine, psychiatry, emergency medicine, oncology and cardiology. As

pharmacy students, we were permitted to shadow the clinical pharmacists during rounds and see them provide pharmacotherapy interventions to improve health outcomes.

Johns Hopkins has one of the largest residency programs in the nation, comprising 23 pharmacy residents. After our first week, the department of pharmacy held a resident-pharmacy student "Meet and Greet," where we had an opportunity to speak with the pharmacy residents and find out how to become a competitive applicant for a residency program. This also gave us time to network with residents and set up on-call shadowing experiences.

My main area of interest is pharmacy administration. Before attending pharmacy school at UF, I received my Master of Business Administration degree. At Johns Hopkins, I wanted to combine my clinical education here at Florida with my background in business. The director of ambulatory care within the department of pharmacy was assigned to be my preceptor. He assigned projects that challenged

me not only from a business perspective, but from a clinical one as well. The capstone project I worked on the most at Johns Hopkins was setting up pharmacy services for a hepatitis C clinic. It was my responsibility to work with the practitioners from the departments of medicine and pharmacy to see how they would be treating the patients. After acquiring all the details about the clinic and how care would be delivered, I prepared a financial analysis that would determine profitability at various capture rates. Based upon my analysis and with the help of the department of pharmacy staff, Johns Hopkins decided to move forward with the pharmacy services initiative. This will include a clinical pharmacist to consult with patients and monitor for drug interactions, while servicing the clinic with medications.

This internship experience left a lasting effect on me as a University of Florida student, and I feel I was able to make an impact on The Johns Hopkins Hospital to improve their patient-centered care. **P**

IRA GESSNER, M.D.



PHOTO BY JESSE JONES

A leader with heart

Pediatric cardiologist Ira Gessner steps down from admissions duties

By April Frawley Birdwell

It's just a tube at first, but it beats. It loops, and ventricles emerge. It grows, and the left and right atrium separate into two chambers. A series of intricate steps, and there is a heart, tiny and perfect.

As an undergraduate enrolled in an embryology class at the University of Iowa, Ira Gessner, M.D., was captivated by the human heart and how it develops.

"I thought it a fascinating subject. Embryology is the underpinning of pediatric cardiology," said Gessner, a UF professor emeritus of pediatrics. "It is hard to understand congenital heart defects if you don't understand how the heart develops and what can go wrong."

This early experience eventually led Gessner to a career in pediatric cardiology, a field just emerging when he began his pediatrics residency at UF in 1960.

"When I started there was very little that could be done for a lot of patients, no therapeutic heart catheterizations, few surgeries," he said. "It was very much starting from scratch."

After a fellowship in pediatric cardiology, including a research fellowship, in Sweden, Gessner joined the UF College of Medicine faculty in 1965. The field was new, with few pediatric cardiologists in the U.S. Gessner jumped in, eventually leading national committees, studying new treatment methods, publishing papers, editing books on birth defects and co-authoring books on pediatric cardiology and congenital heart defects. By 1972 he was named division chief of pediatric cardiology, the first of many leadership roles that he served.

"His breed is rare because he really trained and practiced pediatric cardiology at a time when we did not have all the tools of imaging, like echocardiograms and MRI, that we use to take care of children," said F. Jay Fricker, M.D. "He really became the true clinician and teacher that could figure things out without a lot of ancillary testing. That is his legacy. As other imaging and advances occurred, he always maintained the importance of the clinical exam."

Much has changed in pediatric cardiology since Gessner came to UF. Due to progress in treatment, surgery and technology, children survive many congenital heart defects that were once considered untreatable. Despite the advances in imaging and diagnostic tools, Gessner still takes every opportunity to teach students and residents the art of "auscultation," using their ears and a stethoscope to make a diagnosis, said Maureen Novak, M.D., director of medical education for the College of Medicine.

But he has had an impact on more College of Medicine students than just those who take his courses or see him with patients. As chair of the College of Medicine Medical Selection Committee for 15 years, Gessner played a role in the lives of nearly 2,000 of the college's graduates. He recently stepped down from that role and was honored at an August reception.

"Every class has a personality. It is interesting," Gessner said. "But the end result is the same. Our students are way above average nationally, in terms of their ability and outcomes. I am proud to be a part of that."

Today, at 80, Gessner still sees patients and still teaches classes in both physical diagnosis and physiology. As for what comes next? He's not sure. He plans to continue his practice and teaching, but eventually hopes to do more writing—he's good at it—and visit France. The country holds a special place in his heart. He was a flight surgeon for the U.S. Air Force there between his internship and pediatrics residency at UF. It's where he met his wife.

"We were married there," he said. "She was working for the military, living in Paris. I love Paris, I still do. I would move back there today if it was practical." 

SEE YA!

Members of the UF&Shands team pause for a photo during the American Heart Association Alachua County Heart Walk in September.



PHOTOS BY MARIA BELEN FARIAS



Dr. Rowan Milner, Dr. Huisheng Xie, Victoria Ford, Dr. Carolina Medina and Dr. Glen Hoffsis (from left) cut the ribbon to dedicate the new Victoria I. Ford Acupuncture and Rehabilitation Center at UF's Small Animal Hospital.



A U.S. Navy Seahawk helicopter landed at the Shands Critical Care Center Sept. 2 for a training exercise.

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