



# PROMOTING HEALTHY AGING

How TU is making a difference

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS  
2016 DEAN'S PROGRESS REPORT



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“Our College  
priorities remain  
focused on  
student success.”

### *Greetings from the Office of the Dean*

As dean of the College of Health Professions, I have the opportunity to work with our dynamic faculty and an excellent cadre of students who are building lifelong careers that will improve the quality of health and life throughout their communities and across the nation and world. Without a doubt our faculty are working to engage our students in real-world internships, clinical experiences, undergraduate research and service outreach.

This progress report focuses on several of the College's initiatives related to wellness across the lifespan with a focus on older adults and healthy aging. From our classrooms and clinical sites and to the Wellness Center at our Institute for Well-Being, we are working to ensure expert assessment, holistic frameworks for understanding each person and care that spans the health and wellness continuum. Our students are challenged to confront diverse realities of wellness and individual competence.

We have had an exciting year recruiting strong faculty who will contribute to our mission of promoting well-being in a diverse world through the education and success of our students. Our faculty continues to build stronger interprofessional educational models that further contribute to our alumnis' success as well as contribute to the wealth of knowledge across our disciplines. I hope you will take a look at our new faculty expertise and their many faculty publications to see the exciting areas of inquiry and pedagogy.

During the past year, the College has established and endowed a scholarship fund to support our students in greatest need. With your support, the DreamMaker Student Scholarship Fund is a lasting resource that we will grow so more of our students can realize a career in the health professions.

*Thank you for helping us achieve success and for your continued support!*

*Lisa Ann Plowfield, PhD, RN*

# BY THE NUMBERS 2016-17

**1** The only Occupational Therapy education program in Maryland



**3<sup>rd</sup>** Largest undergraduate nursing program in Maryland

**5** **CENTERS HOUSED AT THE INSTITUTE FOR WELL-BEING:**

- Hearing & Balance Center
- Hussman Center for Adults with Autism
- Occupational Therapy Center
- Speech & Language Center
- Wellness Center

**6** **DEPARTMENTS:**

- Audiology, speech-language pathology & deaf studies
- Health science
- Interprofessional health studies
- Kinesiology
- Nursing
- Occupational therapy & occupational science

**11** Undergraduate Majors

**35** Number of programs offered at the Hussman Center for Adults with Autism in the Institute for Well-Being

**97** Years of health care education at Towson University

**123** Full-Time Faculty

**1,008** Students in practica or internships at the Institute for Well-Being

**1,276** Degrees awarded in 2015-16 school year 

 **3,991**

Clients served by the Institute for Well-Being's programs and services

**4,741**

Enrolled students in College of Health Professions, making it the largest TU college by enrolled students

**22,045** 

Total client visits for programs, services and/or health screenings at the Institute for Well-Being

**441,528**

Grant dollars from the NIH awarded to Dr. Devon Dobrosielski for his work, "Examining the effects of exercise on vascular function in obstructive sleep apnea."

## POINTS OF PRIDE

**100 percent of all majors offer internship opportunities.**

**The Institute for Well-Being is the only dedicated facility for inter-professional clinical education in Maryland.**

**The speech-language pathology program has a continuous Praxis pass rate of 100 percent since 2006.**

**Establishment of the endowed DreamMaker Student Scholarship Fund to support students in greatest need.**

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# How to Make Good Health LAST Past Retirement

*TU's Dr. Nick Knuth investigates the role that physical activity has on the aging trajectory*

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In the spring of 2014, Nick Knuth, PhD, began the Longitudinal Aging Study at Towson University (LAST).

The aim of the study is to look at the role that physical activity has on the aging trajectory, especially on functional outcomes like gait speed, grip strength and balance.

“The study was prompted, in part, by the advent of a new triaxial accelerometer,” said Knuth. “Previously the best way to measure these things was a questionnaire, but the accelerometer measures in 3D and the technology has developed quite a bit in the last 10 years.”

Sixty-four subjects have enrolled and gone through the initial visit. The age range is 36-93 with an average age of 69. Enrollment is open and rolling; the first participants are coming back for their third visit this year.

“Having a good range of ages is important because aging research has shown that a lot of the trends you see in older adults actually start to occur in their 50s or 60s—long before you see a problem,” noted Knuth.

They come back yearly to measure longitudinal change. A typical visit begins with blood drawn by Sarah Caro from TU's nursing department. Participants then fill out

a questionnaire on health history/sleep quality/general health, have their resting metabolic rate and blood flow dynamics measured, complete a dexa scan for body composition and bone density and are fitted with an accelerometer.

After that, they do a five-minute walking task on a treadmill hooked up to a metabolic cart to look at walking economy, then participants wear the accelerometer for the next seven days. At the end of a week, they return for function tests (gait speed, grip strength, chair stands, balance) and a measure of fitness, 400m over a 20m course, which is a well-established method of measurement in older adults.

TU students have been involved in assessments since the start of the study. They have helped schedule subjects, helped “immensely” with data collection, analysis, and some data entry. Kristen Lindsay, Daniel Akkerman, Ariel Ross, Paige Duvall, Blake Williams, Anna Kuegler and Zoey Weaver have all presented at conferences as undergraduates.

Knuth came to TU and LAST with a strong background in aging research. He did a one-year post-doc with the wide-ranging Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging with the National Institute of Aging (NIA).

Before his time at the NIA, his work was in metabolism and energy balance. Knuth did a study on obesity and weight loss

with “The Biggest Loser” contestants during a post-doc at the National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK).

When he arrived at TU, he was struck by the population of the Wellness Center and applied for a Faculty Development Grant and Dean's Strategic Project funding. Later, he applied for a School of Emerging Technology (SET) grant to buy a new walking economy device that measures walking economy on the ground. Previous studies have shown that older people do walk slower but haven't measured the energy expended in maintaining speed while walking. This new device measures walking speed on the ground since treadmills affect individuals' gaits and preferred walking speed.

Ideally, Knuth would like to run the study as long as possible and continues to make improvements as they can—buying the walking device as well as taking advantage of a balance platform at the IWB that avoids the ceiling effect of ability tests, as it is dynamic and allows for varying scores of capability.

While it's too early to make recommendations based on the data he's collected, Knuth ventured a few thoughts on what the future might bring.

“We hope to see some differences or impact on degree of physical activity; hopefully, in five to 10 years we'll see a significant role or impact of physical activity and how that affects [older adults'] aging trajectory,” he said. “You could get it to the clinical sense by perhaps saying, ‘if you have this basic measure [resting metabolic rate, etc.] taken, and that if you're above or below a certain threshold, you may have a greater risk of disease or mortality.’ You could potentially identify at-risk individuals based on [measured] values.”



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## Healthy Aging at The Wellness Center

*Faculty, staff and students work together to support active lifestyles*

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Getting older presents different challenges than those faced at earlier stages of life, but exercise, good nutrition, regular health screenings and social interaction all help promote healthy aging.

Individuals can find all of those things at the Wellness Center (WC) at Towson University's Institute for Well-Being.

According to Michael Pavelik, director of the Wellness Center, health challenges can begin as early as 50 years old—even if they are not immediately discernible—and the Wellness Center looks for ways to augment this through fitness.

### **Fitness and research.**

Towson University College of Health Professions professor Nick Knuth is starting his third year of the Longitudinal Aging Study at Towson University (LAST), housed at the Wellness Center. Begun in the spring of 2014, the study aims to look at the role that physical activity has on the aging trajectory in terms of functional outcomes like gait speed, grip strength and balance.

Once a year, participants come in, have blood drawn, fill out a questionnaire, are fitted with an accelerometer on their wrist and then complete a walking economy test. They return a week later to complete a series of fitness and function tests.

Pavelik said feedback from the LAST study has shown that “the seniors at the Wellness Center are better off physically than their counterparts across the area.”

Through LAST, his staff has seen balance as the first skill to go, starting in individuals' 50s and walking speed starts declining in their 60s.

“The key benefit is the dual university/research component available to clients of WC right where they work out,” stressed Pavelik.

Bill and Diane Carroll, Wellness Center clients and LAST study participants, agree.

“I think definitely that the exercises here have helped slow the issues that come with aging,” said Diane.

Bill began coming to the center back in the late 1990s after a cardiac event. Diane joined him shortly after.

“I said to Diane, ‘This is a very friendly place, and you could use some exercise, so why don't you come with me?’” he recalls with a chuckle.

He is in his early 80s and still gardens and does work around the house for their three daughters, including replacing



railings and pressure treating one daughter's deck in Virginia. He and Diane also keep up with their seven grandchildren.

Both work with a group of kinesiology students who break into teams to do assessments and come up with an exercise plan.

“We've had some really good [staff] people,” said Bill. “They watch what we do closely like Brian. I was doing pushups and I had my back bent. He came over and put his hand on my back. They don't let us do anything they think we shouldn't do. Michael's like a doctor sometimes. Sometimes I think he is a doctor. Diane's had problems with her back, and he can tell you

all about what you've hurt and how. Tiffany is a pusher. I took one of her classes, and a lot of those exercises I do now are from that program [three years ago]. Tiffany's very good.”

The Carrolls also enjoy the social aspect of the Wellness Center. Several times during their interview, friends interrupted to tease and joke with them.

“There's a group of about six of us who go to Panera after we leave here,” said Bill. “[Diane and I] split a bagel and have a cup of coffee, socialize and then go home. We do it Monday, Wednesday and Friday.”

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# New Faculty

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## **Tara Blackshear, EdD**

Dr. Blackshear joins the Department of Kinesiology as an assistant professor. She attended Florida A&M University for her B.S. and M.Ed. in physical education, and the University of North Carolina Greensboro for her Ed.D. in exercise and sports science. Dr. Blackshear's current interests are focused on fathers' involvement in family structure and its impact on health and physical activity of African-American girls.



## **Tammy Burt, PhD**

Dr. Burt is a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology. Her B.A. is from Anderson University in physical education; her M.Ed. is from Bowling Green State University with a focus on special education and certification in Deaf education. She received her Ph.D. from the Ohio State University in the area of adapted physical education. Her specialty is teaching children and adults with disabilities how to ride bikes using the iCan Shine program.



## **Jacob Bustad, PhD**

Dr. Bustad joins the Department of Kinesiology as an assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology. His Ph.D. from the University of Maryland focused on urban sociology research addressing public access to recreation. Dr. Bustad received a B.A. from Buena Vista University in English and mass communication, and M.A. from the University of Kansas in American studies.



## **Alaina Davis, PhD**

Dr. Alaina Davis is a clinical associate professor in the Department of Audiology, Speech-Language Pathology, and Deaf Studies. She received her Ph.D. from Howard University in 2014. Her research interests are in assessment of cognitive-communicative impairments, sports-related head injury, and cognitive styles in culturally and linguistically diverse adult populations.



## **Jodi Dinkin, MS, PA-C**

Ms. Jodi Dinkin, originally from Colorado, joins the physician assistant program as a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Interprofessional Health Studies. A graduate of the University of Colorado for her bachelor's and master's degrees, Ms. Dinkin is certified as a physician assistant from the National Commission for Certification of Physician Assistants.



## **Kathleen "Kate" Eglseder, ScD, OTR/L**

Dr. Kathleen "Kate" Eglseder was appointed as an assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy & Occupational Science. Dr. Eglseder earned a M.S. in occupational therapy from Dominican College, a M.S. in education from McDaniel College, and a Sc.D. in occupational science from Towson University in 2015. She currently serves as the president of the Maryland Occupational Therapy Association.



## **Audrey Grant, MS, OTR/L**

Ms. Grant joins the Department of Occupational Therapy & Occupational Science as a visiting instructor. She earned her associates degree in general studies from Frederick Community College (2004), Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Hood College (2006), and Masters of Science in occupational therapy from Towson University (2010). Her areas of interest include adult physical dysfunction, including orthopedic, neurological, and oncological settings.



## **Andrew Jones, MS**

Mr. Andrew Jones joins the Department of Interprofessional Health Studies as a clinical assistant professor in the health care management and gerontology programs. Mr. Jones spent 30 years working in administrative roles in organizations serving older adults in the community recently serving as a vice president at Edenwald Retirement Community.



## **Gina Kaplanis, MS, OTR/L**

Ms. Gina Kaplanis, MS, OTR/L, joins the Department of Occupational Therapy & Occupational Science as a clinical assistant professor. She completed a Bachelor of Science from the College of Charleston and a Master of Science in occupational therapy from Towson University. She is currently a doctoral student with a research interest in the use of natural environments to engage and promote social participation.



## **Hee Jun Kim, PhD, MSN, RN**

Dr. Hee Jun Kim is an assistant professor in the Department of Nursing. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from Seoul National University. She practiced nursing in medical intensive care unit and relocated to Dubai, where she established a new clinic in collaboration with a local company. She completed her Ph.D. in nursing at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. Her research interests include racial/ethnic differences in pain and health disparities.



**Briana Snyder, PhD(c), RN-BC, CNE**

Ms. Briana Snyder joins the Department of Nursing as an assistant professor. She is a board-certified psychiatric and mental health nurse and a certified nurse educator. She earned bachelor's degrees in history at the University of North Carolina and in nursing at Stevenson University. She completed her master's degree in nursing education at Towson University in 2012. Ms. Snyder is completing her doctoral studies at the University of Missouri. Her research interests include improving nursing care of trauma survivors.



**Nirmal Srinivasan, PhD**

Dr. Nirmal Kumar Srinivasan, assistant professor in the Department of Audiology, Speech-Language Pathology and Deaf Studies, received his BE in electronics and communication engineering from the University of Madras, India, and both his M.S. in electrical engineering and Ph.D. in speech-language pathology and audiology from the University of Nebraska. His research interests include central auditory processing disorders (CAPD), aging, hearing loss, speech perception, reverberation, and psychoacoustics.



**Yu-Kuei Daniel Sun, PhD**

Dr. Daniel Sun joins the Department of Kinesiology as a lecturer for the Sport Management program. He earned his BA in sociology from National Taiwan University, his MA in health and sports studies from the University of Iowa, and his PhD in American studies from the University of Iowa.



**Regina Twigg, DNP, MS, RN**

Dr. Regina Twigg joins the Department of Nursing as a visiting instructor. She earned her BSN, MS, and DNP all at the University of Maryland. She previously served as the Director of the Clinical Simulation Laboratory at University of Maryland, Baltimore. She maintains her practice as a bedside clinician at the RA Cowley Shock Trauma Center on the Trauma Acute Medical Surgical Unit. Dr. Twigg's interests include patient safety and nurse impact on new technology in the hospital setting.



**Noe Turcios, MA, BS, AAS**

Mr. Noe Turcios joins the Department of Audiology, Speech-Language Pathology and Deaf Studies as a lecturer in the Deaf Studies program. He earned an AAS in laboratory science technology from National Technical Institute for the Deaf, his BS in biotechnology and molecular science from Rochester Institute of Technology, and his MA in sign language education from Gallaudet University. His interests include linguistics, language acquisition, and education



**Suzie Woodward, MS, PA-C**

Ms. Susan Woodward, clinical assistant professor, joins the Department of Interprofessional Health Studies in the physician assistant program. She received her bachelor's degree in behavioral neuroscience from Connecticut College, and her master's degree in physician assistant studies from Northeastern University. Ms. Woodward continues her clinical work in family medicine and urgent care.

# Faculty Publications

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## TU Kinesiology Student Receives Matthew Kerner Undergraduate Student Investigator Award

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Exercise science graduate Ariel Ross '16 received the Matthew Kerner Undergraduate Student Investigator Award at the mid-Atlantic regional chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine Conference. The conference is for undergraduates to showcase excellence in research. Ross was nominated for the award with four undergraduates from Penn State, Delaware and Slippery Rock and won due to her direct and important involvement with the research process. Her faculty advisor, kinesiology professor Nick Knuth, Ph.D., says “I think part of what made her the winner was that she was heavily involved with the research process. It was clear from most of the other students that they just plugged into a larger research study that would have happened whether or not they were a part of it. With Ariel, her enthusiasm and ownership in the study was clear during her presentation and, I think, went a long way towards her winning the award.”

Ross's study, entitled “Energy Cost during Standardized Walking Associated with Diminished Fitness in Older Adults,” is a part of the goal of the Longitudinal Aging Study at Towson University to follow individuals who are attempting to become healthy aging adults. In the study, according to Knuth, “Participants will complete a battery of questionnaires and tests at yearly intervals that are used to define their current state of health (e.g., sleep quality index, short-form 12-question health survey), physical activity and functional status.” The study is ongoing and has 47 participants to date; follow up with the participants occurs regularly to assess their progress.



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## Dean's Distinguished Alumni Award

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Each year the Dean's Distinguished Alumni Award is presented to a distinguished College of Health Professions alumnus/a. Nursing alumna Jeannie Seifarth, PhD, RN, PMHCNS-BC, was honored with the award on Florence Nightingale's birthday. This was a fitting date as Jeannie, a nurse with more than 40 years of service, embodies Nightingale's values of dedication, service, an inquisitive and scientific mind, and a humble spirit. Dr. Seifarth earned her bachelor's degree from TU in nursing and went on to obtain her master's and doctoral degrees with a focus in psychiatric mental health nursing. She has made significant contributions as a psychiatric nurse therapist, a clinical nurse specialist, and a faculty member in the greater Baltimore region.



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The DreamMaker Student Scholarship Fund in the College of Health Professions is dedicated to helping Towson University students address the increasing costs of higher education and seeks to offset some of the financial stress caused by student loans. The fund has been endowed and will award its first scholarship in the 2016-17 school year. The College is seeking donors who want to change the lives of TU's CHP students.

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## The Institute For Well-Being

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The Institute for Well-Being (IWB) gives our students high quality clinical experience, while deepening Towson University's connection with its surrounding community. The IWB houses five centers that provide services – Hearing and Balance Center, Hussman Center for Adults with Autism, Occupational Therapy Center, Speech & Language Center, and the Wellness Center. This past year the IWB served 3,981 persons who came for 22,045 visits. In addition, 1,008 students were involved in practicum, internship, or observation experiences at the IWB last year.

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## The Occupational Therapy Center at the IWB

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The Occupational Therapy Center (OTC) provides services for infants through senior citizens. OT students work with students from other health care professions, which allows them to provide better care for participants and teaches students how to interact and work beside other health care professionals. In addition to working with each other, students also work with the patients' families, who are fully involved in the center's programs. They observe services, participate, and are provided with information to help facilitate learning at home.

The OTC provides many high-quality programs. The Pre-Driving Program is for teens and young adults who need practice with pre-driving readiness skills. Teeny Tigers is a once-weekly therapeutic program for children ages 18 months to three years. In this interactive program, the speech-language pathology and



OT students co-treat the participants to strengthen their skills and to teach parents how to reinforce their new skills at home. The sensory-motor groups provide individualized programs to improve and integrate sensory and motor skills in their participants. The life skills groups are for teens and adults, and involve teaching skills like planning meals, shopping, budgeting, cooking and outings into the community. For those who have musculo-skeletal or nervous system disorders who want to play an instrument, the OTC's Musician Services help those whose disorders impact their ability to play. These services enable our students to practice their skills in a real world environment while also being supervised.

**To learn more about the centers and services our students and faculty provide at the IWB visit [towson.edu/iwb](http://towson.edu/iwb).**

# College of Health Professions



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