

GAMECOCK DPT

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM

Fall 2024



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Forever To Thee - Alumni Connections



Give online today!

SOUTH CAROLINA *celebrating* 20 *years* PHYSICAL THERAPY

Dear Gamecock Physical Therapy Alumni and Friends,

As the current Director of the University of South Carolina's Physical Therapy Program, I am thrilled to connect with you through our first-ever e-magazine, marking a significant milestone in our program's history.

This year, we proudly celebrate **20 years of accreditation** by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), a testament to our commitment to excellence in physical therapy education.

Since stepping into this role in 2021, I have had the privilege of building upon the strong foundation laid by my predecessors, Dr. Bruce McClenaghan and Dr. Stacy Fritz, who both contributed immensely to shaping the program's identity and successes. I am deeply honored to have both Bruce and Stacy provide their insights and reflections in this inaugural e-magazine.

Our program has always thrived on the strength of its close-knit community. This rich tradition of personalized education, combined with a dedication to student success, has allowed us to cultivate highly skilled, compassionate professionals who make a meaningful impact in the field of physical therapy.

We would love your support by pledging \$20 for 20 years of accreditation by [clicking this link](#). As we look ahead to the future, I invite you to stay engaged with us, celebrate our achievements, and continue being part of the legacy that defines the Gamecock Physical Therapy Program.



**Here's to many more years of excellence, innovation,
and service to our profession.**

**Warm regards,
Shana Harrington, PT, PhD
Director, USC Physical Therapy Program**

REFLECTIONS ON 20 YEARS FROM THE FOUNDING DIRECTOR

The Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at the University of South Carolina was truly unique in its evidence-based design, small class sizes, and research focus when it was implemented 20 years ago.

Housed within the Department of Exercise Science in the School of Public Health, the program's unique administrative structure brought both benefits and challenges during its early years. Many questioned the wisdom of such a structure, but to me, having degrees in both exercise science and physical therapy, it made common sense. Both professions share foundational content, yet each maintains a distinct professional focus, allowing for respectful collaboration and the clear delineation of their individual expertise.

In the program's early development, we faced numerous challenges, particularly in aligning the goals of various stakeholders. However, with the support of faculty and administration, we successfully established a curriculum, policies and procedures, and a budget, while also hiring a small, dedicated faculty. After two years of hard work, we were ready to submit our application for candidacy to the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). The program was approved, and we welcomed our first class of students in the Fall of 2000.

A key factor in the success of any academic program is the quality of its faculty and the professionalism of its graduates. Recruiting exceptional students and adding more faculty became our next priority. Thanks to the program's evidence-based approach, word quickly spread, and we achieved both goals.

While our first class had fewer than ten students, the program has steadily grown. Today, we admit 30 students annually from a highly competitive and diverse pool of applicants.

A professional physical therapy program can be measured by the outcomes of its graduates, through graduation rates, licensure exam passage rates, clinical competence, and their commitment to lifelong learning through advanced studies and evidence-based clinical practice. By these measures, USC's DPT graduates have demonstrated the value of the program's curriculum and clinical training.

Retirement has brought me freedom of time and the ability to pursue other interests. My wife and I have spent many months travelling around the country in our RV, seeing new sights and learning new things. Our two granddaughters, 4 and 10, keep us on our toes! Life is good.

**Sincerely,
Bruce McClenaghan PT, PED**



REFLECTIONS ON 20 YEARS - THE LEGACY CONTINUED

As I embark on my 20th year at the University of South Carolina, I reflect on the journey that began with what I thought would be a good “first job” before I decided where to land permanently. Two decades later, I am confident that I made the right choice. My time here has been marked by continuous learning and growth, adapting to new challenges, and leading both from within and from the front. Each team and every student have taught me valuable lessons on how to be a better educator and colleague.

As I lifelong educator, I haven't treated as many patients as some have; however, from my time as a clinician, it's the patients and families' stories of resilience, courage, and hope that continue to inspire me and reaffirm my commitment to educating the next generation. From my early days as a young clinical professor to my current role as an administrator, I am appreciative for the opportunities I have had to contribute to the advancement of physical therapy through research and leadership.

In my personal life, I spend a lot of time reading children's books with my two-year-old. One quote that resonates with me is from Dr. Seuss: “Sometimes you will never know the value of something until it becomes a memory.” If you are a current student or alumni I hope you clearly recognize the value of your time at USC DPT.

To all the frontline clinicians, educators of those clinicians, and others in our field, may we continue to be guided by our shared values of compassion, integrity, and excellence as we strive to create a healthier, more equitable world.

**Forever to Thee,
Stacy Fritz, PT, PhD, FAPTA**



Support \$20 for 20





COHORT NEWS

The 2023-2024 Academic Year was a busy one for our DPT Cohorts.

- Welcomed 30 new Gamecocks to USC in our 2027 Cohort.
- Awarded 3rd place for the 2023 *Gamecock Challenge*.
- Hosted APTA-SC's Advocacy Day at the SC State House.
- Held our annual Cornhole Tournament.
- Participated in The Gift of Body Ceremony with USC Medical Students.
- Presented research at numerous conferences across the US. and abroad.
- Celebrated with 2026 Cohort White Coat Ceremony & 2024 Cohort Hooding Ceremony.



GAMECOCK DPTS IN THE COMMUNITY

All Gamecock DPT Students take part in meaningful service learning experiences during their time at USC.

Here are just a couple examples of where & how our students have recently served:

- Volunteering at Transitions Homeless Center & Rapid Overflow Shelter of Columbia
- Assisting Prisma Health's Supportive Housing Services at Richland Library
- Partnering with Knights of Columbus for a *Youth Basketball Shootout & Pancake Breakfast*
- Taking part of a YoungLife Club work crew.
- Volunteering at Harvest Hope Food Bank & FoodShare
- Preparing boxed dinners for *Facing the Fire: Courage and Grace to Stand Banquet*
- Serving as Unit Secretary for Oncology/ Medical Surgery Floor at Prisma Baptist Hospital
- Attending PDREV Program for patients with Parkinson's at the YMCA
- Participating in the *Columbia Walk for MS, Vertex Pump & Run 5K, Cupid's Chase 5K and Run With All Your Heart 5K*
- Mentoring AED students on Pre PT track & high-school students interested in the healthcare field
- Warming up participants at the *Curing Kids Cancer Firetruck Pull*
- Presenting at the *Galen Health Fellows Graduate Student Panel*
- Volunteering with *Homeworks of America: Service the City Weekend*
- Leading demonstrations of assistive devices to students in other fields at the *Demos & Devices* event.
- Assisting with Informational Tours and Q&A Sessions regarding Physical Therapy & USC.
- Educating the public on the value of nutrition, and hydration as part of *Get to the Green 10K/5K/1-Mile Fun Run*
- Presenting on preventative arm care to middle school baseball players & coaches.

2024 STUDENT & FACULTY ACCOLADES



Sean Edmonds
2024 Doctor of Physical Therapy Program
Outstanding Student Achievement Award



Makenzie Anderson
Fall 2024 Gamecock DPT
Exemplary Achievement Award



Dr. Alicia Flach
APTA Academy of Education's
2024 Adopt-A-Doc Award



Dr. Shana Harrington
2024 APTA Oncology Jeri F. Walton
Service Award & the 2024 Gudas Award



Dr. Sheri Silfies
USC's 2024 James A. Keith
Excellence in Teaching Award

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2024



Congratulations to the resilient and accomplished Class of 2024, who have now earned the prestigious title of Doctors of Physical Therapy! Over the past three years, these dedicated individuals have embarked on a transformative journey through the Gamecock DPT program, demonstrating unwavering determination, passion, and skill in the field of physical therapy.

Kendall Anderson DPT
Kristen Bane, DPT
Macy Barclay, DPT
Kinsey Brantley, DPT
Ellie Campbell, DPT
Bret Cassaday, DPT
Sean Edmonds, DPT
Victoria Fonte, DPT
Madison Hackler, DPT

Shelly King, DPT
Lemir Lira, DPT
Kai Miller, DPT
Avery Maddox, DPT
Amelia Murphy, DPT
Riley Nowling, DPT
Brianna Quade, DPT
John Scott, DPT
Katie Smith, DPT

Sara Steger, DPT
Kaleb Thomas, DPT
Brandon Townsend, DPT
Carter Venancio, DPT
Mary Vu, DPT
Aaron Walker, DPT
Joshua Wright, DPT



RESIDENCY

Gamecock DPT c/o 2024



BRET CASSADAY

Orthopedic PT Resident at the
Columbia VA Healthcare System



KAI MILLER

Sports Resident at Spartanburg Regional
Spartanburg, SC



BRANDON TOWNSEND

Orthopedic Resident at PT Specialists
Columbia, SC



JOSHUA WRIGHT

Sports Resident at ATI Physical Therapy
Chicago, IL



SHELLY KING

I AM PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT FEATURE

Words: Erin Bluvas
Photography: Anna Wippold

When the oldest of Shelly King's six children began heading off to college, King decided to join them – circling back to the career plans she envisioned while studying exercise science at the Arnold School in early 2000s. King had spent more than a decade homeschooling her children, and now it was her turn to pursue her educational ambitions by returning to her alma mater to complete a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree.

“If my presence in the program helps any of my peers or my children, I hope it is to give them the awareness and confidence to remember that they can reinvent themselves later in life if they ever want to try something new,” she says.

With her family firmly settled in the Columbia area, King was grateful to have a top-notch program right in her backyard. The youngest of her children were only three and five when King returned to school to tackle prerequisites, so her busy life required balance. She credits the support of her family and the program for making it possible.

"I could never have returned and made it this far in a very rigorous program without the support and encouragement of the most wonderful husband in the world, and my younger ones get excited about helping me learn to juggle for a motor-learning week assignment or playing 'patient' for me," King says. "The faculty see the 'whole student' and are wonderful about being flexible with family and childcare situations. Not only are they able to pass on their clinical experiences and knowledge, but they are also just truly good human beings that want the best for all their students."

During her program, King has gained clinical experience in acute care at a local hospital and orthopedics at a private clinic. She enjoys supporting oncology and geriatric populations and is interested in working in a home health setting after graduating in the fall of 2024.

King says that the DPT program does a great job listening to students' interests and placing them in clinical rotations that match those interests and strengths. She also appreciates the intentionality they put into providing first-year students with both faculty and second-year student mentors.

Dr. Alicia Flach gets all her mentees together to talk about classes, life in general, and to be a resource and soft place for students to land," King says. "In addition to Dr. Flach, Dr. Shana Harrington has frequently checked in with me and how I'm doing while wearing my many 'hats,' Dr. Matthew Geary is not only my research mentor, but he has also gone the extra mile to help ensure I was able to find the best clinical rotations for my interests and family life, and Dr. Amanda Ward has also taken time on multiple occasions to lend an ear and be a support to me.



Walking across campus, King looks for other non-traditional students and loves seeing others in their 40s and beyond who have returned to school to pursue their dreams. Individuals who, like her, may find that they connect with their classmates because they are in the same age group as their older children or who are constantly recalibrating their day to ensure that the needs of both school and family are met.

"The childhood my husband and I were able to give my older three kids is completely different than the childhood we have been able to give my younger three, and they don't really remember a time when mom was not in grad school," King says. "But their involvement and support has made them a part of the journey, and I realize that maybe it's not a lesser childhood, just a very different one. The King cheering section will be overwhelmingly proud and elated when I walk the stage, because it's the end of an unforgettable era and a win for the entire team."

Editorial Note:

At the time of this publication Shelly King has successfully graduated from USC, become Dr. King, and is happily employed.



FACULTY RESEARCH

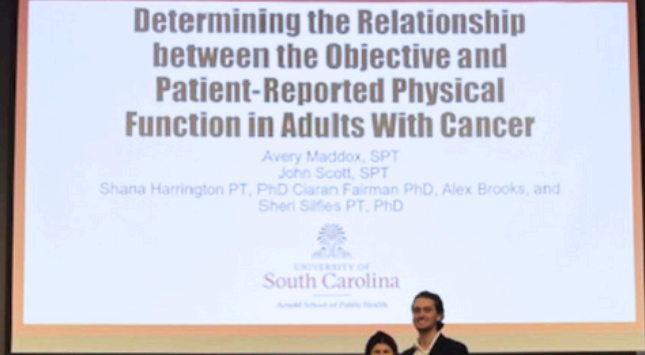
The Gamecock DPT Program is based within a Carnegie 1 research institution offering the highest level of research activity at a doctoral university.

We are excited to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our faculty in presenting their research at numerous conferences both nationally and internationally including:

- American College of Sports Medicine Annual Conference
- American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
- American Physical Therapy Association Combined Sections
- American Physical Therapy Education Leadership Conference
- American Physical Therapy Association South Carolina Annual Conference
- American Society of Neurorehabilitation Annual Meeting
- Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience
- Discover USC
- Southeast American College of Sports Medicine Conference
- World Congress of the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine

These presentations and posters showcase their leadership and dedication to the field as well as their commitment to the mentorship of students and collaboration with colleagues.

To view more details about our faculty's research, [click here](#).



MIDLANDS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

STUDENT RESEARCH

APTA-SC

Avery Maddox & John Scott - mentored by Drs. Harrington & Silfies

- Determining the Relationship between the Objective and Patient-Reported Physical Function in Adults With Cancer

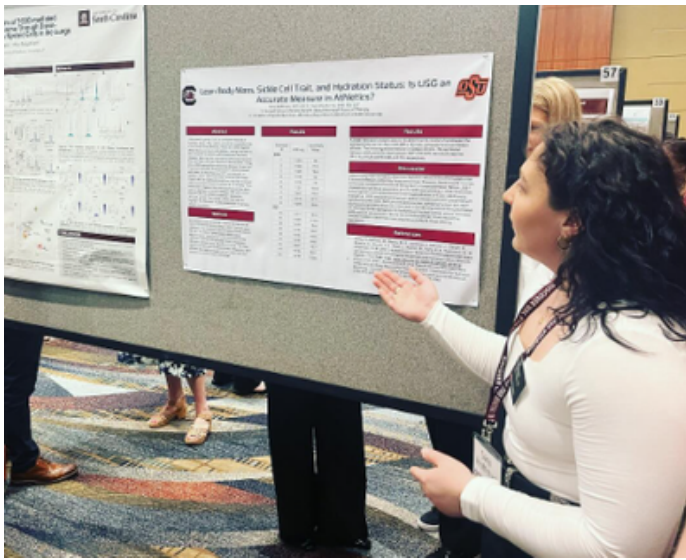
Discover Day USC

Kinsey Brantley, Krista Cummings, Madison Hackler - mentored by Dr. Regan

- Does aerobic capacity and pain levels impact the ability to increase physical activity early after total knee arthroplasty? A secondary cross-sectional analysis

Sara Hoffman

- Lean Body Mass, Sickle Cell Trait, and Hydration Status: Is USG an Accurate Measure in Athletics?



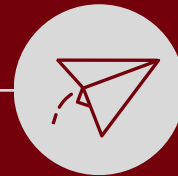


FOREVER TO THEE ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

For 20 years, Gamecock DPTs have been changing the world and we want to help share your story! Alumni may submit updates about their professional or personal life to share in future publications of our E-Magazine and on social media.

STAY IN TOUCH

Interested in staying in touch for future alumni events & communications? Fill out our **information form**:
<https://forms.office.com/r/iEiKFAKqVm>



SHARE A NOTE

Share a short note via this form (<https://forms.office.com/r/eu0H3e6LTd>) if you:

- Have a new job or have been promoted
- Received a prestigious award
- Celebrated a career milestone or achievement
- Are recently married
- Had a baby or adopted a child
- Transferred or moved to a new city

We welcome the inclusion of photos with your note!

PHOTO POLICY: Names and contact information must be included for each person in the photo, so that consent can be obtained before publication. Photos should be high-resolution jpegs, please.



\$20 FOR 20 YEARS SUPPORT GAMECOCK DPT

The Gamecock Physical Therapy Program strives to positively impact the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and society. Through inquiry, innovation, and integrity we aim to foster graduates and faculty to be exceptional practitioners, researchers, and leaders. This focus is based upon the philosophy that physical therapy practice is dynamic and requires engagement in lifelong learning including the application, evaluation, and generation of new knowledge.

We welcome your pledge of \$20 to grow the DPT Fund to support program initiatives.

If you prefer to mail your gift, please make all checks payable to the USC Educational Foundation, note the fund name and number in the memo section of your check and mail it to: Arnold School of Public Health, Office of Development, 915 Greene Street, 251 D, Columbia, SC 29208



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TODAY!**



GAMECOCKDPT

Cultivating compassionate
physical therapists through exceptional training

Doctor of Physical Therapy Program
Department of Exercise Science
Arnold School of Public Health
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Physical Therapy
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