We’re in!

After a fond farewell to the Carol G. Belk Building, the School of Allied Health Sciences was the first to make the historic move into our beautiful, new 300,003-square-foot building over the Memorial Day holiday. The Laupus Health Sciences Library moved in shortly thereafter, and the School of Nursing arrived in July. Our highly successful and well-attended ribbon-cutting ceremonies on September 22 attracted political leaders, past allied health deans, retired faculty, ECU trustees, University of North Carolina general administration leaders, faculty, staff, students and alumni. Lunch was followed by tours of the entire building with demonstrations in classrooms and labs. You would be proud of what your school has accomplished and how it is using the new building to advance its many outstanding departments and the delivery of health care.

Students can enter our marvelous building in the morning to have breakfast at Blimpie before attending class. Between classes, they can pick up a Starbucks coffee from the Grab and Go and access the virtual library on a wireless laptop from anywhere inside or outside of the building. They can eat lunch on the patio, attend afternoon classes or meet with fellow students in the library to discuss a project; and all of this without leaving the building. This state-of-the-art facility will give students a learning environment that is unmatched in the state.

This year, allied health reached a record 661 students, 61 percent of whom are at the master’s and doctoral levels. Over the past three years, we have increased enrollment more than 34 percent. The University of North Carolina General Administration recently approved the establishment of the doctor of audiology program in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. The Department of Health Services and Information Management now offers two on-campus bachelor’s programs to complement its distance education degree programs. We are in our second year of the doctorate in rehabilitation counseling and administration and the doctor of physical therapy. A faculty member in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders was awarded a NIH grant of $1.4 million to continue vestibular research, and the Department of Physical Therapy was awarded a $100,000 equipment grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust for evaluation and treatment of gait and balance disorders. All of this significant growth in enrollment, degree programs and research funding can be attributed to our outstanding facilities.

These are exciting times for the School of Allied Health Sciences, and those of you who are our graduates, former faculty and donors are an important part of this legacy. Growth in size and quality will remain strong in the foreseeable future, and the health of our state and nation will profit from this growth.

We value your interest and participation in allied health sciences and I sincerely hope that you will continue to support your school as we create a bright and exciting future. Come take a tour with us soon. You will be amazed.

Stephen W. Thomas, Ed.D.
Dean
Listen up: Alumni profile: Audiologist dedicates life to helping children with hearing loss

Remembering Jessica: Endowment will assist graduate students working in geriatrics

Leading by example: Student profile: China native overcomes obstacles to enter doctoral program

A giant step: Grant funds new lab to treat and study gait, balance

Under the microscope: Faculty profile: Sullivan trains bioterrorism first responders

Name that room: Giving levels and naming opportunities in the School of Allied Health Sciences

Designing the future: New building, new location, new neighbors spur collaboration

Feels like home: Occupational therapy’s learning and research facility allows real-life role play

A race against time: Staff profile: Mark Allen and 10 cousins remove stomachs to prevent cancer

Dissecting disparities: Mills symposium expands to two days with demonstrations, screening, education

Of mice and genes: NIH-funded research on vestibular disorders continues

Class notes

ECU welcomes nine new faculty
By Crystal Baity

Helping children who have hearing loss is what drives Johnnie Sexton every day. Whether in his car headed to Bladen County to evaluate hearing-impaired students or on a plane preparing to give his next lecture on assistive technology, Sexton's direction is clear: make a difference in a child's life.

“It seems everything I have done throughout my life was just a step towards preparing me for other things,” said Sexton, 51, who is considered one of the world's foremost authorities on FM wireless technology used to educate children with hearing loss.

Sexton grew up in Garland, a small town in Sampson County, the product of hardworking parents who sacrificed so he could go to college. He worked tobacco, as tens of thousands of rural kids did before and have since. He was the first in his family to complete a college degree, earning a bachelor's in 1977 and a master's in audiology in 1979, both from ECU.

While an undergrad, he stumbled into an internship working with children in a satellite program of the N.C. School for the Deaf. The preschoolers were the first generation to try FM assisted devices, used in conjunction with hearing aids or cochlear implants, which transmit voices into the aid or implant while suppressing background noise that can interfere with a child's listening and learning.

“Little did I know that I would spend the rest of my career focusing on this very area in audiology but that I would also eventually travel all over the world to do so,” Sexton said.

He was a speech therapist in Sampson County Schools and later was hired through a federal grant program to develop the model for screening, diagnosing and serving children with hearing loss in North Carolina’s public schools.

The federal grant dried up and Sexton took a new path. He began working in sales and consulting for speech and hearing products which gave him firsthand experience with new technology.

After a few years, he was contracted as part-time audiologist with three eastern North Carolina counties. He started his own practice, John E. Sexton & Associates Inc., which has grown to 14 employees who work with more than 30 school systems and other agencies that serve children with hearing loss. Sexton also began a separate practice, Carolina Hearing and Speech Services Inc., with clinics in Greensboro, Fayetteville and Kenansville, to serve people of all ages.

In the late 1990s, Sexton was hired to design and implement the audiology section of the former Division of Early Intervention in the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. Through that effort, he and others established a mandatory newborn hearing screening program for all birthing hospitals in North Carolina and at 18 regional diagnostic centers. The program ensures that all children born in North Carolina receive a hearing test before discharge and are evaluated within three months if a problem is suspected.

One reason Sexton became an audiologist goes back to his own childhood. He grew up across the street from a little boy who was born deaf. At the time, a public school education was not mandated and hearing aids and services were virtually non-existent. When the boy reached school age, his family sent him to the School for the Deaf in Morganton, the"
only one at the time. The school in Wilson had not yet opened. “At that time, it was the very best place for him,” Sexton said.

He tells another story about his mother’s friend who confided in her that she had a deaf son after finding out Sexton had become an audiologist. The boy had been sent away, not uncommon at the time, because he was thought to be mentally retarded. It was quickly discovered he was not retarded but deaf and he was sent back home to live, with little exposure to the outside world.

“I never knew that boy existed, and they grew up about five miles from us,” Sexton said. “What really pushed my passion was growing up in rural America where there was so little available. You have to drive a long way to get services.”

With the newborn hearing screening project established, Sexton was asked to move to California to become a consultant and traveling lecturer for Oticon Inc., a manufacturer of FM assistive technology. He returned to live in Wilmington, but still works for the company.

Sexton served as chairman of the N.C. Board of Examiners for Speech Pathology and Audiology, a regulatory board established to protect the speech-and-hearing-impaired consumer and assure quality training. (Continued on page 25)
By Crystal Baity

Jessica King’s passion for cooking may have been surpassed only by her desire to help the elderly.

She worked as a therapeutic recreation assistant at a nursing home while an undergraduate psychology student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She fell in love with the elderly population that she described as extremely under-appreciated and stereotyped. She respected older people and felt she could learn from them. Seeing the occupational therapist at the nursing home piqued her interest because the job appeared to be fun, challenging and rewarding.

She considered other rehabilitation professions but chose occupational therapy because of its holistic approach. She wanted to help people learn to help themselves and regain their independence — a gift often overlooked by those not affected by disability or serious injury.

Jessica spoke from experience. She suffered severe syncope and absence epilepsy that, at one point, kept her from driving until her seizures got under control. She didn’t let it stop her. She excelled with honors in high school and college, amazing doctors and defying her illness, which caused multiple seizures a day, even in her sleep.

A second-year graduate student, Jessica died unexpectedly from a seizure at age 26 in 2005.

While mourning the loss of their friend, Jessica’s classmates decided to honor her memory by endowing a scholarship in her name. Dana Bissette, Audrey Clodfelter and Laura Kreps wrote the proposal. To raise funds for it, Jessica’s sister came up with the idea of selling cookbooks filled with favorite recipes from friends and family. Coupled with successful yard sales, other fund-raising events and donations, they raised the $25,000 needed for the endowment in less than a year.

Jessica’s mother, Linda King, has a goal of $30,000. She credits the hard work of many people who raised funds at the grassroots level without corporate donations. A scholarship will be awarded annually to an occupational therapy graduate student with a strong desire to work in geriatrics.

Bissette remembers meeting Jessica, with her infectious laugh and kind spirit, the first day of graduate school. Pretty soon, friends formed a study group and got together to watch “The Bachelor” and “Sex in the City.”

“The Bachelor” show parties and eating chicken and dumplings at the Cracker Barrel were the two big things that I loved to do with Jessica,” said Bissette, 27, who now lives in Raleigh but sat beside Jessica each day. “I can literally flip through random notebooks and there will be a picture or a funny note from Jessica. I am just so glad that I got to know Jessica. I only knew her for a year, but it feels like I’ve known her for so many more.”

Kreps, Jessica’s roommate, hopes the scholarship will attract more students interested in geriatrics to ECU’s program and that the recipient will carry out Jessica’s goals and vision.

Remembering Jessica

Peanut Butter Pie
Sharon Freeman

1 c. peanut butter
1 (3-oz.) pkg. cream cheese
1 c. powdered sugar
1 (8-oz.) tub frozen whipped topping
2 graham cracker pie shells

Cream together peanut butter, cream cheese and sugar. Fold in whipped topping and spoon into pie shells.

Topping
1/2 c. peanut butter
2/3 c. powdered sugar
Mix together and spoon over the top of pies. Refrigerate.
You can drizzle caramel or hot fudge sauce over pie to garnish.

“Jessica had a lot happen to her in her short lifetime but she never let it keep her down,” said Kreps, 28, who lives in Richmond, Va. “She wanted to take her experiences and use them to help others.”

Medical bills and insurance on top of school expenses were a financial struggle. “Jessica would love the fact that she was making one student’s life that much easier so that he or she could stress less about money,” Kreps said.

Jennifer Botts, Jessica’s sister, walked in procession for her at graduation in May.
More than halfway to their fund-raising goal, Jennifer presented a $16,000 check to occupational therapy department chairwoman Anne Dickerson.

The sisters, four years apart, grew up in the kitchen of their Randolph County home. At Christmas, Linda and her girls would begin preparing special holiday food one to two weeks ahead of time. “We did everything from scratch, and they loved it,” Linda said.

At ECU, Jessica and friends formed a supper club, whose members took turns hosting and cooking dinner Wednesday nights in the Wimbledon apartments where they all lived. Jessica’s chicken salad, pineapple casserole and peanut butter pie were all favorite fare.

Jennifer and Linda, often at work, would get a phone call from Jessica, standing in the grocery store, unable to remember ingredients for a recipe that she planned to make the same evening. The last time Jennifer saw Jessica, she gave her a homemade binder of 25 to 30 favorite recipes hoping it would stave off last-minute calls.

In the cookbook’s preface, Jennifer described one particular Thanksgiving as they prepared the turkey. Jessica spotted the thermostat button which pops when the turkey is ready to eat. “She got this horrified look on her face and said, ‘They left the bullet in the turkey!’ Apparently she thought the turkey had been shot and sold to the grocery with the bullet intact.”

“That was so Jessica,” Linda said.
By Crystal Baity

Xueying Li calls them her walking sticks. She depends on double crutches to help her walk, the result of an untreated hip dislocation at birth. Because of her experience, she became interested in medicine and rehabilitation studies. She wants to help others with disabilities.

Li graduated from prestigious Beijing University with a medical degree in health administration and a master's of education in clinical psychology. She came to the United States in 2003 with her husband and later applied to the School of Allied Health Sciences' new doctoral program in rehabilitation counseling and was accepted.

Navigating the complexities of the paperwork was difficult. But Li said because of prayer by many people and the kindness of strangers, she obtained her visa in just 10 days after receiving her admission letter from ECU. A high school teacher, whom she met through a friend at church in Alabama, invited Li to her home, moving into the living room so Li could stay in the only bedroom, and drove her to Mexico from Brownsville, waiting three hours during the application process.

“She helped me a lot,” Li said. “I will never forget this lady my whole life.”

Before moving to the United States, Li was an award-winning counselor at the Counseling Center of Tsinghua University in China. She hosted a youth hotline and worked part-time as an editor and columnist for the publication, “Trends Health.” She voluntarily staffed a mental help hotline from April until June 2003 during the severe acute respiratory syndrome outbreak in China.

Because people were shut in and couldn’t go to work or school, they were anxious and stressed. Li offered a listening ear to those in need. She also served as host for a hotline for the China Disabled Person’s Federation. Her research interests range from bias to post traumatic stress disorder and coping.

Li was born the third daughter of four children in a traditional Chinese family in northeast China, near the border of North Korea. Her grandparents – her father’s parents – lived with the family. Her parents, both teachers, valued education. Li was the top science scholar in her hometown before heading to college.

“I was like a pupa and I fly just like a butterfly,” Li said. “After I go to university, I come out of my cocoon.”

As a child, her parents didn’t take her to a hospital for treatment of her hip. The family wasn’t sure what kind of care they would get. It would be 16 years before Li would see a doctor. By that time, she was permanently disabled.

In China, family support is crucial to a successful outcome for disabled persons. “If the family doesn’t help, there is no help,” she said.

Dr. Daniel Wong, professor of rehabilitation studies, has served as Li’s adviser.

“She has brought a different perspective with respect to rehabilitation and disability studies to our program,” Wong said.

Li anticipates it will take about three years to finish graduate school.

“Later, I will find a way to help China’s disabled persons by what I learned here,” she said. “I appreciate the chance I’ve been given. America has helped many countries to develop international students.”

Inset photo above, Xueying Li as a child with her siblings. At right, Xueying Li spends a lot of time in Laupus Library as a rehabilitation studies graduate student.

Xueying Li on the campus of Beijing University, where she earned a medical degree in health administration and a master’s of education in clinical psychology.
For people with illnesses or injuries, walking isn’t always as simple as just putting one foot in front of the other. With advanced new equipment, the Department of Physical Therapy at the School of Allied Health Sciences is stepping up clinical work and research involving gait and balance.

A $100,000 grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, a Winston-Salem philanthropy, has allowed the department to purchase six high-speed cameras and two force plates for its Gait and Balance Laboratory to analyze movement and provide diagnostic information on gait, mobility and physical activities. The services will be particularly beneficial for low-income patients in eastern North Carolina who are unable to travel long distances for care. Children with neuromuscular disease, overweight children and frail, fall-prone older adults will be assisted through the grant. Training for physical therapy doctoral students and medical students, as well as residents and fellows, is a component of the grant.

Dr. Denis Brunt, professor and chairman of the Department of Physical Therapy, and faculty members Dr. Leslie Allison and Dr. Amy Gross McMillan are the principal investigators.

The new equipment joins a balance platform, electromyography and a virtual reality system the department already had, taking the lab’s capabilities to a higher level.

To collect data from patients or research subjects, reflective markers are placed on predetermined anatomical landmarks. The cameras track the markers in 3-D space. Advanced computer programming calculates joint motion during activity, such as gait or sit-to-stand. Together with information from the force plates, the data also allows the calculation of joint torques and powers.

“These tools allow us to see things our eyes by ourselves cannot see,” Allison said.

Allison is focusing on helping older adults who have problems falling improve their balance. Subjects stand on the platform while researchers program it to simulate unstable surfaces and disturb balance. The platform may tilt or displace forward, backward or sideways. Force plates record body sway. The virtual reality system may project moving images that provide a visual impression of body sway.

“Your feet might be telling you you’re moving, but your eyes are telling you you’re not moving,” Allison said.

One third of adults over 65 fall each year, she said. “The repeat fallers are the big concern because they have repeat chances of injury. They’re falling in situations where other people wouldn’t fall,” Allison said.

The reason isn’t simply age, Allison said, since two-thirds of those 65 and older don’t fall in a given year. Other factors must be at work. Multi-sensory integration is the process by which the brain collects and coordinates information from the eyes, legs, feet and inner ear to keep the body balanced. If the body is falling, the brain normally commands compensatory movements to get the body back over the feet or the feet back under the body. In frequent fallers, that apparently doesn’t happen so well.

“The idea is that sensory balance control is potentially trainable,” Allison said. “Your brain can improve just like your muscles can.” Her research was published in the July and October issues of Experimental Brain Research.

Gross McMillan, also an assistant professor, is studying movement characteristics of children who are overweight. These children are (Continued on page 27)
Grant funds new lab to treat and study gait, balance a step.
Under the Microscope

Sullivan teaches professionals in labs big or small to be prepared.
By Crystal Baity

Google bioterrorism and millions of results pop up. Anthrax, botulism, smallpox and Ebola are just a handful of biological agents that could trigger a widespread public health disaster.

Dr. Karen Sullivan, clinical microbiologist and associate professor in East Carolina University’s clinical laboratory science department, teaches students about common and not-so-common pathogenic microorganisms, including those associated with bioterrorism, which could produce disease in humans.

Since 9/11, Sullivan has delved into an expanded line of work: microbiological training of first responders for bioterrorism events. She has provided training to local and regional hospital laboratory personnel and last year led a workshop for the Greenville-based N.C. National Guard’s 42nd Civil Support Team, the only one in the state and one of 55 nationwide dedicated to responding to known or suspected terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction.

Maj. R. Scot Peeke, deputy commander, said Sullivan compressed volumes of information and made it appropriate for her target audience. She reviewed possible bacterial and viral agents that might be used for bioterrorism, how they could be grown in a lab and how to identify them.

A former student, Barbie White, who is now a lab specialist with the N.C. Regional Response Laboratory in Pitt County, recommended Sullivan to lead the instruction. In turn, the CST invited Sullivan to participate as a student in a two-day, high intensity training session for first responders during a 100-degree heat wave. Trainees evaluated multiple mock lab set-ups to determine if imaginary terrorists were manufacturing chemical or biological agents or both.

“It was a very interesting experience, I learned a lot, but also quickly realized I would not want to be the one going in first,” Sullivan said.

Sullivan admires those assigned the role and said the exercises showed the importance of coordination and teamwork. The CST, a full-time active duty unit, is charged with identifying chemical, biological, radioactive, nuclear and explosive agents or materials. “We recon target sites, obtain samples, conduct presumptive field analysis of the samples and provide advice and assistance to incident commanders,” Peeke said.

The Guard’s mobile unit can download images to a lab anywhere for further evaluation and is outfitted with high-tech instruments and gear needed to rapidly respond and sustain itself uninterrupted for three days in the field.

“It is our job to support civil authorities and work within the existing incident command system,” he said.

They routinely travel across the state participating in field training exercises with hazmat regional response teams, public health and other state emergency management agencies. The CST also is called during natural disasters. Seven team members responded to New
Orleans following Hurricane Katrina and also were deployed when Hurricane Ophelia threatened North Carolina’s coast last year.

Deliberate cases of mailing anthrax in 2001 made it “quite clear that we had to think in a different way,” said Sullivan, who earned a bachelor’s in clinical laboratory science from the University of Virginia-Clinch Valley, a master’s in microbiology from East Tennessee State University and doctorate in microbiology and immunology from Virginia Commonwealth University Medical College of Virginia. She has worked in large and small hospital labs and teaches in-depth clinical microbiology.

Sullivan doesn’t consider herself an expert on how bioterrorists might manufacture or distribute agents but does stay current on microorganisms that could be used and lab procedures for handling and reporting agents in case of an event. “My big issue is every lab no matter what size you are has to be prepared. We don’t know where the outbreak will be,” she said.

A congressionally-mandated study and mock event in 1999 showed infrastructure for handling a bioterrorist event and the amount of antibiotics that would be needed for treatment were lacking. The findings laid the groundwork for the national Laboratory Response Network, designed by the CDC through a partnership of laboratory professionals including national, international, state, military, veterinary and environmental and more.

The LRN classifies labs based on their ability to sample, test and contain. The CDC or the military has the highest classification followed by state labs such as the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health in Raleigh, then clinical labs in hospitals or private physician offices.

North Carolina’s Department of Health and Human Services created three regional response laboratories in the state including the one in Pitt County.

“Our primary mission is providing timely and accurate testing using Laboratory Response Network protocols for bioterrorism and emerging infectious diseases,” said White, a 1997 graduate of ECU’s clinical laboratory science program. “Our secondary mission is to provide surge capacity to the state in the event of other public health threats and emergencies such as contaminated water supply or food-borne outbreaks.”

They report to the state lab and LRN, “Anything we were to find would be reported to and confirmed by the CDC,” White said. Challenges include constant preparedness, operation and funding.

Sullivan has focused on regional labs in eastern North Carolina that have requested continuing education workshops on preparedness for bioterrorism events. The labs would be the first to receive patient specimens to determine possible biological terrorism agents and responsible for submitting clinical samples to state or regional LRN labs if normal methods were unable to rule out a possible agent. Sullivan reviews the disease presentation of possible agents, what specimens would likely be received and the general characteristics of agents, how to cultivate them and perform preliminary identification and whom to notify.

“We have beefed up our lab system,” she said. “Even relatively small labs can perform the basic testing. Most can look at a sample or a smear under the microscope and get an idea of the category of the organism.”
The new home of the School of Allied Health Sciences provides student-centered instruction, research, service and clinical activities in an interdisciplinary health care environment.

Gifts to the school ensure that the urgent need to educate the essential health care workforce can be met, both now and in the future.

Classrooms, laboratories, lecture halls, conference rooms, offices, work rooms and reception areas are available for sponsorship.

“We want to endow the rooms to ensure they will be as high-tech and up-to-date 10 years from now as they are today,” said Dean Stephen Thomas.

Other opportunities for giving include scholarships and endowed faculty chair positions. “Those are equally important to us,” he said.

For additional information, lab and facility tours, visits with researchers or to make a donation, contact Carole Novick, The Medical Foundation of ECU, 525 Moye Blvd., Greenville, N.C., 27834, or call 252-744-2238 or toll free at 888-816-2238, or e-mail medfoundation@ecu.edu.

**Name that room**

*Giving levels and naming opportunities in the School of Allied Health Sciences*
Designing the future

By Crystal Baity
Dean Stephen Thomas has challenged faculty and staff in the School of Allied Health Sciences to build on the past as they embrace the future in their new home.

The school moved into the four-story, $66 million Health Sciences Building Memorial Day weekend. Laupus Library and the School of Nursing soon followed, making west campus a true academic health sciences center with the Brody School of Medicine and Pitt County Memorial Hospital.
How do we create new opportunities with our new neighbors?” Thomas said. “I always say this is more than just a building. This is an opportunity.”

Thomas’ vision is designing the future, a strategic planning process with opportunities for collaborative teaching, research, service and clinical practice.

“We’re giving people the opportunity to design the future from the ground up,” he said, creating ownership while meeting department, school, division and university missions.

“In spring semester, Dr. Thomas asked the chairs to reflect on how we wanted to purposefully relate to one another in the new building,” said Dr. Elizabeth Layman, professor and chairwoman of health services and information management.

“Going into the new building, we had a chance to ‘recreate’ ourselves. We could discard old habits and ways of thinking and acting.”

Layman built on earlier school themes of “Planning the Future” and “Building the Future,” both related to preparing for the new building, in coining the phrase. Since faculty design curricula and research studies, two parts of the school’s tripartite mission (the third being service) were covered, Layman said.

It has been 40 years since the North Carolina legislature authorized ECU to establish a Life Sciences and Community Health Institute, the forerunner of the School of Allied Health Sciences. In the late 60s, the school’s oldest departments - rehabilitation counseling, physical therapy, medical technology, medical records administration, social welfare and occupational therapy – operated in separate buildings across campus, even in the university dining hall. In 1972, allied health programs were brought under the same roof in the Carol G. Belk Building. The school grew to nine departments, spreading out again in annexes and different buildings with the physician assistant studies program last located several miles out of town on Voice of America Site C Road.

More demand for graduates

Industry demand for allied health professionals means continued growth for the School of Allied Health Sciences. Enrollment is up 17 percent this year with 661 students.

A recent report by the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at UNC-Chapel Hill revealed more than one out of three health care jobs in North Carolina is held by allied health professionals. While the growth rate for the health care industry measured 20 percent overall, the allied health workforce grew twice as fast — 46 percent between 1999 and 2005.

The new building is essential to meet demand although Dean Stephen Thomas acknowledges they will be filled and longing for more space soon. Distance education will continue to grow. The HIM and HSM degree programs are offered online as well as certificate programs in assistive technology, a joint program between occupational therapy and the College of Education, and a new health care management certificate through ECU’s MBA and MPA programs aimed at experienced health administrators. This summer, rehabilitation studies will begin offering a substance abuse certificate program.

With a new dental school planned at ECU, Thomas also has been asked to do a feasibility assessment of developing a bachelor’s degree program in dental hygiene. The school could top 750 students in the next year alone, he said.
Now, 34 years later, they are reunited where infrastructure and technology provide for new ways of teaching and learning, research and clinical service. The new location creates easier collaborative opportunities with other schools and departments where few previously existed and helps deepen relationships that were already formed.

“In the past, physical therapy has had excellent teaching and research faculty without the infrastructure to fulfill their potential,” said Dr. Denis Brunt, professor and chairman of physical therapy. “We now have state-of-the-art teaching and research labs as well as high-technology classrooms. These facilities and space will allow us to be competitive for research funding, support collaboration and help recruit top faculty and students.”

Location helps, Brunt said.

“For example, residents from physical medicine and rehabilitation at PCMH now do a rotation in our research labs, and we are now an integral member of the multidisciplinary assessment team in the Pediatric Healthy Weight Research and Treatment Center clinics.”

Others share similar examples.

“The move to the new clinic has brought new opportunities in the form of better and more direct relationships with physicians and other health care providers at both ECU medical clinics as well as physicians in private practice,” said Dr. Gregg Givens, professor and chairman of communication sciences and disorders. The ECU speech language and hearing clinic sees 3,500 adult and pediatric patients each year.

Dr. Paul Alston, professor and chairman of rehabilitation studies, said his department has been able to improve collaborative research with the hospital and Regional Rehabilitation Center.

“It’s very important for us,” he said because it involves human subjects. “It makes some of our research possible where it wouldn’t have been before.”

Engaging different departments or schools to combine research efforts is often viewed favorably by granting agencies, providing incentive for teamwork. And the school has the space right now to invite researchers in to work. In Belk, some researchers had to share labs that also were used for instruction, Thomas said.

“Research is an area we can expand,” he said. “We feel well situated to bring people in across campus for interdisciplinary opportunities and collaboration. Highly-applied translational research will provide better health care and quality of life for people in our region and will increase productivity and funding for research.”

Thomas plans to hire an associate dean for research in the school, where 61 percent of students are studying for masters or doctoral degrees. He also sees allied health working more closely with the Brody School of Medicine in clinical areas with one example being the planned geriatric center.

“To me, that’s a critical component of us being in a health sciences center,” Thomas said.

Already, dedicated labs are helping CSDI to expand its research into voice, aphasia, language disorders, language learning/dyslexia, psychoacoustics, vestibular disorders and auditory processing, Givens said.

And students learn through increased use of multimedia aids and simulators that evoke real life scenarios for hands on instruction.

“Classroom instruction has changed in that our access to technology is at our finger tips, literally,” Givens said. “We are able to go to a Web site during a lecture and show examples of the subject matter being taught. We can hyperlink to Web sites that have streaming video for our students to experience.”

The new doctorate in rehabilitation counseling and administration just admitted its second class of six students, which would not have been possible in the old building. They also will expand the bachelor’s degree program by admitting 10 more students. “The problem is not so much the classroom space but field placement sites,” Alston said.

Clinical training sites, room for growth and additional faculty all play a part in designing the future.
By Jeannine Manning Hutson

On the ABC hit show, “Grey’s Anatomy,” a medical resident lived in the basement of the hospital for weeks until the chief of surgery stumbled upon her makeshift apartment down with the boilers.

If an occupational therapy student decided to try a similar move in the department’s new apartment lab, it would be understandable. But not acceptable.

The 900-square-foot apartment is fully furnished from bed linens and dishes in the cabinets to a working washer and dryer.

Dr. Anne Dickerson, professor and chair of the occupational therapy department at the School of Allied Health Sciences, said having a functional apartment for students is vital to their education.

“The idea is that we have students do home health visits with other students role playing having a certain disability. How do patients who are post-stroke cut a potato or butter bread? How would an occupational therapist come in to do an assessment?” Dickerson said.

For the 40 students in the occupational therapy program, the goal is to make the apartment lab as realistic as possible with real-life obstacles for them to consider.

“If you have a patient with multiple sclerosis, then you have a limited amount of energy (to work with),” she said. “If you have a patient with a spinal cord injury, how are you going to help them learn to get in and out of the bathtub?”

The lab has no adaptive equipment installed. O.T. students must bring in their equipment, such as a wheelchair or walker, and experiment with what works and what doesn’t, Dickerson explained.

The master’s degree in occupational therapy has 20 students in each entering class for the program, which runs two years and three months. During exercises conducted in the apartment, students create patient-therapist interaction simulation. For example, a student patient learns what it’s like to be in a wheelchair, and his classmate develops a plan for the patient to use the wheelchair in the bathroom.

“The pretty rugs on the floor? They need to take those up for a person in a wheelchair,” Dickerson said. “But in our apartment, they are on the bathroom floor until the student takes them up.”

Students Amy Wentz and Ashley Christopher said the apartment has been a valuable addition to their program.

“It has also allowed us to experience how hard it actually would be to be able to maneuver a wheelchair in a lifelike environment where there are barriers that cannot always be moved. That experience will help us to relate better to our patients,” Christopher said. “In the Belk Building, the only thing close to a home environment was a stove. Here instead of imagining what it would be like, we can practice in a real lifelike setting.”
had a kitchen but nothing as spacious as the new apartment which was made possible with the move to the new health sciences building. State funds outfitted the apartment with a stove, washer and dryer since it is a learning and research facility; however, that left a lot of space needing furniture.

In stepped regional businessman Ivins "Itchy" Popkin, president of Furniture Fair, to help fill the void.

Popkin donated all the furniture and artwork and then sent Dickerson to two local stores for cookware, a microwave, towels and rugs. He even donated the refrigerator and a gas grill for an outside patio area.

Dickerson spent approximately $3,500 on the extras. She worked with the manager at Popkin's Greenville store to pick out the furniture for the apartment.

"He was very generous; no editing of what I picked out," Dickerson said.

Popkin said he was happy to help ECU and its School of Allied Health Sciences outfit its apartment.

"East Carolina's done such a wonderful job for providing health care to people in eastern North Carolina so they don't have to leave the region for health care," he said. "And so many other people have done so much for our family, so it was time for our family to do something to help other people."

Dickerson said the apartment also will be used for research for older drivers.

"The apartment is an important aspect of our research agenda. We will be doing assessments of daily living tasks like making a sandwich, folding laundry, brushing teeth, and making beds to determine if such assessments could be used as screening tools for driving," she said. "The apartment gives us the perfect opportunity to use a realistic environment for such assessments."
By Crystal Baity

It wasn’t a question of if, but when, for Mark Allen.

Having inherited a rare mutated gene for stomach cancer, he had a 75 percent chance of developing it. He didn’t second-guess his decision. Allen and 10 of his cousins decided to have their stomachs removed.

Undetected by previous scans and tests, surgeons found cancer cells, waiting to grow and multiply, when Allen’s organ was removed Feb. 14, 2005.

Allen is a soft-spoken electronics technologist in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders in the School of Allied Health Sciences, where he has worked for 10 years.

His story has unfolded nationwide as The Associated Press, CNN, ABC, NBC and National Public Radio covered what physicians believe is the largest family to undergo surgery to prevent hereditary stomach cancer.

“To find out and actually have the surgery was a relief because we knew we had it and could do something about it,” Allen said.

His older brother David Allen died of stomach cancer in 2003 within months of diagnosis. After David’s death at age 57, his oncologist in Fort Collins, Colo., suggested the family get genetic testing.

Mark Allen’s grandmother, mother and five of seven aunts and uncles had died of stomach cancer. Blood tests taken in the last two days of David’s life showed he carried a rare mutated gene, CDH1. Eleven of 19 cousins discovered they carried the flawed gene. One by one, the cousins, who live across the United States and in South Africa, had their stomachs removed.

“For most of us it was not do you get it done but how soon can you get it done?” Allen said. “It was a race against time because it could have developed at any time.”

Mark found out he had the gene in December 2004 and within a week scheduled the gastrectomy. He and cousin Mike Slabaugh of Irving, Texas, were operated on the same day by Dr. Jeff Norton at Stanford University Medical Center in Palo Alto, Calif. Norton previously had operated on four other cousins.

Norton constructed a new, smaller stomach pouch for his patients using intestinal tissue. Initially Allen was restricted to a quarter cup of food at a time as the pouch gradually grew larger. He had to learn to eat smaller, protein- and vitamin-rich portions about six or seven times a day. Never a big eater and prone to meal-skipping, Allen had to program himself to eat.

“It’s a different normal,” said Allen, who takes a daily multi-vitamin and gets a vitamin B12 shot once a month to aid absorption and prevent anemia. He weighed 153 pounds before surgery and weighs about 130 now.

The family credits Dr. Henry Lynch at Creighton University in Nebraska, who has studied hereditary cancers for more than 30 years and who was originally contacted by Mark Allen’s mother before she succumbed to stomach cancer. She was convinced there was an environmental cause, possibly the use of pesticides, or some other clinical or hereditary problem. But there was no way to prove it at the time. Dr. David Huntsman at the University of British Columbia Cancer Agency eventually found the gene mutation in the family.
Both physicians took a special interest and attended a rare Memorial Day family reunion held last year in Las Vegas. Mark Allen grew up in Bucklin, Kan., about 20 miles from Dodge City. He said he couldn’t have gone through everything without his wife of 34 years, Rose, an associate professor of communication sciences and disorders and director of the distance education program in the department. Faculty, staff and friends, including Dr. Gregg Givens, department chairman, have been attentive, Rose Allen said.

“The week we got back (from the surgery), faculty brought us meals every night. They were so concerned and so supportive.”

Since the media coverage, Mark Allen has answered e-mails from across the country from families wanting more information. An estimated 100 families worldwide carry the mutated gene, but there could be more. He hopes to spread the word about genetic testing and genetic cancers.

In 2003, there were an estimated 22,400 new cases of stomach cancer in the United States and an estimated 12,100 deaths, according to the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.
Dissecting disparities

By Crystal Baity

Now in its third year, the Jean Mills African-American Health Symposium will expand from one to two days Feb. 9-10 thanks to a $10,000 grant by the Pitt Memorial Hospital Foundation.

The symposium will address health issues affecting African-Americans and Hispanics. The event will be held at the Greenville Hilton this year after being held the past two years at the Edwin W. Monroe AHEC Conference Center.

“Health disparities are inherently linked to issues of social, environmental and occupational justice,” said Dr. Beth Veld, assistant dean and associate professor in the ECU School of Allied Health Sciences. “Without inter-professional approaches to research and service and the collaboration with communities, health disparities cannot be addressed successfully.”

The two-day symposium will bring together researchers and community members who can work together to address disparities. “Sessions this year feature ECU researchers and community agencies who are taking an active role in enhancing community health and quality of life,” Veld said.

The first day, entitled “Making Research Real in Reducing Health Disparities and Transforming Health Services” will feature presentations and posters on topics such as obesity, diabetes, stroke and disability. The keynote speaker will be Dr. James Johnson, William Rand Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of Management at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Other participants will be Dr. Chris Mansfield, director of ECU’s Center for Health Services Research and Development, Dr. Max Zarate, assistant professor in ECU’s Department of Health Education, Lucy Wong Hernandez, a visiting lecturer in ECU’s College of Human Ecology, and Dr. Eric Bailey, ECU medical anthropologist.

New for 2006 will be the second day’s community outreach, titled “Practicing What You Preach: Developing Healthy Habits.” The public is invited 10 a.m.-2 p.m. for free demonstrations, screenings and education.

Blood pressure, blood sugar, weight and fat analysis screenings will be offered. Local community organizations and the School of Allied Health Sciences will provide screenings and educational programs. Cooking and exercise demonstrations will be held.

The symposium was created by Amos T. Mills III, Jean’s brother, in an effort to keep her spirit of discovery and community outreach alive. The purpose is to bring attention and seek solutions to critical health care issues facing minority populations.

For more information, go to www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/dh/millssymposium.cfm or register for the symposium by calling Eastern AHEC at 252-744-5231.
Of mice and genes

NIH-funded research into vestibular disorders continues

By Crystal Baity

An East Carolina University associate professor has been awarded a five-year, $1.4 million research grant from the National Institutes of Health to continue her study into the role genes may play in dizziness and imbalance, known as vestibular disorders.

Dr. Sherri Jones, associate professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders in the School of Allied Health Sciences, is principal investigator of the grant project. It is an extension of an NIH grant that Jones brought to ECU when she joined the faculty in July 2003. Her research has focused on vestibular deficits in mice, whose genes and inner ear are very similar to humans.

The prestigious NIH grant from the National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders will expand Jones' research by studying additional mouse strains and by adding anatomy and genetic components to her work.

The first grant enabled Jones and co-investigators around the country to screen various mouse functions such as behavior, hearing, brain-wave activity and vestibular function. Researchers identified specific mouse strains that showed deficits. The current grant will allow Jones and her collaborators to look specifically at the strains that they identified with the first study and to characterize the dysfunction in detail, identify the structural deficit in the inner ear and identify the potential location on the chromosome contributing to gravity receptor dysfunction, Jones said.

Of particular interest is identifying mouse strains that have imbalance but normal hearing and identifying those that don't have imbalance but poor hearing to profound deafness.

“Our studies suggest that there may be some unique genes for that to happen,” Jones said. “If it's a gene, I want to find it.”

Since the mid-1990s, a vast amount of research has been done on genetic hearing impairment. Fifty to 60 percent of all hearing loss in children is thought to have a genetic cause. Genetics also plays a role in children who are born deaf, Jones said.

“While we’ve had a lot of research in genetic hearing impairment, there’s been very little research in genetic vestibular impairment and that’s where my project is trying to focus.”

Jones is trying to determine if there is a genetic reason for some balance impairments. A significant number of people with hearing problems also have imbalance or dizziness.

“The results of the study are potentially applicable to the entire lifespan of an individual, because imbalance and dizziness can afflict both young and old, Jones said.

Mice are excellent models for the study of human disease because of their similar gene makeup and short lifespan. Mice live about two years, allowing scientists to collect a lot of data from birth to death in a short amount of time.

“I believe my research could lead to important diagnostic and potential treatments for balance dysfunction,” said Jones, a licensed audiologist. “We need more basic research that can lead to more clinical research and a better understanding of the causes of the disorder, which can lead to eventual treatment.”

Of mice and genes

Hearing, balance and age-related changes

Bruce Mock, an East Carolina University doctoral candidate in clinical audiology, has received a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders at the National Institutes of Health.

The award will support his dissertation research and is approximately $30,000 annually, which includes a stipend, tuition and fees and additional money for travel or supplies.

Mock’s project will focus on characterizing age-related changes in auditory and vestibular function and comparing changes between the two sensory systems in mouse strains with different age-related hearing loss genetic mutations.

The work is expected to lead to a better understanding of inner ear aging and predisposing factors, such as genetics and sex, for age-related changes in vestibular and auditory function.

Mock’s dissertation is under the direction of Dr. Sherri Jones, associate professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders.
Scholarships

Three students in the Department of Health Services and Information Management received awards from the American Health Information Management Association Foundation of Research and Education. Joseph Eric Dolbear, Marcia Moore Jones and Karen Morris each received a $1,000 undergraduate merit scholarship. Students from 45 health information management baccalaureate programs and 245 health information technology associate programs in the United States compete annually for approximately 62 scholarships. A record 90 scholarships totaling $103,000 were awarded to students in 31 states.

Crystal Ploettner received a National Student Honor Award from the American Society for Clinical Pathology. The society selects one to two percent of clinical lab science or medical technology students nationally to receive the annual award, which is based on academic excellence, leadership and service. Ploettner received her bachelor's in clinical laboratory science in May. She works at a hospital in Tacoma, Wash., where her husband is stationed with the U.S. Navy.

Brian Baucom, physical therapy, received the Berbecker Foundation Fellowship. The scholarship is given to students who demonstrate exceptional accomplishment, commitment and skill toward a career in allied health sciences.

Brandy Basham, rehabilitation studies, received the 2006 Beth Lambeth Memorial Scholarship. It is awarded annually on the basis of exemplary leadership, scholarship and character.

Meredith Richardson, physician assistant studies, received two scholar-

Student excels
Claudia Diaz, a second-year graduate student in physician assistant studies, received three scholarships including a $10,000 award from the Casey Family Scholars Graduate School program administered by the Orphan Foundation of America. The program began in 2006, and Diaz was one of the first 10 scholars chosen in the United States.

She plans to work as a physician assistant with the Hispanic community following graduation in December. She has a keen interest in family medicine because she believes she can make a difference in educating and bringing awareness to health issues and disparities of Hispanics. "I want to be there at the front," she said. "There is so much need."

Born in El Salvador, Diaz's parents divorced when she was a toddler and her family moved to the United States when she was 8. Because of an abusive stepfather, she entered the foster care system at age 10 along with her two younger sisters. The girls were not able to be placed in the same home, and her youngest sister, now 19, was eventually adopted by a family in Havelock. Her middle sister is 22 and has three children. Diaz grew up near Charlotte in a large family with two biological children and six foster children. Now 23, she is married and has a 3-year-old son.

"There's always the stigma of foster kids being in jail or getting kicked out of school," she said. "It made me study harder. I think it made me stronger. It has made me what I am."

She said she had great foster parents who encouraged her all the way, strong friendships and faith that have sustained her, too. She was an honors student in high school and at Campbell University, where she earned her bachelor's degree and met her future husband.

"You learn to forgive and keep..."
moving,” Diaz said.

In addition to being a full-time student and mother, Diaz volunteers part-time at My Sister’s Closet, a Greenville thrift store which benefits domestic abuse programs. “Domestic violence is something I experienced. This is my way of giving back to the community.”

Clinical assistant professor Dody McMillen, who has served as Diaz’s advisor, said, “Her path has been unusual but led her exactly where she needs to be.”

Diaz also received a Berbecker Foundation Fellowship and a Bunting Scholarship, which is awarded to students in the physician assistant master’s degree program and is based on financial need.

(Continued on page 2)

Johnnie Sexton took these photos of children in a Vietnam orphanage he has adopted. This year, he will take a team of experts to train staff on working with the hearing impaired children.

He is the embodiment of the goal of East Carolina University,” Maynard said. “Growing up in eastern North Carolina left him with a deep appreciation for the down east life and culture. While he has been apart from eastern North Carolina on several occasions, his heart never left. He keeps coming back. Each time he comes back, he brings some of the world back with him.”

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Susie T. Harris, MBA, RHIA
Clinical Instructor
Robert Kulesher, PhD
Assistant Professor, Program Director
Health Services Management
Thomas Ross, PhD
Assistant Professor
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Amy Gross McMillan, PhD, PT
Assistant Professor
Patricia S. Hodson, PT, DPT, PCS
Clinical Associate Professor
Walter L. Jenkins, DHS, PT, ATC-L
Associate Professor and Associate Chair
Terry Jones, PhD
Assistant Professor
Wayne Scott, PhD, PT
Assistant Professor

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1983
Mary DeLoatch Thompson, RHIA, (BS Health Information Management) is director of Health Information Systems/Services for the Brody School of Medicine at ECU.

1994
Michael Patterson (BS Occupational Therapy) of Melbourne, Fla., is vice president of operations for Avante Nursing and Rehabilitation Centers. Avante operates 20 skilled nursing facilities throughout the United States. He and wife, Vicki, have a daughter, Sydney, 6.

1995
Sarah Sutton Wilbert, RHIA, (BS Health Information Management) lives in Dallas, Texas, with her husband, Carl. The couple has a daughter, Madeline, 2, and is expecting another baby in April. She worked as a coding specialist with Healthcare Business Resources before working 10 years at Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas where she held numerous positions from inpatient coder to clinic record manager. She recently began work with Texas Health Resources.

1997
Greg Gooding, RHIA, (BS Health Information Management) and wife Blair celebrated the birth of their first daughter, Ellie Rose, on March 30, 2006. He works as a project manager with SoftMed Systems.

Barbara White (BS Clinical Laboratory Science) is establishing and supervising the N.C. Regional Response Laboratory in Pitt County which is part of the North Carolina Department of Public Health Laboratories.

1998
Vickie Smith, RHIA, (BS Health Information Management) is a coder at Stanly Regional Medical Center and teaches part-time at Cabarrus College of Health Sciences, an affiliate of NorthEast Medical Center, in Concord. She and her husband, Jared, a fellow ECU graduate, have two daughters, Sarah, 6, and Lauren, 3.

April Delacruz, RHIA, (BS Health Information Management) and her husband, Jay, celebrated the first birthday of their son, Benjamin Isaac, on Sept. 28. They live in Cana, Va., where she works as cancer registrar and assistant director of the health information management department of Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital.

Theresa Dudash Steimle, RHIA, (BS Health Information Management) entered graduate school in Methodist College’s Physician Assistant Studies program this fall. She and husband, David, a 1996 ECU graduate, live in Fayetteville. Before returning to school, Steimle worked as a senior coder for the Department of Pediatrics at UNC Healthcare.

Marie Widener Williams (BS Health Information Management) married Randall Williams II on May 28. The couple lives in Richmond, Va., where she works as a coding specialist for Lexicode Corporation at Virginia Commonwealth University Health System.

2000
Julie Bernocco Dillard (BS Health Information Management) is a supervisor in the Health Information Management Department at WakeMed in Raleigh. She completed her master’s degree in health administration at Pfeiffer University in December. She married Robert Dillard on Oct. 16, 2004.

2002
Lynda Lowry (MS Audiology) won the Circle of Quality Service Award for outstanding patient care at WakeMed in Raleigh. Only one percent of employees receive the honor.

Jon Cray (MS Audiology) has been selected as center manager for the California Telephone Access Program, Communication Service for the Deaf Inc., in Stockton, Calif.

2003
Alicia Stouffer Andrews, RHIA (BS Health Information Management) married Matt Andrews, also a registered health information administrator, on May 13 in Jacksonville, Fla. She works for Health Information Associates and is site manager at Ed White Hospital in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Frances Rainford, RHIA (MBA ’05, BS Health Information Management) is the medical record manager and privacy officer for the Forsyth County Department of Public Health in Winston-Salem. She serves as secretary of the NCHIMA Piedmont Region.

Tiffany Baker Roberts (BS Health Information Management) announces the birth of her son, Collin Baker Roberts, on Jan. 17, 2006. She is the medical records coordinator at Albemarle Mental Health Center, based in Elizabeth City, which has nine units in six counties.

2005
Amy Blanchard (BS Health Information Management) passed the Registered Health Information Administrator exam on Sept. 25.

Lindsay A. Porter, RHIA, CCS, (BS Health Information Management) passed the Certified Coding Specialist certification on Sept. 25. She is a coding specialist at Maryland General Hospital in Baltimore City, Md.

David McGuire (BS Health Services Management) is a graduate student in ECU’s Physician Assistant Studies program.

2006
Monica-Danielle Belin Pridgen (BS Health Information Management) married Jason Pridgen on June 24 in Fayetteville. Now living in Connecticut, she works for the YMCA and is seeking employment related to her major.

Suzanne Francis Canady (BS Health Services Management) of Raleigh is business administrator with US Oncology.
With the new motion-analysis equipment, Gross McMillan is looking at helping them lose weight.

With the new motion-analysis equipment, Gross McMillan is looking at helping them lose weight. Such pain can keep children from following prescribed physical activity aimed at helping them lose weight.

Gross McMillan is collaborating with Dr. David Collier at the ECU Pediatric Healthy Weight Research and Treatment Center. There, an estimated 15 to 20 percent of overweight children complain of leg pain. Such pain can keep children from following prescribed physical activity aimed at helping them lose weight.

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Another professor, Dr. Bruce Albright, is studying balance and the effect of wearing adaptive shoes with rocker soles on balance control and recovery. These soles are designed to relieve pressure points and reduce foot ulcers, the main source of infection and amputation in people with diabetes. But the soles may make it more difficult for wearers to keep their balance. Albright is using an in-shoe pressure recording method to record the location, magnitude and duration of pressures on the bottom of the foot. Since they are inside the shoe, pressure information may be recorded during a variety of daily activities.

One of the original departments in the School of Allied Health Sciences, ECU’s Department of Physical Therapy shifted from a baccalaureate to a master’s program in 1995 and to a clinical doctorate program in 2004. The DPT is a three-year, 106-semester-hour program that includes 32 weeks of clinical education. It has 10 faculty members and 90 students.

High-speed cameras record subjects’ movements for computer analysis in the new lab.

(A Giant Step ~ Continued from page 8)

Drs. Blaise Williams and Wayne Scott of the Department of Physical Therapy, Gross McMillan can then focus on ways to improve movement and prevent joint injury, such as increasing leg strength and flexibility and changing physical activity recommendations.

Gross McMillan will present an abstract of her research in February at the American Physical Therapy Association Combined Sections Meeting in Boston.

The new equipment will also allow the lab to do clinical gait analysis of children and adults with cerebral palsy, stroke or those with an amputation, among other conditions. Such a facility is not currently available in eastern North Carolina. In children with cerebral palsy, computerized gait analysis has been shown to change surgical recommendations in 52 percent of patients, with an associated reduction in cost of surgery, less inappropriate surgery and an increase in the use of more conservative therapy. Post-operative gait analysis also has been shown to be a strong measure of treatment outcome and is important in determining the best plan of care. Brunt will direct this clinical gait analysis.

Another professor, Dr. Bruce Albright, is studying balance and the effect of wearing adaptive shoes with rocker soles on balance control and recovery. These soles are designed to relieve pressure points and reduce foot ulcers, the main source of infection and amputation in people with diabetes. But the soles may make it more difficult for wearers to keep their balance. Albright is using an in-shoe pressure recording method to record the location, magnitude and duration of pressures on the bottom of the foot. Since they are inside the shoe, pressure information may be recorded during a variety of daily activities.

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Graduate student Justin Pyroender places sensors on fellow student Amanda Makoff as her movements are recorded by the Gait and Balance Lab’s camera system.

High-speed cameras record subjects’ movements for computer analysis in the new lab.

(Continued from page 25)

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Kevin Youngs, MSPT
Clinical Instructor
Karen Eastwood
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Spencer Cole, MPAS, PA-C
Clinical Assistant Professor
Julie Daniel-Yount,
MHS, PA-C
Clinical Assistant Professor
Carolyn Pugh, MHS, PA-C
Didactic Education Coordinator
Peggy (Dody) McMillen,
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Paul Toriello, RhD
Assistant Professor
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Professor, Director of Doctoral Studies
Cathy Moore
Office Assistant
Kathryn Dail
Office Assistant
The School of Allied Health Sciences announces the following faculty additions: Steve Cohen, Julie Daniel-Yount, John Heilmann, Nathalie Mizelle, Julie Morrow, Timothy Reistetter, Pat Royal, Bonita Sasnett and Wayne B. Scott.

**Steve Cohen**, clinical associate professor in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies, received his bachelor's of science at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and master's of physician assistant studies at the University of Nebraska. He previously taught in physician assistant programs in Florida and worked as an orthopedic surgical physician assistant in Hawaii, Colorado, Florida, Alabama and North Carolina. He has a daughter, Kierstin, 12.

**Julie Daniel-Yount**, clinical coordinator in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies, is an alumna of ECU's Physician Assistant Studies program. She received a bachelor's degree from Barton College and master's of health sciences from Duke University. Her clinical work has focused on children with developmental disabilities with particular interest in autism spectrum disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. She and her husband, Brad, also a physician assistant, have a 1-year-old daughter, Edie.

**John Heilmann**, assistant professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, received his bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Cincinnati and his doctorate at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. His research interests include measurement of children's language in naturalistic contexts and language development of children with atypical linguistic profiles. His wife, Beth, is a speech-language pathologist in the Regional Rehabilitation Center at Pitt County Memorial Hospital.

**Nathalie Mizelle**, assistant professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Studies, holds degrees in psychology and rehabilitation studies with emphasis on rehabilitation counseling and vocational evaluation from North Carolina Central University and ECU. She received her doctorate in rehabilitation psychology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Her research interests include resiliency of individuals with disabilities and their families, multicultural issues in counseling and school-to-work transition issues.

**Julie Morrow**, clinical instructor and coordinator of external clinical education in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Pittsburgh. After receiving her certificate of clinical competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, she worked as a speech language pathologist in the Pittsburgh schools and in northern Virginia before establishing her own private practice. Now in Greenville, Morrow and husband, Rob Evans, live closer to their five children and six grandchildren.

**Timothy Reistetter** has joined the Department of Occupational Therapy. He received a master's in occupational therapy from Shenandoah University and his doctorate in occupational therapy from Texas Women's University. Previously Reistetter was a research associate at Texas Institute of Rehabilitation and Research, where he studied traumatic brain injury and stroke. At ECU he will research spasticity and movement with state-of-the-art motion analysis equipment. He and his wife, Kristine, also an occupational therapist, have three children.

**Pat Royal** has joined the Department of Health Services and Information Management. She previously served as an assistant professor in family medicine at the Brody School of Medicine. She has worked in home health, hospice care and dialysis health care. Royal received her bachelor's in psychology from Mount Olive College, her master's in social work and her doctorate in educational leadership at ECU. Royal has two daughters and two grandchildren.

**Bonita Sasnett** has joined the Department of Health Services and Information Management. Sasnett received her master's in health education and her doctorate in educational leadership from ECU. She previously served as coordinator of the interdisciplinary rural health training program for the Eastern Area Health Education Center and Brody School of Medicine. She has two children, Tyler, 20, and Josh, 19.

**Wayne B. Scott**, assistant professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, received a bachelor's in anthropology, a master's in physical therapy, and a doctorate in biomechanics and movements science all from the University of Delaware. He completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Maryland at Baltimore, where he examined muscle function in persons with HIV. His research focus at ECU will be on the effects of obesity and diabetes on muscle function. Wayne and his wife, Jennifer, have two children, Atticus, 4, and Olivia, 1.
Alliance is published annually by the East Carolina University School of Allied Health Sciences for alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the school. Send your story ideas or comments to the Editor, Office of News and Information, Division of Health Sciences, Lakeside Annex #3, 600 Moye Boulevard, Greenville, NC 27834, 252-744-3764, or e-mail baityc@ecu.edu.

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Calendar 2007 - Allied health celebrates 40 years

February
9-10 Jean Mills Health Symposium Expanded Two-Day Conference Health Issues Affecting African-Americans and Hispanics, Greenville Hilton
16 37th Annual Symposium of the ECU Chapter of National Student Speech Language Hearing Association Dysphagia Services in the Public Schools, Greenville Convention Center

March
8 ECU Centennial Celebration begins

April
7 ECU Spring Open House
22-28 National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week
National Occupational Therapy Month

May
2 Occupational Therapy Graduate Research Symposium
4 School of Allied Health Sciences Graduate Recognition Ceremony
5 ECU Spring Commencement
National Better Hearing and Speech Month

September
16-22 National Rehabilitation Awareness Week

October
6-12 National Physician Assistant Week
School of Allied Health Sciences Annual Family Picnic
National Physical Therapy Month

November
3-9 National Health Information and Technology Week
5-9 Allied Health Professions Week Health Fair

Dean Stephen Thomas, J. Craig Souza, Vice Chair of the UNC Board of Governors, Chancellor Steve Ballard and Stephen D. Showfety, chairman of the ECU Board of Trustees, cut the ribbon for the new School of Allied Health Sciences on September 22.
Farewell, old friend.

Buildings and careers may change but you can still keep in touch. In each issue of Alliance, we share news with your classmates wherever they are. We love photos, so send them along with your news by e-mail to baityc@ecu.edu or mail to Alliance Class Notes, Attn: Crystal Baity, editor, Health Sciences News and Information, Lakeside Annex #3, 600 Moye Blvd., Greenville NC 27834.

We look forward to hearing your news!