Cold weather is suddenly upon us in Grand Forks, signifying the change in seasons. Similarly, there have been changes recently within the Department of Physical Therapy. After 21 years of exceptional leadership for the Department, Tom Mohr, PhD, decided to step down from the position as chair. Tom informed the department last winter, with the intent of returning to full-time teaching within the department. Subsequently, Tom was appointed to the inaugural position of associate dean of health sciences by Joshua Wynne, dean of the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences. While Tom will continue his full-time faculty position within the Department, he will also oversee the health sciences within the school including the departments of Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies and Medical Laboratory Science.

Last spring, Dean Wynne initiated an internal search for the chair position and I was appointed, effective July 1, 2014. It is a great honor to be appointed as only the third chair of the department since its inception in 1967. I graduated from the UND PT Department and went on to obtain a PhD in Pharmacology, Physiology and Therapeutics from UND in 2003. I have been a faculty member within the department since the mid-1990s and am excited for the opportunity to lead the program. As a member of the North Dakota Board of Physical Therapy, I have been able to serve the profession locally and nationally through involvement in the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy.

The department also has a new director of clinical education (DCE). Beverly Johnson, PhD, decided to step back from the DCE position after 23 years of excellent leadership and development of UND PT clinical education. She will continue to be a full-time faculty member within the department and has assumed the duties of assistant DCE. Cindy Flom-Meland, PhD, was appointed DCE effective July 1, 2014. Cindy is a Grand Forks native and graduate of the UND PT Department. Cindy went on to obtain her PhD from the Department of Teaching and Learning at UND. As the assistant academic coordinator of clinical education within the Department, Cindy worked closely with clinical sites, clinical instructors and students to facilitate exceptional clinical learning experiences. She is active in the American Physical Therapy Association at the state, regional and national level.

The UND PT program has changed in other ways this past year. The program has collaborated with the UND Division of Sports Medicine and two regional healthcare systems, Altru Health System and Sanford Health, to develop a Sports Physical Therapy Residency Program. The residency is a one-year program including coursework, mentored clinical experiences, and on-field sports coverage. The program is coordinated through the UND PT Department by Gary Schindler, PT, DPT, ATC, CSCS. Applications for admission to the sports residency were accepted in the spring. The first resident, J.J. Ferguson of Drayton, N.D., started the year-long program in August just in time for the beginning of football season at UND. The sports residency program is not currently accredited through the American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education (ABPTRFE), but will be submitting materials to initiate the accreditation process later this year.

After an extensive planning process, ground was broken for the new School of Medicine and Health Sciences building. The building will bring together all of the programs and departments under one roof in a state-of-the-art building that will accommodate growing class sizes and emphasize interprofessional education.

The PT Class of 2017 began “eating, drinking and sleeping” physical therapy in August at the same time the second-year students began their clinical experiences, while the third-year students are excited for their final year. On that note, we really appreciate all of the clinical instructors and clinical sites who provide critical educational experiences for the development of future physical therapy professionals. We couldn’t do what we do without you!

Finally, please keep us up to date with pictures and address changes. We enjoy hearing from you and seeing pictures of you and your families.

David Relling, PT, PhD
Chair, Department of Physical Therapy,
UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences

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**From the Chair**

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Focus on Alumni

Lori (Baszler) Charlton, PT

Lori is a 1984 graduate of the UND PT Department and is employed at PeaceHealth Medical Group in Vancouver, Wash., specializing in clinical informatics. She had previously practiced in the areas of acute, subacute and outpatient care, and has served in leadership roles over the years.

When asked how the physical therapy profession has changed her life, Lori answered with one word—enrichment. She would encourage new practitioners to focus on relationships with patients and their support systems, and the care teams.

Lori and her husband Joe, also a 1984 UND graduate, have been married for 30 years. They have two daughters. Kate, 26, is an environmental engineer and Annie, 20, is a senior at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Wash., majoring in human services. In her spare time, Lori enjoys figure skating and skiing.

Mike Kroke, PT

Graduating from the UND PT Department in 1984, Mike owns a private practice in Fargo, N.D., in partnership with an occupational therapist. PT/OT Partners was established in 2011.

Mike has specialized in orthopedic and sports medicine for the majority of his career. He has a special interest in the treatment of acute and chronic myofascial pain utilizing conventional physical therapy along with trigger point dry needling, for which he is currently pursuing certification. He also has a special interest in the treatment of temporomandibular disorders (TMD), working with dentists in the Fargo area.

Early in his career, Mike worked with patients in long-term care, home health, and acute-care hospital settings before focusing solely on orthopedic and sports medicine, where he managed the physical therapy department along with being a full-time clinician. He said he has learned from all settings and that they were beneficial in helping him grow in his career.

For new practitioners, Mike would encourage continued education after graduation, staying abreast of current medical literature and research. He said the challenge is in avoiding complacency and taking patients for granted.

When asked about the future of the profession, Mike said that healthcare, in general, finds itself at an interesting time with larger medical groups positioning to gain a greater market share in the hopes that the new government insurance programs will be more favorable to them than smaller hospitals and clinics. He feels there will be fewer private practices, but that they will continue to exist not for the financial rewards, but for the freedom they provide. “I know we have a lot to offer patients,” he said. “Whatever transpires, I know we will continue to be an important part of the healthcare team.”

Mike said the PT profession has made his life more fulfilling and that he feels fortunate to be in a career that he still enjoys 30 years after he started his career. “We have the opportunity to impact people’s lives every day in a positive way and that is rewarding,” he said.

Mike and his wife Denise, BSPT ’86, have two boys. Jake is attending North Dakota State University in Fargo and Jared is a senior at West Fargo High School. During their leisure time, they enjoy scuba diving and Mike enjoys running, golfing and fishing.

Barbara Nash, PT, DPT

Graduating from the UND PT Department in 1984, Barbara started her career at the Life Skills and Transition Center (formerly the Developmental Center) in Grafton, N.D. She said that while she was employed there, she learned about true persistence and passionate patient advocacy. In addition, she learned proper wheelchair positioning, but with a creative approach, that she has used her entire professional career.

Barbara spent several years working part-time for both WilMac Special Education Unit and Bethel Lutheran Home in Williston, N.D., before joining St. Alexius Medical Center in Bismarck, N.D., in 1990. At St. Alexius, she rotated through all areas, except Sports Medicine, with primary responsibilities in the area of inpatient rehabilitation.

While she has enjoyed all her various areas of practice, she said she truly loves inpatient rehab and all the challenges that it presents. Spinal cord injury (SCI) rehab in particular has been a life-long passion. Her interest in SCI led to volunteering at the National Wheelchair Sports and Recreation Camp (NWSC) held at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch near Rochester, Minn., and with Joni and Friends’ Wheels for the World (WFTW), which provides properly fitting wheelchairs to people in need in developing countries.

Throughout her involvement with the NWSC, Barbara said she had the opportunity to learn a great deal about wheelchair fit and function for community use as well as in sports. Volunteers at the camp included some of the first participants in American wheelchair sports and inventors of the rigid wheelchair and sit ski, and they were very generous in sharing their expertise with her. “I have been active, if not very successful, in promoting local wheelchair athletics,” she said. As a patient advocate, Barbara feels that wheelchair athletics are important not only from a wellness standpoint, but also in promoting a more positive and accepting social environment for her patients.

Barbara’s involvement in sports for the disabled and WFTW led to a trip to Ghana, West Africa, where physical therapists begged for intervention. With the assistance of several churches, Williston State College, the University of Mary, and UND faculty, among many others, three students from Ghana have since graduated with their DPT degrees: Samuel Owiredu and Lydia (Continued on page 3)
**Focus on Alumni (Continued from page 2)**

Mary Wehde, PT, DScPT, NCS

Graduating from the UND PT Department in 1984, Mary has been employed by Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., for 30 years. For the past 29 years, she has specialized in caring for adult neurology patients, particularly those with stroke or brain injuries. She is a neurologic clinical specialist (NCS) and received her Doctorate of Science in Physical Therapy from the University of Maryland-Baltimore.

Mary has a special interest in health and wellness, and global health, which she has incorporated into her practice. She is also a supervisor and says she finds it challenging to inspire others in the constantly changing medical environment.

Her research interests encompass the areas of brain injury, health, and wellness. Her doctoral project was titled, “Educational Programming for Personal Trainers: Exercise Implementation for Clients with Neurological Impairment.”

In addition to caring for neurology patients, she is an instructor in the Mayo School of Health Sciences and has had the opportunity to teach many classes, primarily focused on stroke and brain rehabilitation. She has also coordinated a class on health and wellness for many years.

Mary has had the privilege of being involved in multiple Mayo medical trips to Port-au-Prince, Haiti (pictured). She says it is an amazing and heartbreaking experience. Her mission is to teach the Haitian therapy technicians (there are no therapists) how to do the best they can to treat patients in the most horrific of conditions and circumstances. “Though my mission is to teach, I have learned more in Haiti than I can possibly ever explain,” she said.

She would encourage new practitioners starting their professional careers to keep their options open. During her first year at UND, she was asked in what area she might like to specialize. Her reply was, “I don’t know, but not brain injury.”

For the future of physical therapy practice, Mary said she feels there will be a need to be agile and think of unique ways to solve problems regarding decreased lengths of stay. She also sees less outpatient services being covered.

Mary said she feels fortunate to work in a field that provides so much to others, and she believes there are few careers as rewarding and fulfilling as being a therapist. “I know that what I do every day really does make a difference in someone’s life,” she said.

**Barbara Nash (Continued from page 2)**

Obeng from the University of Mary and Kenneth Wutoh from UND. Samuel and Kenneth have since co-founded a nongovernmental organization in Ghana called Stepping with Faith Rehabilitation, or Step FaR. They each travel to Ghana once or twice a year, often leading teams, where they engage in direct care as well as both professional and community education. There is a fledgling school offering Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy degrees at the University of Ghana, but it is solely academic with no lab or hands-on experience. Kenneth and Samuel provide lab-based seminars as well as what they call reverse clinical affiliations, where they spend a week at various PT clinics around the country. They work side by side, sharing their knowledge and expertise with their Ghanaian counterparts. Together, they have helped set up several new PT departments in various hospitals and their wives Kari Owiredu, also a DPT, and Amanda Vatsaas Wutoh, a special education instructor, often accompany them and offer further services in their own areas of expertise. Barbara’s personal involvement in Ghana also continues with taking teams to assist in many different areas, but working primarily with Mephibosheth Training Center, a boarding school for children with disabilities run by an American physical therapist and husband near Cape Coast. “The needs are endless and the workers few,” Barbara said. “But progress is being made!”

When asked what advice she would give to new practitioners, she said, “Don’t be afraid to give it your all. It is true that you get back in proportion to what you give. So go ahead and love your patients, and your days will be endlessly rewarding (sometimes frustrating, but still rewarding).”

For the future in physical therapy practice, Barbara said she believes there will be more therapists moving into private pay practice. “The human body only heals so fast,” she said. “And as therapy windows keep narrowing, I believe there will be a growing need to treat people beyond what third-party payers are willing to provide.”

Barbara retired from St. Alexius Medical Center a few years ago to more fully pursue her mission interests. She is currently employed as missions coordinator at Legacy United Methodist Church in Bismarck, where she coordinates local and international mission involvement. An ongoing part of this includes collecting textbooks, wheelchairs and other medical supplies that support various physical-therapy-related missions, as well as leading medical and educational short-term mission trips to Ghana, West Africa and Thailand. She said she is always looking for volunteers! Barbara and her husband Dave have three grown children and several grandchildren that she is very proud of and loves deeply. Dave is a certified financial planner and is also co-director of the Bismarck Marathon. Barbara said she thoroughly enjoys gardening and photography when she has time and that she’s also trying to learn the Thai language, although she said it’s not going very well.

Barbara said there is no part of her life that her profession has not influenced and enriched. “Not only has it allowed me to support my family while doing something I truly loved, but because the profession has so many choices of venues, it also allowed me to work less when I needed to be able to spend more time with my family,” she said. She has enjoyed the fact that there is always some new opportunity or ongoing intellectual challenge to keep things interesting. She said the biggest way PT has changed her life has been that the profession has given her the knowledge and skills, the ways and means, to be of real and substantial assistance to those who suffer. “I have traveled many places, waded in the Amazon, planted rice in Thailand, developed deep friendships and met so many wonderful people because my PT skills were needed in that place at that time,” she said. “I am grateful.”
Chris Kraemer, MPT

A 1998 graduate of the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences Physical Therapy Department, Chris is the owner and a therapist at RehabAuthority Physical Therapy in Fargo, N.D. He specializes in treating the spine, neck and back, and is also certified as an orthopedic specialist with special interest in lower extremity mechanics.

Chris said he enjoys mentoring the physical therapists of tomorrow and trying to instill a passion for continued learning and evidence-based medicine. “Working with the students facilitates my continued development as a clinician as I challenge myself to stay current with research and best patient practices,” he said.

Recalling his own experiences as a student, he said he had a clinical instructor who was actively taking courses through the International Academy of Orthopedic Medicine (IAOM), an evidence-based group that made clinical decision-making and treatment of specific conditions rather straightforward. Chris said that when he had completed his affiliations, he wanted to take courses with the IAOM to better his manual skills and facilitate the development of clinical reasoning skills.

“I practice evidence-based medicine in my practice on a daily basis, and the students that I am involved with do as well,” he said. “There are many effective practices that we as therapists complete that have not been ‘proven’ in evidence but have also not been ‘disproven’ as effective. Therefore, evidence-based practice plays a large role in my treatment, but ultimately care will be personalized. In other words, the right patient gets the right treatment at the right time.”

Chris said that having a student in the clinic challenges him to dive further into research, and facilitates professional discussion on rationalization for treatment procedures and clinical reasoning. On a personal level, he said this helps keep things “fresh” in the workplace. He also enjoys meeting new people and watching their passion for PT grow. Recently, Chris was working with a student on pain science and therapeutic neuroscience education. He said it was extremely rewarding to see her interest level shift toward this fascinating topic. She did a great deal of reading on the topic even though it was not formally assigned. At the conclusion of her affiliation, she presented an informative, evidence-based in-service on the subject. “On her last day, new materials arrived for the clinic to help with patient education in this area,” Chris said. “She began clapping and jumping up and down in excitement for these new materials, and even though it was her last day, she actually stayed late to look through them. It really indicated true interest in the topic and this facet of the profession. It felt great to know that I was a part of developing that passion for the subject as well.”

Jill Steinmetz, PT

Jill Steinmetz graduated from the UND PT Department in 1999 and is employed at St. Luke’s Children’s Hospital in Boise, Idaho. She specializes in acute-care pediatrics in hospital and home-care settings. Jill also works weekly in a multidisciplinary clinic in the area of pediatric oncology and monthly in a clinic setting with patients who have spina bifida.

Jill said that being a clinical instructor increases her awareness of what current DPT students know, and it challenges her to adapt her teaching techniques to each individual learner. She reports that students “make her more accountable for her own current practice in pediatrics.” Jill enjoys seeing a student become a confident, capable clinician in the acute-care pediatric setting. She sees herself being a more competent instructor and using evidence-based practice (EBP) to devise treatment plans. “The students of today are very knowledgeable about the practice guide and using evidence in their treatment plans as well,” she said. “Professionally, I feel that each student teaches me more about the profession of physical therapy, and I attempt to teach them the art of what I love in the area of pediatrics.”

Looking back on her own clinical affiliations as a student, Jill said that clinical instructors are instrumental in a student’s confidence and ability to start their first job after graduation. She remembers the “different styles of teaching and mentoring” and those that worked best for her as a student. Jill strives to offer students the kind of mentorship and guidance they need without hindering or impeding their learning. She feels it’s important to adapt and change when necessary, and for the clinical instructor (CI) and the student to have an open line of communication. “There is always more to learn, and I feel that being transparent and available to students is very important,” she said.

When asked to share a heartwarming story involving her experiences with students on affiliations, Jill said a recent student was involved in the evaluation-to-discharge process of an adolescent who was very ill and close to death. The student had a major influence on the child’s rehabilitation program and was able to see him walk out the door and go back to being a successful young man. The student has since been in a documentary video and in the news with this adolescent. Even though the former student no longer lives in the area, the local community remembers the positive influence she had on the young man.

Jill feels that EBP, along with outcome measures, is the future of physical therapy as we know it, and that the use of EBP in the profession is needed in order to yield the best outcomes in an efficient and cost-effective manner. She said her role as a CI is to offer these practices to the patient population she serves, and to allow the student to learn the importance and see the value in it, which is vital to the longevity of physical therapists. In addition, Jill said she would like to see CI credentialing courses with mandatory re-instruction every five years, preferably online and affordable. “I think curriculums are always changing, and the CI should be aware of these changes,” she said. “It would be helpful if the students’ institution would help enable CIs to take these courses.”

“Being a CI is a rewarding experience that offers growth as a clinician and pride in giving back to our profession,” Jill said. “Without clinical instructors, students would not have the clinical mentoring they need, and our profession would suffer from it. Clinical instruction is vital to the success of all the graduates from the accredited PT programs. It’s well worth anyone’s time.”

(Continued on page 5)
Kevin O’Brien, PT, DPT

A 2005 graduate of the UND PT Department, Kevin has been employed for nine years at Altru Health System in the Outreach Therapy Department. For two years, he worked at many of their regional sites, but for the past seven years, has been practicing at Altru Clinic in East Grand Forks, Minn. He specializes in outpatient orthopedics and sports medicine, specifically assessing and treating back and neck pain via The McKenzie Institute’s Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy method.

In the role of clinical instructor, Kevin said he enjoys seeing the development and progression of students toward independent work and that he has been provided an excellent opportunity to be able to further progress the PT field, as well as add some variety to the routine of clinical practice. He feels the students are always gracious and eagerly seeking out opportunities to learn.

Remembering his own clinical affiliations, Kevin shared that his instructors had a wide range of clinical styles and skill levels, but the one thing he took home at the end was that PT practice allows an individual to develop their own treatment style, and the freedom to make his own choices was imparted on him early on in his clinical education. “That initial push to develop critical thinking skills, to self-assess and be able to modify my own skill set has had the largest effect on me as a clinician and it is something that I try to impart in all of my students,” he said.

When asked about a humorous story involving his experience with students, Kevin recalled a cook-off competition, a long-standing tradition at Altru Clinic. For the category of Mexican cuisine, a student brought in a cake decorated as the Mexican flag. However, he opted to leave out the intricate drawing of the eagle in the center of the flag. “Unfortunately for him, this disqualified him because the Mexican flag minus the eagle is the exact same as the Italian flag,” he said. “This was discussed at his final evaluation under the cultural awareness/sensitivity portion.”

Kevin said the opportunity to work with more students has personally affected the way he approaches parenting his own son. “There is a definite learning curve as a parent, and practice in teaching has given me more insight into the way people develop, learn and express ideas,” he said. “I feel it has made me more patient and more accepting of other ways of doing things that may be just as effective as the way I would have done it.” Professionally, Kevin feels that being a clinical instructor has driven him to stay skilled and specialized. His focus is one of competitiveness and a desire to be one of the best clinicians, and that having students looking to him as a role model increases that drive.

As the physical therapy profession continues to broaden in scope and complexity, Kevin feels there will be a transition toward the residency model currently adopted by medical doctors. He said therapy is becoming much more subspecialized, and it would not surprise him to see students focusing more on developing a specialization early in their education. He also sees the results of the interprofessional education taking place at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences in the clinics during students’ field education, with medical, nursing occupational therapy, physician assistant and PT students working on collaborative teams under the supervision of clinical instructors.

When asked about evidence-based practice in his role as a clinical instructor, Kevin said, “It is absolutely vital. For instance, in my setting of outpatient orthopedics with the PT professions pushing toward becoming the “go-to” provider for nonsurgical musculoskeletal conditions via direct access, we need to prove to the public and to other medical disciplines that our evaluative methods and treatment interventions have the backing of solid research and statistics. With insurers decreasing reimbursements across the board and the public becoming more knowledgeable about medical conditions and their options, it is our responsibility to provide more than a verbal reassurance that what we do provides more than anecdotal benefits. The old saying, ‘In God we trust, everyone else bring data,’ is more important now than ever before in the history of our profession.”

Kevin thanks the UND PT Department, Northland Community and Technical College and all of the learning institutions that use Altru Clinic in East Grand Forks as a clinical site. “Year in and year out, I see more talented young people coming into our clinic,” he said. “Their hard work, and the hard work of faculty and clinical educators, is certainly paying off. I look forward to seeing the growth and change that is expected in our field in the years to come.”

Upcoming Event

Physical Therapy Alumni and Friends Reception
Thursday, February 5, 2015
6:30-8:30 p.m.
The Westin Indianapolis
50 S. Capitol Ave., Grand Room 2

In conjunction with the APTA Combined Sections Meeting. Hors d’oeuvres and refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP by Jan. 5 to kristen.peterson@med.und.edu, 701.777.4305, or at www.med.UND.edu/events/pt-2015.cfm.
Stork Report

Heather (Sletten), DPT ’07, and Jon Studsrud became the proud parents of a baby girl Nov. 12, 2013. Her name is Kenley, and she was 8 lbs. 0 oz., and 19 inches at birth.

Owen arrived at the home of Emily (Janssen), DPT ’11, and Brett Kubat on April 10, 2014. He weighed 7 lbs. 2 oz., and was 20 inches.

Holly made her debut April 8, 2014, to the home of Jen, DPT ’06, and Cass Brekhus. She was 6 lbs. 11 oz., and 20 inches.

Lincoln was born on June 14, 2014, to Suzi (Steffes), DPT ’05, and Damian Sobolik. He weighed 7 lbs. 8 oz., and was 20 inches.

Kathryn (Chaney), DPT ’14, and Ian Bjerke welcomed Andrew on July 29, 2014. He weighed 9 lbs. 0 oz., and was 22 inches.