

Physical Therapy and Athletic Training

2020 Department Newsletter



We're All in This Together

Message from the Chair

I am very proud of the people I associate with at work – students, staff, faculty, clinical instructors and alumni. I continually hear mention of a willingness to adhere to health guidelines and take the steps necessary to protect themselves, those they work with and care about.

Our students have been remarkable. Because of their commitment to learning and good health awareness we continue to hold clinical lab sessions this semester. These labs consist of small and consistently-assigned groups that adhere to safety guidelines, including PPE and social distancing as possible. I am also impressed with our students being proactive in reporting when they are not feeling well and following up with responsible behavior and action.

Because of their actions we continue the program's clinical labs and full-time clinical experiences while some other programs in the country have had to postpone.

Faculty and staff have responded to current conditions with dedication and innovation as well. They're embracing new forms of teaching, incorporating online and mixed methodologies. Research continues with incredible success. Clinical care is being delivered prudently and progress continues to be made on numerous program initiatives. I am fortunate to be surrounded by such committed, stalwart and inspiring associates.

This could certainly be thought of as the strangest of times. Regardless of our varying circumstances we have all created a list of what constitutes the peculiarities of the year 2020. We have all had to pivot or shift or adapt – choose your verb – simply to manage the unanticipated. I hope you are as proud of the resilience and flexibility that you and those you find around you have shown as I am of those around me.

Please stay well and healthy and keep us posted of your successes and adventures.

Thanks,

Scott



A Departmental Response to the Pandemic



The Physical Therapy Program's Response to the Pandemic

Walk into the Health Professional Education Building on a weekday in September 2020. You will hear students discussing the anatomy, physiology, and kinematics of the shoulder. You will hear discussions on an upcoming group assignment and groans about studying for Pathokinesiology or Tests and Measures, or some other class. These sounds are all too familiar to any current or past physical therapy student, but what you would see is something very different.

[Read more](#)



Transitioning Athletic Training During a Pandemic

Like everything in March 2020, COVID-19 brought athletic training to a screeching halt. However, the Athletic Training (AT) Program at the University of Utah was in the middle of a degree transition. We had excitedly sent out acceptance letters to their first Master of Athletic Training cohort just three weeks before the shutdown. Suddenly, we were trying to determine if there would be a traditional start to our new program. We also quickly pivoted our baccalaureate students to online learning to make sure our graduating students were ready for their future careers.

[Read more](#)

Community Outreach



The Wellness Bus

The Wellness Bus is part of a flagship initiative of a large gift from the Larry H. and Gail Miller Foundation to the University of Utah. "Three years ago, The Foundation gifted the university money with the hope of addressing the the diabetes epidemic in the state of Utah and beyond." says Robin Marcus, PT, PhD, FAPTA, professor within the Department of Physical Therapy and Athletic Training and the University's inaugural Chief Wellness Officer.

[Read more](#)

A High-Flying Career with the Circus of Circuses

By Bill Keshlear, College of Health

University of Utah alumna, Jaclyn Arduini, was backstage last year at the Maverick Center in West Valley City, home of the Grizzlies, the minor league affiliate of the professional hockey team Anaheim Ducks. She was watching circus magic, but her professional focus was the same as it would've been anticipating a full-body check.



[Read more](#)

Alumni Spotlights

Research

After graduating from the University of Utah's Physical Therapy program in 1984, Michele Basso, Ed.D, PT decided she wanted to teach. She was accepted to Teacher's College at Columbia University and received a master's degree in Motor Learning from the Movement Sciences and Education Department. However, something unexpected happened along the way: she discovered she had a brain for research, she could see things from a research design perspective, confounding variables and point out factors that would mar interpretation. Soon, this discovery led her to an Ed.D. and set the stage for a career in brain and spinal cord research.



Even as an undergraduate at the University of Utah, Dr. Basso demonstrated a talent for research. She remembers a time in physical therapy school when the students were in a lab performing repeated measurements on the knee. She started to question whether the measurements would be valid due to inconsistencies of some people wearing pants and others not. After the lab, the instructor of the class, Gerard Brennan, came up to her and told her she had a really good mind for science. No one had ever said anything like that to her before.

It didn't take long for Dr. Basso's findings to gain an audience. Her first publication, written with fellow student Lo Knapp, while still in physical therapy school was published in the journal *Physical Therapy* in 1987. She explored a comparison of two continuous passive motion protocols for patients with total knee implants. Since then, she has gone on to write and contribute to 77 scholarly articles, furthering her own natural curiosity and advancing neurologic research.

Dr. Basso says the reason she is a scientist is simple, "I learn something new every day. I get really excited when I see my research translate into practice". Nowhere is that translation more apparent – or her excitement more evident – than in her pioneering research in translating spinal cord injury improvements from an animal model

to people living with spinal cord injury.

"Nothing in spinal cord injury is easy," Dr. Basso says, but difficulty is exactly where people like Dr. Basso can find success. Her lab is currently exploring the role myelin plays in neuroplasticity, recovery, and improvements in function. "Everything we know about motor learning, about recovery, about facilitating improvement in function and performance is based on neuroplasticity," she says. "We are now finding that myelin is a key player. Neuroplasticity doesn't capture it all because now we have *myelin* plasticity."

Along with her research, Dr. Basso enjoys watching her lab grow and change with each new graduate student who joins her team. Because of one former grad student, her lab has a strong background in neuropathic pain; because of another, her team has a foundation in animal models of rehabilitation strategies; and because of another, innovative new discoveries in myelin plasticity. "Graduate students drive some of the coolest science," she says.

Dr. Basso considers the training she received from the University of Utah Physical Therapy program as the whole package – providing strong science, foundational knowledge and encouragement. She left the program ready to be engaged at the national level. The program prepared her to take on whatever would come next in her career after graduation.

Clinical

Physical therapists know the value of patient-centered care. Stephen Hunter, PT, DPT, OCS, FAPTA, is no exception.

Through research, clinical experience, and leading a Dream Team of Internal Process Control experts, Dr. Hunter, a graduate of the University of Utah Department of Physical Therapy and Athletic Training, has forged connections with therapists and patient-centered care.

Thanks to his schooling at the U, both his undergraduate degree in 1984 and his DPT in 2008, Dr. Hunter saw the important connection between research and how research guides the care that is delivered across an entire health system. Across all practice settings from acute, to home care, to outpatients, and with all rehabilitation providers including, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, athletic training and audiology.

As an undergraduate, Dr. Hunter worked in a muscular dystrophy clinic in the evenings after school and wrote his senior thesis on how physical therapists use the PT Journal in their practice. He could see, even in his early career, how important evidence-based practice was to the profession of physical therapy.

Upon graduating from the U, Dr. Hunter was hired by Intermountain Healthcare and given the task to develop content for their Back School. He was flown across the



country to meet with back programs and gather as much information as he could. This experience, along with others, led to involvement in his first publication in the journal Spine. His article answered the question of what predicted return to work for railroad workers with back injuries.

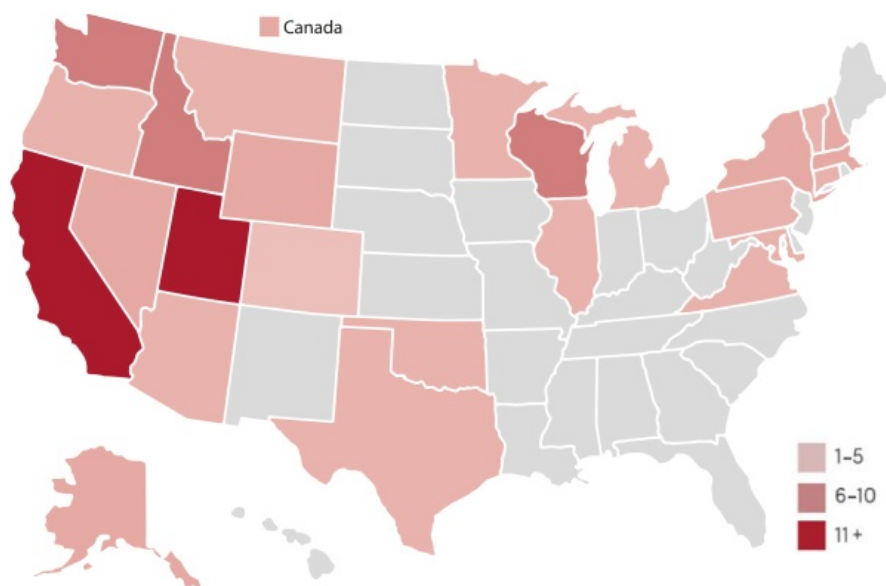
Dr. Hunter quickly moved into management at Intermountain Healthcare where he managed 12 outpatient orthopedic physical therapy clinics. In 2018 when Intermountain restructured their rehab facilities and Dr. Hunter became the Director of the Internal Process Control Team whose primary responsibility is to set standards, establish evidence based processes, and standardize education for their rehab professionals.

Dr. Hunter has also been active within the APTA sitting on the scientific advisory board for the PT outcomes registry and working on the recent Total Knee Replacement Care Process Guidelines.

When a provider calls Dr. Hunter and says, because of you and your team we are now doing something different and patients are getting better faster, with fewer visits, and better outcomes, this is what is most exciting to him. Knowing that his work is translating to the therapist-patient level and patients are getting better care because of it.

Dr. Hunter stills sees patients one day a week in the clinic. "I pinch myself daily to make sure the career path I have been on is reality, not a dream!" Dr. Hunter says, reflecting on the trajectory that has brought him to this point. And he is grateful to the U for setting him up for success. "The University of Utah prepared me for this".

Current Students



The University of Utah's Physical Therapy and Athletic Training programs welcome students from around the country and the world. This graphic is an illustration of the geographic diversity of the programs' classes of 2021-2023.

New Faculty



**Elizabeth Lane, PT, DPT, PhD,
OCS, FAAOMPT**

Elizabeth Lane is an Assistant Research Faculty with the Department of Physical Therapy and Athletic Training. She earned her doctorate in physical therapy from the Medical College of Georgia and Ph. D. in Rehabilitation Sciences from the University of Utah. She has completed residency training in orthopedics and manual therapy fellowship training. Her teaching responsibilities include orthopedic assessment and intervention. Her research interests are treatment of low back pain, pain science, and dry needling. She has served on the Residency and Fellowship Education Special Interest Group for the Academy of Education of the American Physical Therapy Association.



**Craig Switzler, DHSc, LAT,
ATC**

Craig Switzler returns to the University of Utah as the Coordinator of Clinical Education for the Athletic Training Program. He completed his undergraduate degree in Exercise and Sport Science with an emphasis in Athletic Training at University of Utah. He earned his athletic training post-professional Masters of Science at University of Oregon in the Department of Human Physiology. He received a doctorate in Health Sciences with an emphasis in education from A.T. Still University of Mesa, Ariz. He has worked over 15 years as an athletic trainer in a variety of settings, including small and large university athletics, industrial, inpatient and outpatient clinics, performing arts, and high school.



**Eric Robertson, PT, DPT, OCS,
FAAOMPT**

Eric Robertson is an Associate Clinical Professor within the Department of Physical Therapy and Athletic Training. Previously he served as assistant professor of physical therapy at Regis University in Denver, Colorado, and the University of Texas at El Paso. He received his bachelor's degree in physical therapy from Quinnipiac University and his doctor of physical therapy (DPT) degree from Boston University. He is board certified in orthopedics and a Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists (FAAOMPT). Dr. Robertson's research interests lie in health service utilization, evidence-based practice, clinical reasoning, and exploring the impact of technology on health care.

DPT Program Expansion

St. George Satellite Program

The DPT program is pleased to announce an extension of the current Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree to be offered at the University of Utah DPT on site in St. George, Utah. This degree program is housed in the Department of Physical Therapy and Athletic Training



within the College of Health.

[Read more](#)



Hybrid Program

The department is exploring the development of a hybrid, distance-based DPT program. In this program, students will be able to live anywhere around the country and complete a majority of this coursework at a distance. Students would make several trips to campus for lab immersions and the clinical education portion of the curriculum stay the same.

[Read more](#)

Alumni Updates



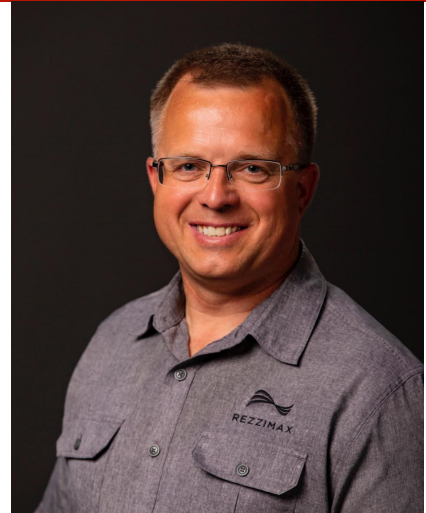
Evan Papa, PT, DPT, PhD

I am the program director at the Idaho State University physical therapy program. We recently expanded our cohort size from 24 to 48, and opened a new site in Boise. I was recently awarded an NIH grant through NIGMS to study the effect of a community-based exercise program to reduce falls in persons with Parkinson's disease.



Wendy D. Bircher, PT, EdD

Upon graduation, I worked with birth to 3 yr olds with birth defects and medically fragile programs on the Navajo Reservation for 28 years. Following that, I was a clinical director and then program director of the PTA program at San Juan College in Farmington, NM. While there, I developed the first accredited Online Hybrid PTA Program, in the nation. I am



Sharik Peck, PT

I have created a medical device, an external vagus nerve stimulator that is helping many people throughout the world. We have 3 patents on the device with 2 more pending. It is most known for its help with TBI, migraine headaches, and TMJ/TMD.



Beatriz Sunderland-White, PT

After graduating from the UofU, most of my career as a PT has been based in Oregon. I did a 1-year travel PT assignment that took me to Florida and North Carolina. I lived in Saudi Arabia for 3 years for my husband's job. We had 2 boys, who are now 9 and 7 years old. In 2018, I started my own practice in Portland, Oregon, specializing in Women's Health working predominantly with pre and postpartum women. Covid-19 turned everything upside down and I left my practice to be able to navigate the crazy times we are living. In July of this year, we moved to Guam for a 2 year assignment for my husband's job. I hope to continue my work as a PT here in Guam once my kids are back in school.



Alison McKenzie, PT, MA, DPT,
PhD

I am currently a tenured professor and Director of Anatomy Lab Operations in the Dept. of Physical Therapy at Chapman University in Orange County, CA, where I am also serving as the Faculty Senate President this year. I am also a Project Scientist at the University of California, Irvine, CA and am involved in stroke-related research. In addition, I founded and lead an inter-profesional, integrated clinical education program of intensive stroke intervention (Stroke Boot Camp) and co-founded two non-profit organizations for clinicians, researchers, individuals with stroke, and caregivers. Last year, I received the APTA's Societal Impact Award for my work in stroke.



Emma Johnson, PT, DPT

Since graduating from the U I have been working at the UofU Hospital in critical care on the Medical ICU. I thoroughly enjoy that this environment is always changing and challenging and now includes caring for our sickest patients with COVID-19. For the past two years I have been teaching labs and some lectures for the Cardiopulmonary Management course for the U's PT program. Currently I am getting more involved in value improvement and am working on a project to improve efficiency of PT orders and treatment time within the hospital.



Anne Houser, ATC

For the past six years I have been extensively involved in providing outdoor recreation opportunities to individuals with various disabilities, though working with spinal cord injury athletes are my favorite. I am on several committees for the American Canoe Association, including the Universal Paddling Committee, Advanced Communications Sub-Committee, and Intro to Paddling committee. Through my work with the ACA, I helped develop a new curriculum to teach ACA instructors how to teach paddling to paddlers with visual impairments, hearing impairments, and speech impairments. I continue to teach paddling to individuals with physical disabilities, which is where I use much of my knowledge of anatomy and biomechanics learned in my undergrad, to adapt equipment so those individuals can be efficient paddlers, regardless of their disability. After working in adaptive sports for the past 6 years, I am now pursuing a Master's degree in Social Work at the University of Utah.



Gayanne Grossman PT, EdM, BFA, FIADMS

Thanks to Kent Allsop's guidance, I have had a wonderful career as a performing arts medicine physical therapist with a specialization in dance since 1988. I am the author of the textbook Dance Science. I serve the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science (IADMS) on the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and as Treasurer. I have been the Editor-in-Chief of the IADMS Bulletin for Dancers and Teachers since 2009. My research focuses on dance, measuring turnout, tibial torsion, functional anatomy, and most recently hypermobility in dancers. I am faculty for the Performing Arts Medical Association (PAMA) certification in performing arts medicine. I teach Anatomy and Kinesiology and am the Director of Dance Wellness at Muhlenberg College. I formerly taught kinesiology and cared for the dancers at Temple University. I also cared for the dancers at the Pennsylvania Ballet and before that at the University of Utah. Thank you to the University of Utah for great training in physical therapy.



Valerie Schwalbe, PT, DPT

In 2018, I opened the first Physical Therapy clinic exclusive to pelvic health conditions (for all) in the state. Since then, we have grown to 3 therapists, all pelvic health providers. We are a cash-based clinic. I have been enjoying working directly on patients' needs, providing direct care, and have been able to introduce new graduates to this clinic type. I have built great relationships with the community, including doulas, midwives, integrative medicine, mental health professionals, Urology, OBGYN, and GI. We participate in community events, podcasts, and provide our clinic for events and continuing education opportunities. I have been proud of the clinic, its growth, the safe and validating space it provides, my fellow therapists' support, and community engagement to raise awareness and normalize the treatment of these issues.



Nathan J. Savage, PhD, DPT,
ECS, OCS, RMSK

I operate an outpatient orthopedic and sports medicine clinic in South Ogden. Since completing a PhD in Rehabilitation Science

I have published peer reviewed papers in European Spine Journal and JOSPT on electrodiagnostic testing in patients with sciatica receiving physical therapy.

Since graduating I have obtained board certification in Clinical Electrophysiology and have become the only physical therapist in Utah to certify in musculoskeletal ultrasonography (RMSK). My clinic specializes in orthopedics and includes electrodiagnostic testing (EMG/NCS) as well as diagnostic neuromuscular ultrasound imaging. Proud husband and father of three great kids!



Ian Staley, Captain Infantry
US Army, ATC

I graduated and then commissioned as an Infantry officer in the United States Army. I've lived and deployed in over ten countries and led Soldiers for over seven years. As an officer and leader in the Army, especially the infantry, we are required to train our Soldiers to a high standard of health and fitness to make sure we are always ready for anything. I've used my unique background to train soldiers on proper fitness techniques and forms to improve function and prevent injury. My Soldiers have trained and passed Army schools like Airborne, Air Assault, and Ranger as well as deployed in service to our country. I'm currently applying to teach physical education at the United States Military Academy at West Point. I'm proud of my degree and the training I received while at the University of Utah and how successful it's made me today.



Matthew D. Hansen, PT, DPT,
MPT, MBA, BS

I began my career in pediatrics and neurological rehab in Washington State.

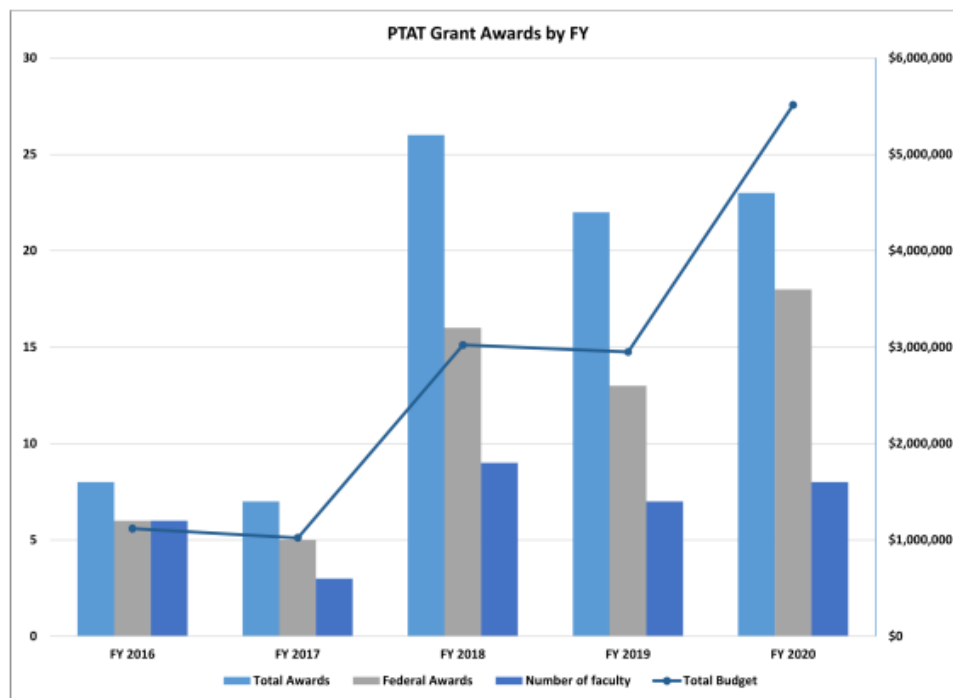
Upon completing my transitional DPT program at the UofU, I returned to WA and ran my own therapy staffing agency for 5 years. The Rocky Mountain magnet pulled us home to Utah in 2011 to be closer to family. Since then, I've worked as a

Director of Rehab, best practice and healthcare start-up consultant through my own company, author, and national speaker. During my career, I've developed a passion for population/preventative health and seeing clients in their own environment.

Consequently, I have been involved in the Home Health Industry in Utah and at a national level for the past 8 years. I left clinical operations just over a year ago to serve as the Executive Director for the Homecare & Hospice Association of Utah.

Read the rest of the exciting things our alum have been up to since they left the University of Utah [here](#).

Recent Faculty Publications and Presentations



Our faculty have been hard at work throughout 2020. Check out all the recent publications and presentations in which our faculty have participated [here](#).

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