

THE SCHOOL OF  
**PHYSICAL  
THERAPY**  
AND REHABILITATION SCIENCE

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER  
2020 - 2021



# FROM THE DESK OF THE CHAIR

Dear alumni and friends of the program,

**I hope this note finds you healthy and well.** It is my great pleasure to write to you as the new Chair of the University of Montana, School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science (UMPT). I moved into this position at the end of the 2020 academic year as the outgoing Chair, Dr. Anita Santasier, returned to a full-time faculty role. It is humbling to serve as the Chair of a program with such a long and storied history. In fact, we just graduated our 40th class. I want to take this opportunity to share updates on how our program has met the challenge of COVID-19 while still maintaining our excellence in the classroom, clinic, and with our research.

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic in March of 2020, none of us were prepared for the far-reaching effects this virus would have on us. Indeed, no part of our lives remains untouched by this terrible virus, with either friends, family, or even ourselves falling ill. Unfortunately, many of us have lost loved ones, acquaintances, and patients to COVID-19.

Preparing tomorrow's physical therapists for the task of treating patients in the presence of an ongoing pandemic has been daunting. At the time of this writing, the pandemic appears to be on the decline thanks to amazing vaccines and widespread mitigation efforts. Still, we will be dealing with COVID-19 in all healthcare settings for the foreseeable future. The multi-faceted skills of physical therapists uniquely position us to assist patients with active COVID-19 or those dealing with the broad, multi-system impacts of "long-COVID" as our Nation recovers from this pandemic. It is critical that physical therapy education adapts to meet these changing needs.

Last spring, UMPT quickly embraced the opportunity to train our students in the midst of this pandemic, viewing challenges, such as proper risk-mitigation strategies, as a way to prepare our future graduates for the new realities of clinical practice. In late spring 2020, a working group of UMPT faculty, staff, and students was formed to make recommendations for best instructional practices in the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key recommendations made by this group continue to guide our program in the classroom and our clinic nearly a year later. While the rest of the UM campus pivoted to a year of virtual learning, UMPT adopted the Centers for Disease Control guidance for healthcare workers so that we could continue face-to-face and hands-on instruction in our classrooms. We continue to provide our students with the added support they need, whether that be vaccines at the beginning of January, free personal protective equipment, or additional student support. UMPT cannot thank our clinical education partners enough for their flexibility and willingness to help us reschedule clinical affiliations for our second- and third-year students. Unlike many physical therapy programs in the west, UMPT

students remain on schedule for an on-time graduation and we have our students, staff, faculty, and clinical educators to thank. At the conclusion of the 2020-21 academic year, UMPT was proud to hold an in-person commencement and doctoral hooding ceremony in Washington Grizzly Stadium to celebrate the achievements of the UMPT Class of 2021. Several members of the UMPT Class of 2020 also received their doctoral hooding alongside the Class of 2021 since an in-person commencement was not held in 2020 due to COVID-19.



Despite the challenges that the pandemic presented, UMPT continues to thrive. We recently welcomed two new faculty members, Drs. Andy Kittelson and Brian Loyd, to our program. I hope you enjoy learning about these excellent new additions in this newsletter. Drs. Kittelson and Loyd bolster UMPT's already strong research and scholarship efforts. In 2020 alone, UMPT was awarded over \$1.6 million to support research and services in vestibular and musculoskeletal disorders, injury prevention in Soldiers, geriatric healthcare, and healthcare access in Montana. During this same time period, UMPT faculty published 26 peer-reviewed papers. Our excellence in the classroom is personified by Dr. Sue Ostertag, who was recently awarded the APTA's Excellence in Neurologic Education Award from the Academy of Neurologic Physical Therapy. Lastly, our students continue to excel, with a 99.4% graduation rate and a 100% pass rate on the National Physical Therapy Examination over the past 5-years.

Aside from serving as the Chair, I continue to pursue my passion of studying runners and soldiers with injuries. As part of this work, I was recently named to the faculty of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Diploma Program in Sports Physical Therapies to share my knowledge and expertise in the area of running injuries with physical therapists from around the world. Dr. Brent Ruby (University of Montana School of Integrated Physiology and Athletic Training) and I were recently awarded a \$1.2 million Department of Defense grant to study musculoskeletal and heat injuries in tactical athletes. I feel fortunate to be able to serve as Chair of our wonderful PT program, while continuing my research agenda.

I invite you to learn more about the accomplishments and goings on of our UMPT team in this year's newsletter. I could not be prouder to serve alongside the consummate professionals who make up UMPT. As alumni and friends, my door is always open to you. Please feel free to drop me a line or stop by to meet. I am grateful for your continued support of our School.

## **Rich Willy, PT, PhD**

Chair and Associate Professor  
School of Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Science



I just celebrated one year since joining the University of Montana community on February 24, 2020 as the Dean of the Skaggs School of Pharmacy. I am also proud and honored to serve, since July 19, 2020, as Acting Dean of the College of Health. I'm excited to be part of the University of Montana community and have learned that there is ample talent and dedication in the College of Health and wonderful support from alumni, donors and friends of the College and School. My professional goals

for the College of Health are to continue the legacy of outstanding accomplishment and dedication to foster health profession education and training, interprofessional collaboration and education, innovative and locally-relevant scholarship, and service including health outreach in the community to improve health outcomes and health justice. I have truly enjoyed discussion, work and collaboration with the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science leadership, faculty and staff.

As many of you do not know me, I wanted to briefly introduce myself and my background. I'm trained as both a pharmacologist/neuropharmacologist and a clinical pharmacist with specialty in psychiatry, neurology and geriatrics, a Board-Certified Psychiatric and Geriatric Pharmacist and Fellow of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists. I completed graduate education in the Czech Republic and Finland, and additional research, clinical and postgraduate trainings from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in Nashville and the Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. Over the past 25 years, I have been practicing in a variety of inpatient and outpatient pharmacy practice settings, have served as an administrator, faculty and preceptor, developed ambulatory and inpatient clinical services, and was involved in bench lab research, clinical studies, and community-based health outcomes research. It is truly exciting and stimulating to be part of the College's interprofessional environment and to watch the College flourish.

The past year was exciting and rewarding, but also year filled with challenges that required a lot of hard work, resilience and grit from faculty, staff and students. Also, thanks to initiatives from UMHM and Griz Health, the University was able to provide COVID-19 testing and helped to create a presence on the UM campus to promote best practices and actively participate in mitigation strategies to prevent COVID-19 transmission. Higher education is dealing with unrepresented challenges due to COVID-19, especially difficult for health professions education, such as our Doctor of Physical Therapy. We all worked very hard to ensure sustainability, continuous education and student progression in

the curriculum and on-time graduation. Despite the negatives associated with COVID-19, by pushing us to be innovative and to assess the use of technology, we are learning how we can use technology better to creatively teach and learn.

Despite all these challenges, the College is flourishing and has steady enrollments in all programs. The Doctor of Physical Therapy is staying strong with a high-quality application pool from in- and outside of Montana. We have also been able to launch new degree programs. In Fall 2020, we started the new Bachelor Degree in Public Health and currently have several new proposals for new programs including microcredentials and undergraduate and graduate degrees waiting for Board of Regents approval in Spring 2021. Unfortunately, due to fiscal and space challenges, in accommodating this new program we had to make a hard decision to defer the launch of a new Doctor of Occupational Therapy with hopes to possibly enroll in Fall 2023. In Fall 2022, we will launch an online Master of Social Work program that will expand access to our wonderful training to individuals across of Montana as well as outside of the state.

These unprecedented times are also when we can use our clinical training and knowledge in practice to lend a hand and join forces in the fight against COVID-19. The College is central for the University of Montana in the efforts to vaccinate Montanans. The Manager of the Curry Health Center Pharmacy (operated by the Skaggs School of Pharmacy) and Director of Community Pharmacy Experiences plays a leading role on the University's COVID-19 response team which operates in collaboration with the Montana Department of Public Health. He works collaboratively with faculty and students from the School of Pharmacy in administering the vaccines per the U.S. Centers for Disease Control vaccine rollout phases. Students enrolled in the Doctor of Physical Therapy programs often assist with the vaccine clinics held on Sundays for the public where immunizing pharmacy students and faculty are delivering 600-800 doses of vaccine. It is a truly collaborative approach that requires a lot of human resources, but is worth it to ensure vaccine availability.

I look forward to another year of being part of this wonderful community. I hope you have a wonderful spring. I sincerely look forward to meeting many of you in the near future and hope we can host you on our beautiful campus. We are only as strong as our alumni, donors and friends and we truly appreciate all your help and support.

### **Marketa Marvanova, PharmD, PhD, BCGP, BCPP, FASCP**

Acting Dean of the College of Health  
Dean of the Skaggs School of Pharmacy

## SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL THERAPY AND REHABILITATION SCIENCE

### **FACULTY:**

Jennifer Bell, PT, ScD, Clinical Associate Professor  
Jadlyn Carson, PT, DPT, Clinical Physical Therapy Instructor  
Audrey Elias, PT, PhD, Clinical Physical Therapy Instructor  
Andy Kittelson, PT, PhD, Assistant Professor  
James Laskin, PT, PhD, Professor  
Brian Loyd, PT, DPT, PhD, Assistant Professor  
Jake Mischke,  
PT, DPT, OCS, FAAOMPT, Clinical Physical Therapy Instructor  
Ryan Mizner, PT, PhD, Professor, Program Director  
Sue Ostertag, PT, DPT, NCS, Clinical Assistant Professor  
Anita Santasier, PT, PhD, OCS, Associate Professor  
Rich Willy, PT, PhD, Associate Professor, Chair

### **UMPT CLINICAL FACULTY:**

Troy Adam, PT, DPT, Physical Therapist  
Steve Ferdig, PT, DPT, OCS, UMPT Clinic Director  
Kelli Wrolstad, PT, DPT, Orthopedic Resident

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Caitlin Malinak, Administrative Associate  
Tiffany Quindry, Research Lab Manager  
Ken Thompson, UMPT Clinic Manager  
Dara Tome, UMPT Clinic Billing Manager  
Debra Regan-Wagner,  
Accounting Associate and Department Research Administrator  
Alyssa Waters, Administrative Associate

# FROM THE UM FOUNDATION

Dear UMPT Alumni & Friends,

I hope you are doing well despite the difficult circumstances of the past year. For those of you who I haven't had the pleasure of meeting, I am in charge of fundraising and alumni relations for the College of Health. During a normal year, this job has me hopping around Montana and the western US meeting with people like you: alumni and friends who care deeply about the mission of the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science. While these meetings have been relegated to Zoom or the telephone, I am still in awe of the great work you do in your communities, especially in the face of a life-altering pandemic.

I have been similarly impressed by the efforts of our students during this strange year. They have shown incredibly flexibility and perseverance while managing their clinical responsibilities along with a mix of online and in-person coursework. They remain focused and committed to their education and the needs of their patients, and it has been a pleasure watching them work (albeit from a safe distance).

Now, more than ever, private support is essential to giving these students the opportunity to continue learning and serving patients throughout Montana. While student scholarships and stipends remain a high priority, we have also been focused on raising emergency funds for students who have been impacted by COVID-19. These funds support students

who face unexpected job loss, medical bills, or unexpected travel expenses. If you are looking for a way to make life a little easier for UMPT students, I encourage you to consider giving to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund or the UMPT Impact Fund. You can do so by visiting [SupportUM.org/health](https://SupportUM.org/health) and indicating in the comments that you would like your gift designated to one of those two areas. If you would like to assist our students in other ways, such as internships or clinical opportunities, feel free to contact me directly at (406) 243-4301.



If you have questions about how to support these efforts, don't hesitate to get in touch. I look forward to meeting you in person when it is safe to do so. We truly appreciate your support.

## Tim Sorensen

Director of Development,  
College of Health Professions & Biomedical Sciences  
UM Foundation



Griz mentor Griz: Jaden Maharg, 3rd year student is completing his final clinical experience at Harrington PT in Helena. His clinical instructor is 2019 UMPT alum, Dallas Vanluchene, PT, DPT.



Kallee Wilson, 3rd year student, is completing her final clinical experience at Ortho Rehab in Whitefish with her clinical instructor Amy Fischer, PT, who is a 2002 UMPT alum.

# AFTER TWENTY-THREE YEARS, A FAREWELL FROM JAMES LASKIN

It truly doesn't seem so long ago that I was the "new" guy at UMPT. I arrived August, 1998 to an office in Corbin Hall, the classroom and UMPT clinic were in the basement of McGill, the program was transitioning from a BSPT to a MSPT program, and Missoula's housing market was affordable. As I was packing my office, I came across a touchstone that helped me connect the present with the past. I was taking down the myriad of newspaper clippings, articles, class lists, APTA certificates, notices from my bulletin board and under several layers (no judging) I found the notice announcing the birth of, Zach, in December of 1998 – yikes, he is now in engineering physics at the University of British Columbia.

I never tire of walking down the hall and viewing the 23 class pictures of the students that I have had the honor and pleasure of contributing to their education in my small way. I see the faces of: those who asked questions; those who working on the Kaiman crossword; my research groups with whom I had the opportunity to get to know in a much deeper way; the babysitters who cared for my boys; those who were engaged (many as pre-PTs) with New Directions; and of course, the 5 groups of students who trusted me to create a study abroad opportunity in Thailand. These students engaged in a myriad of classroom activities including Thai massage Clinical experiences included: traditional inpatient and outpatient venues, nursing homes, a small independent community of those living with SCI, community-based programs for those living with stroke located at the local Temple, hippotherapy being conducted by the Thai military or veterinarians and home health visits with people living in a simple shelter along a canal. They helped me with teaching, conducting workshops and research; they even taught their own class to the physical therapy students on typically western clinical practices. It was not all academic, we traveled throughout Thailand, trekked in the jungle, spent the day with elephants (fed, bathed and hiked with them), stayed in rural home stays, visited numerous cultural and historical sites, beached, learned about Buddhism, and twice traveled to Siem Reap, Cambodia to experience the splendor of Angkor Wat as well as the tragedies of land mines and war.

In particular I am proud of New Directions, which is as you know is my passion and I hope my most significant contribution to UMPT, UM and the Missoula community. It has been a privilege to contribute the health and wellbeing of over 500 Missoulians with disabilities and chronic illness as well as providing an opportunity to impact the growth, development and careers of hundreds of UM undergraduate students who have come through the doors of ND as student employees, interns and/or volunteers. During PT student interviews we often hear that it is the ND program that helped inspire them to consider UM for their PT education. I am so pleased that I could be a part of the growth and development of Sue Ostertag, Molly Blair, Jaclyn Carson, Troy Adam as well as many former UMPT students that have taken ND into their hearts. When I brought NDWC to campus 17 years ago the UMPT clinic was focused on sports and orthopedics. While it was a challenging transition to add

neurological and complex patients to the mix (not to mention the underinsured/uninsured) with the support of Dean Forbes, the vision of then Chair Humphrey, and the continued support of the UMPT faculty, staff and students, NDWC has grown. A result of including this population into the clinical mix, and the increased breadth of the PT program's clinical expertise, was the creation of the Student Run Clinic and the implementation the Integrated Clinical Education program as well as the model for our new program at Partnership. Last fall we received our 2nd Craig H. Nielsen foundation grant which allowed us to upgrade our RTI FES bike and purchase the Excite FES System that has for the rehabilitation and exercise of those with SCI and other neurological conditions. This grant adds to the over \$350,000 (4 Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation Quality of Life grants) that I have obtained to support the equipment and programmatic needs of ND and make it a fully accessible program. Ultimately, we hope to provide individuals in Western Montana with SCI and other neurological conditions an option to receive their post-acute rehabilitation at UMPT.

New Directions and UMPT program will continue to grow, morph and change to meet the needs of the community they serve. ND has become, as it should, an integral part of the UMPT clinic and the School; I cannot wait to see what the future holds for both.

So, off I go to Vancouver. With Calvin an aeronautic engineer in Seattle, Jake a refinery systems engineer in Bellingham, and Zach along with much of my family in and around Vancouver. My family has grown to include Erin, our new home on Bowen Island and her 3 teenage boys (yes there are 6 boys in my life now). My work includes research at ICORD (<https://icord.org>) focused on the care and cure of SCI; my current project is looking at the cardioprotective effect of passive heating on those with high-level spinal cord injuries (yep, putting people with tetraplegia in a hot tub). I am the researcher in residence for both the SCI incubate and SCI Accelerate programs at Praxis Spinal Cord Institute (<https://praxisinstitute.org>). I have an active role with a consortium of researchers from the UBC, SFU and the BCIT. Oh, and by the way I recently received my physiotherapy license!!!

So, thank you UM, UMPT, Missoula, my colleagues past and present, and most importantly the students. I hope that I have given you even just a fraction of what all of you have given me. I will sign off with my 2 favorite quotes: "Be kind; everything else will work itself out" and "Don't forget to bend at the knees".

**James J. Laskin, PT, PhD**  
Professor, UMPT



## JOSH KRANTZ REFLECTS ON HIS EXPERIENCE

# UMPT CLINIC UPDATES

Reflecting on my time as an Orthopedic Resident at UMPT, I can't help but appreciate the personal and professional development that has occurred. These improvements have not come by chance but through a well-organized and supportive residency program. Over the 2019-2020 academic year, in addition to my clinical case load, I have been improving my knowledge of orthopedic PT by completing 428 hours of didactic coursework. The weekly clinic-based mentoring sessions sharpened my clinical reasoning and hands-on skills. Engaging in research and biweekly journal clubs have allowed me to become a more informed consumer of literature. This past February 2020, I engaged on a national level by attending CSM in Denver, CO. There are many other objectives that I worked on throughout the year including: teaching, case presentations, community service, and physician observations. Through all of these experiences the faculty guided me to become a better clinician, professional, and citizen. I frequently remind myself of a quote by William Faulkner, "Don't bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself." The residency taught me how to become better than myself each day, in order to improve the health of my patients and the profession of physical therapy.



## UMPT WELCOMES INCOMING 2020-2021 ORTHOPEDIC RESIDENT

Kelli Wrolstad was raised in Golden, Colorado and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Physiology from Gonzaga University in 2017. She then attended Creighton University to earn a Doctorate of Physical Therapy degree in 2020. During physical therapy school, she served as an academic tutor, a student ambassador, and was very involved with community service. Kelli loves traveling, dance, yoga, and spending time in the outdoors. She could not be more excited to move to beautiful Missoula and join the team at the University of Montana as the next Orthopedic Physical Therapy Resident. She will complete her training in July of 2021.

## UPDATES FROM TROY

The last year at UMPT has been an exciting one. I started off with preparations for the NCS examination and subsequently received my NCS last summer. I continue to work closely with our students both in the classroom and in the clinic. I am always amazed at the caliber of individuals I get the pleasure of working with. On a personal note, my wife and I continue to foster children in the Missoula area. We have had the privilege of having five different children for some period of time in our home over the last year and a half. Take care, Troy Adam

### Troy Adam, PT, DPT, NCS

UMPT Course Instructor, APTA Certified Clinical Instructor



## CLINICAL EDUCATION

Over the last year, like so many, Sue Ostertag, Associate DCE, and I have had such a wild ride in clinical education. In March 2020, the Class of 2020 were completing their final clinical experiences and our 1st and 2nd year students were looking forward to their summer clinicals. However, as COVID-19 began spreading rapidly in the US, we began to receive calls from clinical sites who were suspending all student experiences. At the same time, the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), our accrediting organization, announced that PT programs could decrease the amount of clinical education time required for students to graduate, as long as they achieved entry-level practice. We were very fortunate that, through a combination of strong didactic and clinical training, all of our students were ready for entry-level practice by mid-March. This allowed us to discontinue our final clinical experiences early while ensuring that all members of the Class of 2020 met the requirements to graduate in May 2020.

It was a huge relief for all of us to see those students graduate but Sue and I knew the hard work was just starting as we navigated rescheduling all summer clinicals to the fall. Luckily, we have amazingly dedicated clinical partners. So many of our sites were willing to bring students back in the fall, despite the numerous unknowns. And when the understandable cancellations happened, Sue and I were able to reach out to our strong clinical partners to take last minute placements. And our resilient students navigated pre-clinical COVID testing, quarantines, travel restrictions, and holidays away from family in order to safely and effectively complete their clinicals. As I write this, students of the Class of 2021 are completing their final clinical experiences at sites around the country. These students have demonstrated such dedication to their education and profession despite the last year's challenges and we look forward to celebrating their success at Commencement in May!

### Jenn Bell, PT, ScD, COMT

Director of Clinical Education & Clinical Assistant Professor

# ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

We are so proud of our alumni and we wanted to take a moment to recognize their expertise and success after graduation. Last year, we know of at least 4 graduates who completed their APTA clinical board certifications from the same Class of 2018! They join a growing list of UMT alumni who have achieved this impressive distinction. We wanted to tap in to their know-how and knowledge to help others achieve the same type of success. So, we asked them to share a note of advice and tips for other alumni about what helped them pass their board exams.



## T.J. Crippen, PT, DPT, OCS; Class of 2018

I think that besides residency, what was helpful for me when preparing for the exam was familiarizing myself with the question format and taking several practice tests. Also, being mindful of what areas of the body or conditions were going to be emphasized more than others as well as identifying my own strong and weak areas to guide studying was really helpful.

## Emily Smith, PT, DPT, OCS; Class of 2018

I am so proud to have studied physical therapy at the University of Montana. The University of Montana faculty treats their students as colleagues, which was just as valuable as the education itself. It helped me build my confidence as a doctor of PT, and eventually as a specialist. My advice for the OCS: I studied the Orthopedic APTA monographs, Clinical Practice Guidelines, and used supplemental videos and exams from Medbridge. Create a study timeline outlining how long you plan to study each topic and intersperse practice exams throughout to track your progress. I made flashcards with details and clinical prediction rules as I went prepped during the final week before the exam.



## Lizzie Choma, PT, DPT, GCS; Class of 2018

I found that there weren't as many academy-approved resources or practice tests available for the geriatric exam as there were for the NPTE, so instead I used Medbridge, Clinical Practice Guidelines, and other recent key geriatric publications to study from. I recommend getting together with individuals in your residency program or other clinicians taking the same exam and talking through case scenarios. Lastly, make sure to train your concentration and reading endurance over several hours as reading fatigue during the test really sets in after a couple of hours!



## Brianna Irion, PT, DPT, OCS; Class of 2018



Taking a specialist examination can be an intimidating feat. But, as I was preparing for the OCS, I had the privilege of working with several mentors who shared words of wisdom with me and I would like to do the same. Here are some helpful, practical tips I received along the way.

1. Clinical practice guidelines are a BIG deal. Make sure to study and read those.
2. Purchase study courses and materials.
3. Take at least 3 practice exams. The practice exams will help prepare your mind for the test layout.
4. Take time to de-stress. Continue doing things you enjoy and take mental breaks away from the material- it will be a huge benefit in the long run.
5. Trust the process. Despite the cheesy-ness of that saying, it was valuable for me. Putting in the necessary work and trusting the study process will create a successful outcome.

Hotspotting:  
The 2019-2020  
Interprofessional  
Student Hotspotting  
Team with faculty  
directors, Kate  
Chapin (far right) and  
Jenn Bell (far left).





Sue Ostertag working on Interprofessional Educational Experiences.

# CHECKING IN WITH UMPT FACULTY

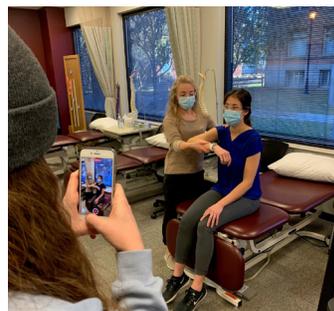
## AUDREY ELIAS CLINICAL FACULTY

Writing updates has never been my strong suit, but here goes. Personally, I feel so lucky. My family has weathered the past year better than most—yay introversion! Ciaran is now in 3rd grade, and in general did just fine with remote/hybrid schooling. He has grown into such a fun hiking and skiing buddy, which has been a blessing this year in particular. I also got back into running after several years of trying, which has been one of my most important outlets in this stressful year—thanks to Rich Willy for his return-to-running program, and most importantly to my best running partner Jenn Bell!

Professionally, this has been a year of surprising growth, with new colleagues and opportunities that allow me to flex some muscles I haven't used in a while! We've worked hard to formalize the clinical outcomes research capabilities of the UMPT Clinic, which has borne fruit in a grant with Andy Kittelson, Brian Loyd, and Sue Ostertag to assess outcomes of screenings in rural Montana. I'm also starting to remember my dance roots, working with the UM Department of Dance to provide injury screenings (and maybe get my tap shoes on again?). My most important new colleagues, of

course, are the students working with me in the UMPT clinic. Being able to have students in the clinic is one of the great success stories of the pandemic, and speaks to the dedication of the entire UMPT school.

My biggest project has been utilizing the Movement Science Lab's Vicon motion capture system to assess whether patients are progressing toward best-practice goals after ACL reconstruction, including readiness for return-to-sport. For several years now, evidence has been building that hop tests, time, and strength alone are poor predictors of injury risk. By assessing lower extremity kinetics during functional tasks, we can ensure patients are utilizing their knees appropriately. My goal is for Missoula to become a recognized community of excellence in the treatment of knee injuries, and to that end I've been working to partner with outside clinics to bring their patients in for periodic assessment as well. It's been the highlight of my year to work with Anya Gue at Endurance Physio and Kelly Christensen at Infinity Health in ensuring their patients attain their goals. So please do contact me if you are interested in learning more!



# JENNIFER JEFFREY BELL

## DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL EDUCATION & CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Over the last couple years, I've had some great opportunities to continue my work in underserved areas locally and internationally. In 2019, Kate Chapin, LCSW and I received a grant from the Montana Healthcare Foundation to start an Interprofessional Student Hotspotting program. Hotspotting is an intervention that was developed by the Camden Coalition in New Jersey to identify patients with patterns of high utilization of the emergency department (ED) and hospital admissions and low utilization of primary care and preventative services. Typically, these patients have complex, unmet social needs that the traditional healthcare system isn't designed to meet. Our interprofessional student teams are trained to provide non-clinical services to address the social needs in order to improve their patient's mental and physical health as well as engagement with their primary care team. One patient we served regularly developed significant isolation and depression during the winter months which led to eight ED visits in the winter prior to starting in the program. During the 6-month program that ran through the winter, he had no ED visits and no hospital admissions. Thanks to the pandemic, our students taught him how to use Zoom to engage in telehealth appointments but to also visit with his daughter who lives out of town and join virtual AA meetings around the country. Kate and I have really enjoy seeing the student teams learned to collaborate and communicate with each other as well as the patients. And to do all of this face-to-face as well as over text, Zoom, Google Duo, Facebook messenger, and other virtual platforms.

In Fall 2019, Dr. James Laskin and I had the great opportunity to serve as visiting faculty at Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC) to teach Kenyan physiotherapists in an advanced diploma program. The Jackson Clinics Foundation supported our trip to Nairobi, where we spent two weeks teaching wound care techniques at KMTC.

We had a great time working with the physiotherapists and they brought a wealth of experience from their clinical practices all over Kenya. We were also able to spend part of a day in the Burn Ward at Kenyatta National Hospital, a 2,000-bed referral hospital. This was a unique opportunity for our group to collaborate with nurses, PTs, and physicians to observe and discuss wound management in the hospital. While James and I planned to return yearly to teach in this program, international travel hasn't been possible over the last year. So instead, James and I have taken to Zoom! We are currently teaching a Sports Physiotherapy course to Kenyan students through Amref International University (AMIU). These students are part of the first class of students in Kenya who will complete a Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy. Prior to this program, physiotherapy has been a diploma program that could be complete in three years after high school. While we would much rather be teaching these students in person, it is such an honor to get to be part of this program that works to increase the training and expertise of PTs in Kenya.



Jenn Bell and James Laskin with the KMTC Advanced Diploma students in Nairobi, Kenya.

# SUSAN OSTERTAG

## ASSOC. DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL ED & CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

**Time to catch up!** Since moving out of clinic management and into Clinical Education in 2018, I have found that my "new" career path as Associate Director of Clinical Education has challenged and rewarded me in a number of ways. I have enjoyed getting to work with Jenn, our clinical partners, and all of our students on this new path. Despite the ongoing pandemic we have been able to effectively navigate our way along this challenging year to ensure our students are provided the depth and breadth of experiences required by accreditation. Thank you everyone for your help, and patience, with this process!

In 2019, I received the APTA Neurological Educator of the Year award. How humbling this was, considering that my Chair and peers nominated me and were there when I received it. All of my previous and current students know that teaching is indeed a passion of mine, and being recognized for something that I absolutely love was indeed an honor.

One last change in my role on campus is that I have taken on the PI/Director position for the Montana Geriatric Workforce Enhancement program, a federal grant through HRSA. Joining this talented and industrious leadership team was not something I had ever anticipated, and yet this opportunity in the midst of the COVID19 pandemic was

one that I could not pass on. My work with older adults is now taking a different route outside of traditional patient care, one that I can travel with an interprofessional team of experts from around the state, and country, as we strive to make an impact on the health care services for older adults and their families and caregivers.

Check out some of our programs at <https://health.umt.edu/mtgec/>.

**Don't hesitate to reach out at any time to connect and catch up!**

**Email: [Susan.ostertag@umontana.edu](mailto:Susan.ostertag@umontana.edu)**

**Office phone: 406-243-2678**



## ANDY KITTELSON ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Hello UMPT: Wow! It's hard to believe it's been a year since we arrived in Missoula. Since then, we've skied, hiked, biked, and walked our way around town. We've settled in. Our hairs have grown. Like many others, we've quarantined. We've also planned, unplanned and re-planned new ways of working, teaching, schooling, child-caring, and fun-having in a world we never thought we'd encounter. For us, 2020 was a bittersweet year. Like the rest of the world, we say: good riddance. But it was also a year of many happy milestones and exciting opportunities for our family.

For me, it was a chance to work with a world-class group of people in my dream job: teaching anatomy to future physical therapists. This is an awesome responsibility and an enormous privilege, which I don't take for granted. It was also an opportunity to continue my research program in the areas of data science and clinical decision making in physical therapy. It's been a productive year, with 8 new papers either accepted or published (check them out here: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/myncbi/1X9MbKS1b-C5m/bibliography/public/>).

The research environment at UMPT is energizing and collaborative. The sky is the limit. I look forward to speaking at length about my research to anyone brave enough to show a little interest (you've been warned).

For our two girls, the move to Missoula was a chance for them to have nature in the backyard. It was a chance to go to daycare on the same campus where their dad works, a chance to throw rocks into Flathead Lake, and a chance to watch their dad try and fail to catch a fish on more than a few occasions. I have a feeling 2021 will bring a trout to the Kittelsons' net, no matter the boredom that must be wrought upon the children in pursuit.

For my wife Kate and me, the last year has been the adventure of a lifetime. What started with an aborted road trip into a Wyoming blizzard became a year of so many wonderful memories. Our little June was still learning to crawl when we arrived, and now she runs

around the house. Our 3-year-old Edna began the year obsessed with "Frozen 2," and well, as they say: some things never change. One nice change from our previous life: the two hours per day we used to spend sitting in traffic we now spend with each other, in a place we love more and more each day.

Thank you for the opportunity to be your colleague and neighbor! I look forward to seeing you all in person, once we're walking the halls of Skaggs Building with regularity again. UMPT strong!!

Andy



## ANITA SANTASIER ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR



Since our most recent UMPT newsletter much has changed in the world and UMPT is no different. Aside from the pandemic, the challenging political climate, and the national dialogue on racial injustice, for me, the biggest change came in May of 2020 when I decided not to put my hat in the ring for another 5-year term as UMPT Chair. Although, not a decision that came easily, after thoughtful and intentional reflection, I was confident that I would

best serve the program, myself, and my family leading from the middle as full-time faculty.

As many of you know, over the past 5 years, I have found being your Chair both an honor and a privilege. It has really been interesting, challenging, fun, and, at times, downright exhausting— in addition, it has also kept me from working on other areas of my professional life that I would like to complete before I retire - and the clock is ticking.

The faculty and I have viewed this change as an opportunity to reflect on the past, present and future and chart a course together that will maximize the UMPT mission. By choosing to step aside, opportunities for leadership became available to the other members of our faculty and I am excited to have confidently passed the torch to the combined forces of Rich Willy (Chair) and Ryan Mizner (Program Director). I'm sure you will agree with the faculty and I that UMPT is in good hands.

As I write this today, I continue to enjoy my new role and responsibilities at UMPT. I have transitioned with ease and enjoyed rejuvenating my scholarship. Stay tuned and please feel free to come find me in my new office ...or on the golf course...or floating the river...or smiling somewhere in my new favorite place: Missoula Montana. Be sure to stay in touch, as the UMPT family is our greatest treasure.

Take good care,  
Anita

"Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you." RBG

## BRIAN LOYD ASSISTANT PROFESSOR



Hello UM PT friends and family, my name is Brian Loyd, the newest faculty member in the department. I am thrilled to be a Griz and my wife and I are incredibly excited to be starting our lives in Missoula. I am a physical therapist who got my DPT from Texas Tech University in 2013, before completing my PhD in Rehabilitation Science at the University of Colorado in 2017. Over the last two and a half years I worked as a post-doctoral research fellow in the study of gaze and

postural stability disorders at the University of Utah. My role in the UM PT department is centered around my research focused on improving outcomes for various balance and mobility limited populations and my teaching responsibilities in neuroscience and vestibular rehabilitation. Specifically, I currently have active studies exploring recovery of head and trunk control and coordination in people following unilateral vestibular loss. I am also working on the development of a monitoring and decision-making tool for the delivery of remote vestibular rehabilitation. I look forward to continuing to develop these lines of investigation in the coming

years through the completion of larger studies and collaboration with investigators across the UM campus and with colleagues nationwide. I also look forward to embracing my teaching role in the department and feel lucky to have the opportunity to work with this team of outstanding educators in UMPT. Teaching neuroscience and elements of vestibular rehabilitation is a challenge, but something I love. Taking on these difficult topics and getting to work closely with the students as they expand their understanding is truly enjoyable. In the coming years I plan to work closely with the faculty experts in neurological physical therapy in the department, Dr. Ostertag and Dr. Carson, to continue to grow and adapt the neuro curriculum so that we continue to provide the highest level of education to our students.

2020 was a dark and incredibly challenging year for everyone and the choice to move to the new city in the middle of it all was certainly not without its challenges. However, my wife and I, Janelle, have felt immediately welcomed by the outstanding UMPT family and could not be more pleased to be in Missoula. As we look to 2021, we will be bringing our first child into the world and could not think of another place we would rather be.

Brian

## JACLYN CARSON CLINICAL FACULTY

Greetings Griz Alumni and Friends!

Here at the Carson house we have been doing experiments to pass the time. Ryan and Owen are 9 years old now and in the 3rd grade and Olivia is 7 and loving 1st grade. We have also been enjoying the new addition to our family, Pickles, now 6 months, 3/4 Corgi and 1/4 Mini Australian Shepherd. His ears are the best! I continue to pursue my love of clinical education by serving my first term as a Clinical Director at Large in the National Consortium of Clinical Educators, part of the American Council of Academic Physical Therapy. One piece of work that our Consortium is working on that you might be familiar with is the Common Terminology in PT Education. I am excited to be collaborating with our new faculty Dr. Kittelson and Dr. Loyd for translation of research to clinical practice. As most of you know I have an enthusiastic interest in Parkinson's Disease. The Parkinson's Foundation has been the primary source of my growth, becoming a Physical Therapy Faculty

Scholar at Parkinson's Foundation in 2017. Through the foundation, I received a community grant for which I was able to establish Rock Steady Boxing in Missoula at a local gym (Straight Blast Gym Missoula). I am currently enjoying the Parkinson's Foundation Team Training Course to further cultivate my clinical expertise in the area and I look forward to sharing this information with our students and patients.

If you ever want to chat about Parkinson's Disease or have a question, don't hesitate to reach out! I look forward to the changes ahead and reconnecting with the community and each other without the use of a screen! Take care.

Jaclyn



# JAKE MISCHKE

CLINICAL FACULTY & ORTHOPEDIC RESIDENCY DIRECTOR

Hello UMPT family!

I am so grateful for another year of working with such an amazing faculty team and interacting with our incredible students. Professionally, this past year has been challenging, but also extremely rewarding. Last Fall, we made the difficult decision to cancel the Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapy Course Series. Even though it was the right decision for our participants, for the program, and for our community, I missed seeing friends and colleagues at our courses. In addition to my musculoskeletal teaching responsibilities, I was moved into the Practice and Administration course which has been so much fun! Among many items in this course, we go through business formation, business operations, and marketing strategy. I am currently halfway through the MBA program at the University of Montana which melds perfectly with my new instructional load in the DPT program.

On the scholarship front over the past year, I had one peer review publication. I also currently have two submissions in review and one book chapter in preparation. We were fortunate to have poster presentations at CSM 2020 with TJ Crippen, PT, DPT and at CSM 2021 with Josh Krantz, PT, DPT – both are Orthopedic Residency Alumni.

On a personal note, 2020 was an incredible year and our family was so blessed! We relished spending time together dancing to “Baby Shark” and enjoying our outdoor playground in Missoula. Emma is nearly 2 and absolutely loving life! Mary and I are also expecting a new addition to the family any time now (baby boy Mischke). We are so grateful for our Missoula community and the connections we’ve made in our nearly six years here.

Jake



# RYAN MIZNER

PROFESSOR & INTERIM PROGRAM DIRECTOR



First off, you will be pleased to know that we continue to graduate some of the finest students in the country. Working with them in my biomechanics, orthopedics, and electrotherapy classes is where I find some the greatest joy at work. While COVID presents challenges for all that we do, I’m proud that we have been able to carry on in our work to provide high-quality clinical preparation of our students. Our research in the lab

continues to move forward including several recent publications with the Univ. of Utah related to total knee arthroplasty rehabilitation. I feel fortunate to help author a great systematic review related to initiating running after ACL reconstruction with several other UM faculty. In addition, we have had several publications focused on our trial results using carbon fiber AFO’s to improve mobility for people with PAD. I’m pleased to announce that we will be updating our aging KinCom with a new HUMAC NORM this spring for quadriceps muscle strength testing. This equipment will be used in multiple studies, for classroom labs, as well as part of patient care. I have plans to be on sabbatical

Mizner with our past orthopedic residents

in 2021-2022 in order to move our work in ACL rehabilitation towards publication and submitting some new grant ideas. I’m also going to use this time to developing new collaborations with our excellent faculty at UM and our clinicians in the MT community. We miss seeing and talking with you and we welcome the chance to help you out or just catch up through email, phone calls, or a zoom meeting.

Ryan



Mizner with his newest nephew Lincoln born in summer 2020!





# CLASS OF 2022: LIFE AND CLASSES IN THE MIDST OF A PANDEMIC

In the past year, our lives have been shaken and moved as we have worked to find balance and sanity between managing classes and life during the current pandemic. In March 2020, we made a rapid shift from in person to online classes and had to figure out how to do hands-on classes in a hands-off way at home. While difficult and exhausting, the transition opened different opportunities for learning and fostered flexibility and communication between students and faculty. As the 2020-21 school year picked up, we parsed ourselves into lab groups to limit contact between classmates. We are so fortunate to get vaccinated as health care professionals, and grateful to be learning in-person again, even with masks and face shields! We have gotten to know classmates more deeply as a result of the lab groups and have grown together as an entire class as we all endure the joys and sorrows accompanying this unique and odd time together. Professors have gone above and beyond to make sure that we are successful, encouraged, and understood during this time through countless extra hours, effort, and flexibility. We are so grateful for the support of the UMPT faculty and staff, and for the increased flexibility, understanding, and care that they have for us students! Please enjoy photos highlighting some of what we love to do!



Community Service



Lunchtime Hockey



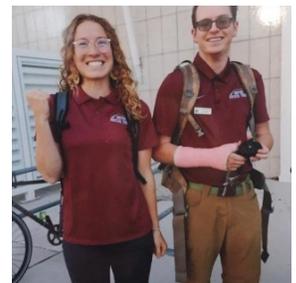
Wheelchair Lab and Practice



Body Weight Support Lab



Building snowmen on our breaks



Being Successful SPTs



# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RECENT GRADUATES!

## 2021 DPT GRADUATES

Aidan Kay Amtmann, Butte, MT  
 Nichole Alexandra Andriolo, Bozeman, MT  
 Danielle Axe, Missoula, MT  
 Manoj Battar, Yorktown, VA  
 Leslie Marie Bermes, Park City, MT  
 Clare Cozza, Spokane, WA  
 Britney LaRae Curran, Belgrade, MT  
 Lev Darkhovsky, Los Angeles, CA  
 Tessa Dimock, Bozeman, MT  
 Dusty Jon Duncan, Bellingham, WA  
 Alyson Judy Freitag, Elko, NV  
 Nicole C. Garcia, El Paso, TX  
 Kelby Grotbo, Shelby, MT  
 Erin K. Heard, Caroga Lake, NY  
 John Hoheim, Missoula, MT  
 Andrew Kafka, Havre, MT  
 Jacob Kamps, Burlington, WA  
 Tess Marie Kreofsky, Fairbanks, AK  
 Bethany Legare, Hinsdale, MT  
 Leah Ling, Raleigh, NC  
 Dan Lockman, Florence, MT  
 Jaden Maharg, Helena, MT  
 Ryan James McCann, Frostburg, MD

Kensey Mettea Mikkelsen, Hobson, MT  
 Rachel Elizabeth Miles, Carson City, NV  
 Katrina Shiri Morgan, Missoula, MT  
 Lisa Herrick Morgan, Seeley Lake, MT  
 Farris Ashley Rae, Kirkland, WA  
 Emily Sara Skillman, Puyallup, WA  
 Sarah Stafford, Colorado Springs, CO  
 CJ Taylor, Arlington, WA  
 Shanon Williams, Livingston, MT  
 Kallee Jo Wilson, Cowley, WY

## 2020 DPT GRADUATES

Kourtney Armstrong, Boise, ID  
 Chris Bemis, Gunnison, CO  
 Jillienne M. Braucher, Lewiston, ID  
 Ashley M. Bullers, Gooding, ID  
 Kelly Christensen, Boulder CO  
 Caitlin Ciccone, Bethlehem, NH  
 Hannah Clark, Houston, TX  
 Natalie Clausing, Yakima, WA  
 Cortney Lynn Collins, Bozeman, MT  
 Heather Louise Danzer, Pocatello, ID  
 Kristin Finch, Beaverton, OR

Shelby Frasl, Tenino, WA  
 Brittnee Lee Grimstad, Billings, MT  
 Sophia Brett Hansen, San Diego, CA  
 Brittany Rose Hanser, Billings, MT  
 Bailey Hewitt, Clark Fork, ID  
 Jace Matthew Kalbfleisch, Whitefish, MT  
 Theresa Kelly-Mitchell, Great Falls, MT  
 Brian Levon, Bellevue, WA  
 Misha Lind, Hamilton, MT  
 Benjamin Stephen Moerkerke, Conrad, MT  
 S. Taylor Mulford, Fruit Heights, UT  
 Cayden Napierala, Great Falls, MT  
 Tessa Anne Netelbeek, Salt Lake City, UT  
 Sarah Pedone, Florence, MT  
 Kortney Renee Sauerbier, Walla Walla, WA  
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 Tyler Shandra, Santa Ana, CA  
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 Mya Stiffarm, Browning, MT  
 Kansas Grace Suenram, Dillon, MT  
 Evie Tate, Spartanburg, SC  
 Kelsie Lee Taylor, Naches, WA  
 Madeleine E. Tight, San Rafael, CA  
 Nikole Wolfe, Chester, MT



# FROM THE CLASS OF 2023

Masks, face shields, temperature checks, and Zoom calls quickly became the norm as our class began our first year of physical therapy school. Our first day was entirely virtual, and we were eager to get into the classroom on day two. Walking to lab, we secured our masks and face shields or goggles before we checked our temperature and checked off that we were symptom-free. So far, we have been practicing hands-on techniques solely with our lab groups to limit possible transmission. To further limit the risk of close contacts, we split our class into two lab rooms with the instructor presenting material on one side while the other side observes over a zoom broadcast. Lectures have been a mixture of in-person with enough space to socially distance, hi-flex with the option to be in-person or over zoom, or entirely over zoom. These options have allowed us the flexibility to continue learning while following regulations in case a student is quarantined due to COVID or being a close contact. In speaking with other classmates, it's safe to say we are incredibly grateful for being able to continue in-person instruction this year. The precautions taken have allowed us to do so as we avoided any mass-quarantine amongst the class. We are excited to start getting to know each other better as vaccinations continue to roll out and COVID cases continue to drop. Cheers to a healthy year ahead!



Class of 2023



Katie Minahan practicing with the crown in lab.



Kelly Lindahl & Taylor Plymale practicing with the goniometer for our MSE course during the 1st block

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