

# EMORY **Physical Therapy**

FALL 2019

## **EMORY PHYSICAL THERAPY**

A Beacon of Clinical and  
Leadership Excellence

Dual Degree Graduates **2**

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## FROM THE INTERIM DIRECTOR

One of the most impactful quotes attributed to John F. Kennedy is one that he actually never delivered. As part of a speech that was to be given on that fateful day in Dallas in November 1963, the president's remarks were to include, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." In other words, both are intrinsically linked — you can't have one without the other.

At the Emory Division of Physical Therapy every faculty member is committed to training not just the world's brightest, most skilled physical therapists, but the most bold, innovative leaders in our field. In a health care system that is increasingly complex where caregivers are expected to do much more with significantly less resources, we are challenging our students to fill the leadership gap to ensure that no matter how difficult external factors become, patient care is never compromised. That means developing physical therapists who are adept in business and can help a practice respond to community need by spearheading growth and innovation. It also involves teaching our PTs to be leaders in developing and improving public health policy.

In 2010, Emory DPT became one of the first physical therapy programs in the country to adopt a dual degree program. Since then, 18 students have earned a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Emory along with either an MBA or MPH. In conjunction with the physical therapy degree, we also offer a PhD in Applied Physiology from the Georgia Tech School of Biosciences or a Master of Arts in Bioethics.

In this issue of *Emory Physical Therapy*, we are pleased to chronicle the careers of five of those dual degree graduates. While two are successful practicing physical therapists, two are making remarkable contributions to our health care delivery system outside of physical therapy while the other is in a teaching role geared to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities internationally.

As educators, we couldn't be prouder of these individuals who are making their mark as leaders. They are shining examples of why the dual degree program was created in the first place. If you are a current or future Emory DPT student who is considering joining one of our dual degree programs, I encourage you to read our feature story on page 2. You'll be glad you did.

Also, in this issue is an in-depth look at the collaborative efforts of faculty and students to bring the fun to graduate school.

As educators at one of the most esteemed physical therapy programs in the country, we design the Emory DPT curriculum to be challenging and rigorous. But we also want to create a culture where students have the freedom to press pause on their studies and join our faculty for events that strengthen relationships and enhance wellness. Please read the article on page 6 that highlights some of those fun activities such as lunch-time trivia, yoga, group walks or a night out at a professional sporting event.

And finally, please make sure to read about some individuals within the Emory DPT family who are making a major positive impact in the field of physical therapy research. On page 5, we highlight the impressive research efforts of Emory DPT alumnus Michael Ellis who was recently awarded a prestigious National Institutes of Health Research Project Grant (R01) for his groundbreaking research that could improve the lives of stroke victims. We are so proud of Michael and hope you are as inspired by his remarkable career at Northwestern University as we are.

On page 8, we chronicle the collaborative projects that Emory faculty members Mark Lyle and Peter Sprague are working on that have the potential to change the standard of care in the treatment of patients who have had ACL reconstructions.

As we celebrate the many Emory DPT graduates who are enjoying success around the world, this summer, we welcomed the class of 2022, comprised of 72 students from 21 states, China and Korea and representing 52 universities and 24 undergraduate majors.

I hope you enjoy this publication and sincerely thank you for your continued support of the Emory Division of Physical Therapy.

Best wishes,  
**Marie Johanson, PT, PhD**  
Professor and Interim Director

### Make a Gift to Emory DPT

Please consider making a gift to the Division of Physical Therapy. Your unrestricted support will help sustain our ground-breaking research, allow for the recruitment of the top researchers in the field, and help us maintain state-of-the-art facilities. For more information, please visit <https://www.emorydpt.org/alumni/give-now/>

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# EMORY Physical Therapy



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# EMORY'S DUAL DEGREE GRADUATES MAKING WORLDWIDE IMPACT IN AND OUT OF CLINIC

Long rated one of the best PT programs in the country, the Emory Division of Physical Therapy took a bold step more than 10 years ago when it became one of the nation's first PT programs to offer a dual degree program. Since its first three dual degree graduates in 2010, 15 other Emory students have obtained either their MBA or MPH degrees in conjunction with their Doctor of Physical Therapy degrees.

Recently, *Emory Physical Therapy* caught up with five Emory dual degree graduates. While all began their journey at Emory with a passion for physical therapy, their dual degrees have opened a wide array of professional opportunities that would not have been available otherwise.

## PHILIP IKOKU: A RISING STAR IN THE BOARDROOM

Since graduating from Emory with dual DPT/MBA degrees in 2016, Philip Ikoku has spent his entire professional career working with large hospitals and health systems throughout the country in the areas of strategic and capital planning and value-based care. Despite not being a practitioner, Ikoku, who is the director of business development at the St. Louis-based Lumeris, has no regrets about his three-year journey completing his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at Emory and still sees himself as a physical therapist.

"I adopt a philosophy that my family has that says there's no wasted experience when you're advancing yourself in the educational realm and doing something you love," Ikoku says. "I gained a ton of perspective, ability and knowledge in the PT program and fed my love for clinical science and interpersonal interaction."

Today, Ikoku spends his days in hospital/health system C-suites nationwide fostering partnerships that promote value-



based clinical and business models geared toward creating operational and financial efficiencies in health care delivery. According to Ikoku, while his MBA degree equipped him with the business knowledge to excel in the board room, his clinical background has further enhanced his credibility.

"On a day-to-day basis, I'm having conversations with people who, at first, have no idea that I have a clinical background," Ikoku says. "They are pleasantly surprised when something in the business side of the world goes to the clinical side and they discover that I know what I'm talking about."

While his ascent in the health care business world has been rapid, Ikoku's goals for his future are not title or dollar related but are geared toward expanding his influence in a health care system in need of bold leadership.

"My plan is to continue using the skills that I've gained at Emory, both at the clinical and business levels, to expand my impact on where health care is going and make it better for the greater populace of the United States," he says. "That means enhancing my existing relationships, growing my network and influence, and being



viewed as someone who is a leader in health care with the relationships that can really move the needle in the way our health system needs to go."

## MICHAEL WANG: LEADING AND EXPANDING HIS OWN PT PRACTICE

Emory DPT/MBA graduate Michael Wang is living the dream that he had envisioned for his life several years ago. As owner of the successful New Care Physical Therapy in Norcross, Ga., Wang, who graduated in 2012, credits Emory's dual degree program for equipping him with the knowledge to start his own physical therapy practice.

"Without a doubt, the MBA definitely was well worth it for me," Wang says. "It gave me a broad overview of how to run a team and how to work with people to get a project done. It also gave me a good overview of how business works in general — basically, just knowing what to look for. Of course, it didn't teach me everything that I needed to know specifically applicable to physical therapy, but even as my business grows right now, I know what resources to look for."

Wang, who started New Care about four years ago, specializes in sports rehabilitation, dry needling, spinal manipulation and the treatment of temporomandibular joint disorders. He is making plans to open another practice location in 2020.

"Without the MBA, I probably wouldn't have had the focus or the knowledge needed to grow beyond a single clinic," he says.

As New Care continues to expand, Wang is grateful for a business education that emphasized that being talented in your field is not nearly enough.

"In most cases, you're always going to be working with a team and it's so important to understand and adapt to different leadership styles," Wang adds. "When someone comes to work in my clinic, I need them to know how to work with the assistants, how to work with technical support and how to create relationships with other doctors. If you don't know how to create relationships and can't see the long-term goals by even just being friendly with someone, then you're

missing out on a lot. You need to have that broader spectrum and be able to see the bigger picture."

## CRYSTAL HUBER: A LEADER IN HOSPITAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

After graduating from Emory with dual DPT/MBA degrees in 2013, native Floridian Crystal Huber moved to Northern California without a job and looking for a year-long "fun adventure." Not only did Huber and her husband stay in the state's Bay Area, her career transitioned from her first job as a hospital-based physical therapist to her current role as the quality improvement manager of Alta Bates Summit Medical Center in Oakland, overseeing quality for three campuses. In her position, she reviews quality-related data, initiates system-wide quality improvement projects and supports the medical staff with peer review.

"Ultimately, I ended up transitioning because I felt like in the quality role, I could impact clinicians who could impact patients," Huber says. "It's a grander scope than one patient at a time."

Huber, who leads a team of 12 people, credits the dual degree with preparing her for leadership.

"For me, the MBA allowed me to see the value of sharing knowledge, building up others and cultivating a team environment," she says.

"Looking back, I can't say that I expected to be in this position."

With her business degree, she is also positioned to expand her role within the organization if she chooses.

"The leadership training at Emory creates a lot more opportunities for me, not just in management, but in a whole other world of consulting and other operations within our hospital that wouldn't have been there otherwise," Huber says.

Six years after leaving Atlanta, Huber still stays in touch with some of her Emory professors and credits them for equipping her with the tools to meet any challenge.

"I moved to the Bay Area without a job and as a new grad, I was overwhelmed," she recalls. "But once I got that first job, I was like, 'Oh yeah, I got this.'"







Emory public health degree with the way she views people she cares for.

“It has given me a totally different perspective of how to treat a patient,” she explains. “There is a stigma with workers’ comp patients which I’ve found to be mostly false. What I see are hard-working people who are working very physical, laborious jobs. I feel like I can identify with those patients a little bit better and incorporate that into how I care for them.”

In the future, Myers hopes to pattern her career after Emory Division of Physical Therapy Associate

Professor Sara Pullen, DPT, MPH, CHES, who has combined her clinical skills and public health acumen to improve the lives of HIV/AIDS patients previously living in chronic pain. Myers wants to utilize PT to reduce the incidence of chronic disease.

“I worked pretty closely with Dr. Pullen and was impressed how she was able to mesh her public health background with her clinical expertise to do amazing work,” she says. “I want to take a parallel path but focus on the prevention of noncommunicable diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.”

### LORI BAXTER: A GLOBAL REHABILITATION PIONEER

Lori Baxter chose Emory for its dual degree program and since graduating in 2010 with her DPT/MPH degrees, she has used her education to make an impact globally. Currently, Baxter lives in the country of Laos working at an international non-governmental organization (INGO) that exists to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Her role perfectly blends her dual degrees.

“I am not treating patients every day, but I use my clinical skills and expertise to help improve the capacity of physical therapists throughout the country,” Baxter says.

As one way to overcome the language barrier, Baxter educates caregivers by showing them pictures on her phone. The seeds for her current role were planted at Emory while getting her DPT degree. There, Baxter longed for something more than her clinical experience. That’s where the MPH degree came in.

“I’ve always loved learning about how the human body works and what can be done to help people have a better quality of life,” she explains. “But I’ve always had this nagging feeling of, ‘How do I help the people who don’t make it to the clinic? How do we help people who don’t speak the same language as the therapist they see? How do we help the people who can’t pay for the services?’”

Baxter and her husband, who are from a small town in Southern Oregon, moved to Laos in 2016 after being impressed by the country during a honeymoon stay there in 2012. Today, with two small children, they are preparing for another international adventure as Baxter recently accepted an early child development position with an INGO in Cambodia.

“We’re the kind of people who feel that our home will always be mobile,” she says. “We don’t own a house in the U.S., and I don’t foresee us living there for many, many years, if not decades.”

For Baxter and the other dual degree graduates, the Emory dual degree program has opened up endless possibilities. **EPT**



## With New Federal Grant, Michael Ellis Aims to Improve Function of Individuals with Stroke

Nearly 20 years after earning his Master of Physical Therapy (MPT) degree from Emory, Michael Ellis, PT, DPT, is leading a project that could revolutionize early rehabilitation care for stroke victims and position him as one of the country’s most influential researchers in the field of physical therapy.

Ellis, who is associate professor at Northwestern University’s Department of Physical Therapy and Human Movement Sciences, recently landed the prestigious National Institutes of Health Research Project Grant (R01). The project is titled, “Progressive Abduction Loading Therapy: A Phase IIb Stroke Rehabilitation Trial with Longitudinal Tracking.” An R01 grant is the benchmark federal funding mechanism for clinical and basic science research and is extremely competitive.

Ellis, who later earned his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Emory in 2003 while in Chicago as part of the division’s transitional program, credits Emory DPT for cultivating his passion for clinical research.

“I wouldn’t have gone down this path if it weren’t for Emory’s MPT program,” Ellis says. “I chose Emory over other schools because when I came to the open house, I was asking questions like, ‘What does this curriculum do for teaching or exposing students to clinical research?’ They, by far, had the most well-developed program. I learned so much about the research inquiry process and I was pretty excited about that. I probably would have gone down an entirely different road if I would have chosen another program.”

After leaving Atlanta in 2000 with his MPT degree, Ellis, a native of the Chicago metropolitan area, returned home and landed a position as a physical therapist in an outpatient clinic. A year into the job, he contacted long-time Emory DPT Professor Steven Wolf, PT, PhD, FAPTA to see if Wolf had any Chicago contacts who needed some part-time clinical research assistance. Wolf connected Ellis to some colleagues at the Rehab Institute of Chicago (now called Shirley Ryan AbilityLab).

“It was an impressive recommendation coming from Steve Wolf,” Ellis recalls. “They offered me a position, but they were not interested in a few hours a week here and there; they wanted me full time. So, I quit my outpatient job and I took the full-time position as a research physical therapist at RIC.”

Eighteen months later, Ellis’s boss, Jules Dewald, took a tenure-track teaching position at Northwestern and asked Ellis to join him. Since arriving at Northwestern 17 years ago, Ellis and Dewald have devoted themselves to understanding the neuromechanisms of movement impairments in individuals with stroke as a foundation for the development of new therapies.

“You follow that scientific approach, and, over the years, it begins to pan out and really solidify in terms of the evidence that supports the underlying mechanism of movement impairment,” Ellis says. “It starts to breathe a little bit of life into the possibility for translation to a promising intervention. Anywhere along that road it can fall apart. But what has happened over the last few years is that we’ve established a solid scientific underpinning that explains the movement problem and because of that, we think our new intervention has more potential to be an effective therapy.”

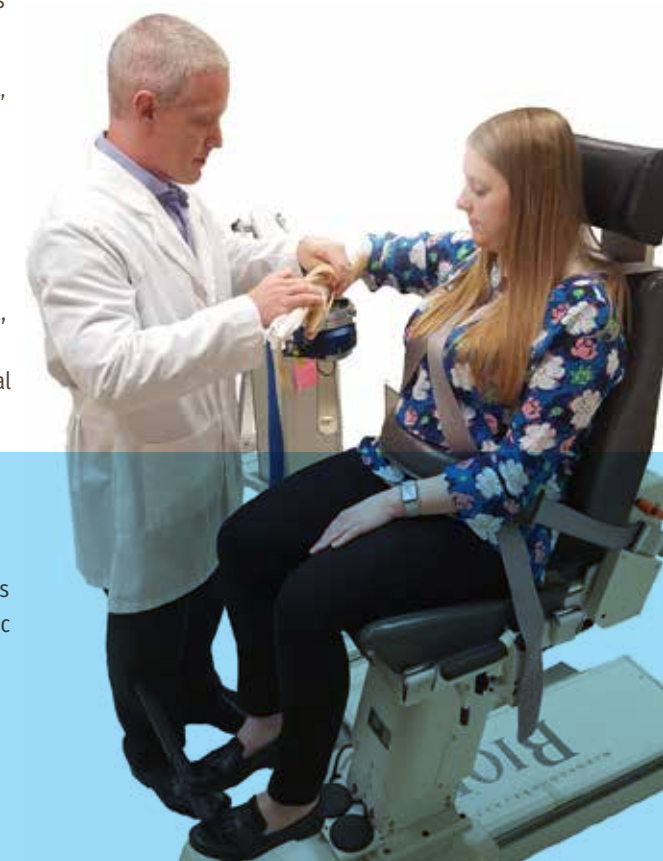
With R01 funding, Ellis is excited by the opportunity to take years of research to a completely new level.

“We’re going to take our intervention idea, bring it into the inpatient rehabilitation setting and use it to augment conventional inpatient therapy,” Ellis explains. “We’ll test to see two different variations to determine the key ingredient of this therapy. The most exciting part for me is that I’m going to follow the entire cohort for one year and track how these interventions may attenuate the development of specific movement impairments.”

If the five-year study yields the results that the Northwestern team expects, the project will move into the next phase which would be a large scale, multi-site study that examines how the new treatment protocol fares in different environments and cultures and with various dosages. By the end of the process, it’s possible that Ellis will have dedicated his entire professional career working on this single project. The payoff, improving the lives of individuals with stroke, is worth it, he says.

“When you think about how 10 years down the road, it may change the way clinicians are working with this population, it can get you kind of emotional,” Ellis says. “You spend so much time working with them and you see that they have so few options. It gets you fired up and you say, ‘I’m going to keep pushing through and fight to get funding to support this process and make an impact.’”

As his passion and research for improving the lives of stroke victims reaches the national stage, Ellis is proud of the fact that, for him, it all started at the Emory Division of Physical Therapy. **EPT**





# Emory DPT Bringing Fun, Wellness Back to Graduate School

Recent studies show that graduate students are at greater risk for mental health issues than those in the general population. In one international study appearing in *Nature Biotechnology*, 39 percent of nearly 2,300 PhD candidates scored in the moderate-to-severe depression range compared to 6 percent of the general population measured in a previous study using the same scale. A recent survey by the American College Health Association backed those findings concluding that 66 percent of graduate and professional students experienced above-average stress in the last year. A November 2018 Harvard survey of 500 graduate students from eight prestigious universities underscored the severe implications of the problem revealing that 11 percent of the graduate students surveyed reported having suicidal thoughts over a two-week period.

While higher stress levels for graduate students is hardly a surprise, the Emory Division of Physical Therapy, in collaboration with the student-driven Sustainability Committee, is making efforts to inject a few doses of fun and healthiness into the graduate school experience. Those activities, led by division faculty members, have helped alleviate stress, build student camaraderie and strengthen faculty/student relationships.

## BREAKING WALLS DOWN WITH TRIVIA AND SPORTING EVENTS

Like several students and faculty in Emory's Division of Physical Therapy, Emory DPT Assistant Professor Jenny Sharp, PT, DPT, is a former college athlete whose competitive drive is greater than most. But Sharp had no idea that a simple game of lunch-time trivia among faculty and students would get the competitive juices flowing.

"We had a lot of fun, but I learned that we have some very competitive people in our department, especially our faculty," Sharp recalls with laughter.

Sharp, a 2011 Emory DPT graduate who joined the faculty in May 2018, has hosted two lunch-time trivias in the past year in which five teams consisting of six to eight people, compete for first-place prizes such as Starbucks gift cards. About 40 faculty and students attended both events which Sharp said included a lot of laughter and helped "break walls down" between students and faculty.

"The whole reason for lunch-time trivia is to allow students and faculty to get to know each other outside of the classroom environment," Sharp says. "For students, I hope their only image of faculty won't be of us standing in front of them in a classroom giving them a lecture or an exam."

Sharp, who is a season-ticket holder and an avid Atlanta United soccer fan, personally purchased 150 tickets for the Emory DPT students and faculty to join her at a September game at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta. All of the tickets were sold.

"We had a great time and they put the Emory DPT name on the large halo board at halftime," she says. "And then, after the game, 50 lucky people from our group had the chance to attempt a penalty kick on the field. That was really exciting."

Six of those people were winners of the most recent lunch-time trivia. The rest were selected from a drawing in which students purchased tickets to support the Foundation for Physical Therapy Research. Together, students raised almost \$900.

Knowing how challenging the Emory DPT program is, Sharp wants to help create a culture where students are encouraged to get away from the classroom setting and have fun.

"It's important, I think, to bond and connect more off campus, so everyone can see each other in a different setting that is more fun and light hearted," she says.

## YOGA: ENHANCING MINDFULNESS AND MOVEMENT

Emory DPT Assistant Professor Sarah Caston, PT, DPT, has been practicing yoga for the past 10 years and knows firsthand the physical and mental benefits of the practice. That's why when Emory's student-led Sustainability Committee created goals for incorporating more mindfulness and movement into the DPT student experience, Caston had the perfect solution.

Caston, who joined the faculty two years ago and who is also a 2011 Emory DPT graduate, has conducted several yoga classes for Emory DPT students both inside and outside of the Emory School of Medicine.

"Yoga helps you feel grounded, not only physically, but mentally," Caston says. "It's asking one to take a look inward and be aware of some of the messages that we send ourselves throughout the day.

It allows us to pause and be more aware of our mindset, which is really important in graduate school. Yoga helps to bring mindfulness and movement together."

In the fast-paced graduate school setting where there's always a test to study for or a project to be completed, many students feel guilty about carving time out for fun and wellness activities. Caston, who has competed in triathlons, marathons and has hiked long distances, insists that students cannot afford to neglect these activities.

"Research shows that when people abandon self-care and do not practice mindfulness, their productivity and outcomes are worse across the board," she says. "When students come to me and they are struggling in a class and they tell me, 'I'm studying hours and hours and I'm still not getting anywhere,' some of my first questions to them are, 'What are you doing for self-care? What are you doing to get outside every day? Are you able to find time for exercise?'"

Caston conducted her first yoga class last December with 12 students and continued them on a monthly basis until she went on maternity leave in the spring. Since returning this summer, she's resumed the classes, now occurring during the lunch hour on the School of Medicine lawn, with anywhere from eight to 20 students. The student feedback has been all positive.

"Students are a little bit hesitant on the front end to give themselves that time," she adds. "But once they do, they're very happy that they did."

## MORE THAN A WALK

Going for a walk with Emory DPT Assistant Professor Peter Sprague, PT, DPT, and a group of Emory PT students at Lullwater Park near the Emory campus is anything but a typical walk in the park. Sprague, who leads the park walks with the students, has designed the activity to challenge the students to navigate around the natural barriers of a wooded park.

"My goal is to challenge their movement systems in a manner that isn't typical during a normal walk or activities that they engage in each day," Sprague says. "We're using obstacles in the immediate environment that test balance, cause us to climb over things, go under things and interact with our environment. While it's a fairly easy activity, I encourage them to challenge themselves at the level of their ability and even a little bit beyond that to try to improve their neuromuscular coordination and balance."

Sprague, who regularly goes on weekend hiking excursions in the North Georgia mountains, led 10 students on the first walk last fall with participation doubling to 20 for the most recent walk this year. The walks, which are geared to not disturb anything inside the park while maximizing movement and function, will mostly likely occur at least every other month in the future.

"The students love it," Sprague says. "In fact, among the group that came the first time, 90 percent of them showed up the second time."

Sprague, like most Emory DPT faculty, is fully aware of the studies showing declining mental health of graduate students and is committed to reaching out to them.

"The more we can be around our students and the more intentional we are about interacting with them outside of the classroom, it is more helpful for them," he adds. **EPT**







## Emory Faculty Members Collaborate to Change Standard of Care for Rehab After ACL Surgery

(from L to R) Emory DPT Assistant Professors Mark Lyle and Peter Sprague and Emory Sports Medicine's Jenny Hunnicutt.

Two Emory DPT faculty members, in collaboration with a team of caregivers from the Emory Sports Medicine Center, are leading a series of research projects that have the potential to change the standard of care in the treatment of patients who have had ACL reconstructions.

In one project, Mark Lyle, DPT, PhD, and Peter Sprague, PT, DPT, who both joined the Emory faculty within the past two years, hope to prove that a series of open kinetic exercises performed after ACL reconstruction surgery can actually strengthen the quadriceps and decrease the chances of reinjury or osteoarthritis. Currently, the standard of care within the orthopedic community discourages the exercises for fear of weakening the quadriceps tendon graft used during surgery.

Last summer, at the request of Emory Chief of Sports Medicine John "X" Xerogeanes, M.D., Lyle and Sprague began compiling a database comparing patients who have done the quadriceps-strengthening exercises to those who haven't. Typically, quadriceps strength after ACL surgery suffers. Early returns on the study have been eye opening.

"So far, evidence suggests that including these knee extension exercises immediately after surgery contributes to a quicker return of strength," Lyle says. "Not only do patients who do these knee extension exercises have more strength after six months, there are no adverse effects on the knee joint ligament. It's an exciting finding that is still very preliminary."

According to Sprague, the research will continue to track patients through various stages of post-op measuring strength and movement 30 days after surgery, six months and one, two and three years. If they are successful in proving that the quadricep exercises are safe and effective, a revised standard of care, which Sprague calls "a career's worth of work," could contribute to stronger quadriceps after surgery which could go a long way in preventing future ACL injuries. Currently, 25 percent of athletes who get ACL reconstruction re-tear the same ligament or damage the other one.

"There are so many factors that involve the ability for human function, but we're hopeful that we can change practice a little bit, improve quadricep function and help a lot of people out," Sprague says.

While data collection and analysis continue, Lyle says the next key steps in the process will be sharing the findings within the rehabilitation community, writing a support paper and pursuing grants that allow them to more closely examine muscle contraction during the open kinetic chain exercises versus traditional ones.

The second project that Lyle and Sprague are collaborating on is one that closely tracks the movement ability and strength of high-performing athletes after ACL surgery to better determine when these athletes are able to return to competition or their previous activity levels. According to Lyle, there is little criteria that suggests when an athlete can safely return to play. Motion capture data should provide quantitative-based evidence that will assist teams in making those important decisions. Sprague says they are tracking 60 athletes all at different stages of post-op recovery.

"We actually had them walk on a special mat that can identify whether they are walking symmetrically on each leg before Dr. X performed the surgery," he explains. "We're doing some data collection at the four-week mark on the gait map and will continue that through the six- and nine-month mark. We're looking at weight-bearing restrictions. Are they able to walk normally? We look at how their feet hit the ground. We'll also analyze movements like jumping and landing, cutting, lateral movement, forward/backward movement, deceleration – just higher functioning athletic-type activities. We'll see if there's anything in their movement that correlates with an increase in injury risk. We can't predict injury, but we can probably identify risk."

Jenny Hunnicutt, a post-doctoral research fellow at the Emory Sports Medicine Center who helps coordinate the projects and serves as the liaison between the two researchers and Dr. X, is impressed at how the entire team of researchers and caregivers work together to make these projects a reality.

"It's been so great working with an interdisciplinary team that recognizes that we can't tackle these questions on our own," Hunnicutt, who is an athletic trainer, says. "Everyone here at Emory is very open to a team approach and everyone respects each other's roles. The orthopedic surgeon is listening to the physical therapist and the physical therapist is listening to the athletic trainer who may be out on the field with the athlete. It really is such a team approach where everyone is respectful and willing to get input from these individual entities and fields." **EPT**



(from L to R) Tim Lonergan '11DPT, a leader of the new DPT mentorship program, mentors recent graduate Phillip Kellogg DPT'19.

## New DPT Mentor Program a Huge Success

Only a couple of months away from graduating with his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Emory, Phillip Kellogg remembers listening to a presentation from an Emory DPT alumnus early this year promoting a new mentorship program available to Emory DPT students – even third-year students on the cusp of graduation. Hoping to broaden his networking base and recognizing that advice from a seasoned professional regarding the job search process could be valuable, Kellogg signed up for the program and weeks later, the presenter that day, 2011 graduate Tim Lonergan, became his mentor.

Months later, Kellogg is thankful that he took the leap of faith. Lonergan has been a source of valuable career advice and guidance which has helped Kellogg land a position with PT Solutions.

"I definitely felt so much more prepared and confident during the interview process, asking some of those critical questions and making sure that my interests were met," Kellogg says. "It was less trial-by-fire because I was able to learn from somebody who had been there and was willing to give me some sound advice and critique."

For Lonergan, regional vice president for BenchMark Physical Therapy Clinic in the Metro Atlanta area, his contributions to Kellogg's life and career completes a community service-minded vision that he and his company have had to create a mentorship program for current Emory DPT students. He was so committed to the vision, he crafted a detailed 12-page plan complete with template letters and talking points for mentees at different stages of their graduate studies. He then pitched it to Emory DPT faculty members Patricia Bridges, PT, EdD, MMSc, Sarah Caston, PT, DPT, and Tami Phillips, PT, DPT, MBA, who loved the proposal and told him that the DPT Alumni Committee, chaired by Emory DPT Associate Professor Beth Davis, PT, DPT, MBA, FNAP, had recently casted a similar vision for a mentorship program for the students. Lonergan and Davis partnered with Alumni Committee Member Jonathan Erickson, currently a second year-student in the DPT program, and the initiative took flight at the beginning of this year. Today, in just a few months, about 110 mentees and 135 mentors nationwide have registered to participate.

"The beauty of the program is that all of our mentors are Emory DPT

graduates and they know most of the faculty that students work with every day," Lonergan says. "They also know the facility, the classes that are required and the rigor that it is and how it prepares students for their careers."

"It allows students to get some counsel and advice on how to handle the next semester of neuroscience, kinesiology or the service project. It'll address questions such as: How did you study for that type of test? When do I start studying for boards? Who should I look into as far as a company that has great values, a great mission, a great vision? What have you heard about this company? The idea was to create the kind of relationships that allow students to be comfortable enough to ask questions with some depth."

While some students may not feel comfortable forging relationships with people they don't know, Lonergan designed the program to ensure that mentees dictate the terms of the relationship. Mentors are assigned to mentees based on the preferences of the students and from there, the mentees determine the number of meetings and the method of communication whether it be in-person, telephone conversations or email/text conversations.

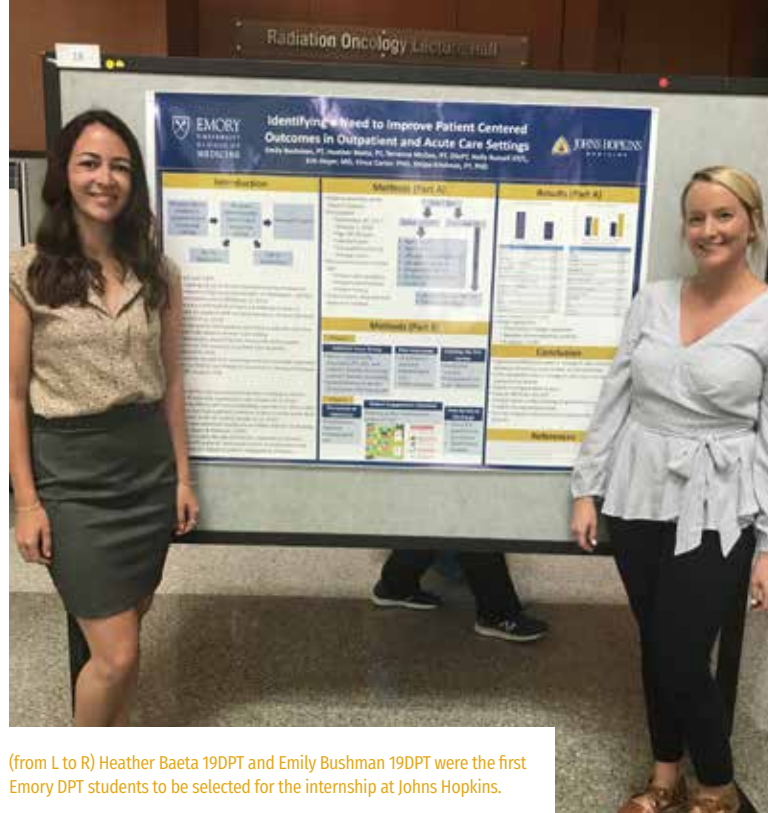
"I don't want it to be busy work for the mentee and I don't want the mentor to have to go too far out of their way unnecessarily," Lonergan adds. "I want it to be a win-win for both. And fortunately, the mentors around the country are excited to be part of this. They haven't viewed it as more work on their plates. Their attitudes are, 'I would love to give back to the institution that did so much for me.'"

Mary Alice White, a 2018 Emory DPT graduate who is currently working on getting a PhD from Georgia Tech, agreed to serve as mentor and was assigned to two current students whom she meets with occasionally in person. White says that a mentor would have been valuable to her Emory experience and she is happy to help those currently walking in her footsteps.

"There was not somebody to help guide me along the way, so if I can be helpful to any student who is following along the same trajectory, I'm happy to do that," she says. "This program formalizes these kinds of relationships and hopefully, is helpful to the current students." **EPT**



## New Emory DPT/ Johns Hopkins Internship Creates Invaluable Experience for Students



(from L to R) Heather Baeta 19DPT and Emily Bushman 19DPT were the first Emory DPT students to be selected for the internship at Johns Hopkins.

When she started her graduate school journey at the Emory Division of Physical Therapy more than three years ago, Heather Baeta could have never imagined that, as part of her Emory course work, she would be participating in executive meetings at the world-renowned Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. But thanks to a new internship program that began last summer between Emory DPT and the academic medical center, Baeta and fellow Emory DPT student, Emily Bushman, became the first students to complete the new internship.

While being the partnership's first-ever interns created unique challenges that go with blazing a new trail, Baeta called it "valuable experience" that enhanced her leadership capabilities as a clinician and helped her in key areas such as patient rounding, enhancing physician involvement and time management.

According to Emory DPT Interim Director Marie Johanson, PT, PhD, the partnership, which sent another Emory DPT student to Baltimore this summer, combines the clinical strengths of Johns Hopkins with the research expertise of Emory DPT to create an alliance that benefits everyone — especially the students.

"Our students, with some faculty involvement, are doing in-depth work for Johns Hopkins in terms of improving patient care and investigating treatments and services," Johanson says. "In return, our students get access to excellent clinical training opportunities at a prestigious institution."

Both students started their internships by performing clinical rotations — Baeta in acute care and Bushman in the outpatient setting. Once the rotations were completed, they were assigned to separate administrative and research tasks. Baeta conducted a research project designed to enhance the mobility of patients in the acute care unit while Bushman examined the correlation between patient-reported outcomes and the long-term mobility of patients with lower back pain in six outpatient clinics within the Johns Hopkins system. Both

presented their poster findings at Emory DPT's Poster Day in the spring.

Emory DPT Assistant Professor Shilpa Krishnan, PT, PhD, who supervised the research component of the project, said that both new graduates, with their recent experience of navigating a research project from start to finish, including the establishment of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), are already way more advanced in their research foundation than most physical therapists.

"There are very few clinicians who actually understand the ins and outs of an IRB and as physical therapists, it's going to be important for us to be involved in certain quality improvement projects," Krishnan says. "These students have these additional skills, and now being doctors of physical therapy, they are going to be the go-to people in many settings. They can now be involved in a lot of quality improvement projects because they can successfully complete an IRB. All of this was very challenging, but also very beneficial."

Beth Davis, PT, DPT, MBA, who is associate professor in the Emory DPT program and in charge of the project's administrative component, says that Baeta and Bushman, as the first-ever interns in the partnership, blazed a trail for future participants and had an opportunity that will pay huge dividends as they start their careers.

"These students worked in an amazing hospital and institution and got valuable lessons in leadership, communication, management and administration," Davis says. "They were exposed to so much of the back office of health care which will prove to be invaluable to them."

The internship has already paid off in a big way for Baeta, who, after graduating with her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Emory in May, landed a coveted 13-month orthopedic residency at Johns Hopkins which began in August. As part of the residency, she is helping teach courses at George Washington University twice a week and working in a clinic three times a week. **EPT**

## Atlanta's Northside Hospital Named Outstanding Clinical Partner

The Northside Rehabilitation Services Department, part of Northside Hospital in Atlanta, has been named the 2019 Outstanding Clinical Partner by the Emory Division of Physical Therapy. Brandy Wilkins, PT, DPT, SCCE, Northside's system rehabilitation program coordinator, accepted the award on behalf of the Atlanta-based five-hospital system.

By the end of 2019, Northside will have provided clinical training to eight Emory DPT students this year, more than twice the number in 2018. Students can serve in Northside clinics for as long as 12 weeks or as little as two weeks, depending on their experience. According to Wilkins, Emory DPT students are known for their "strong didactic knowledge" while the Emory DPT faculty is easy to work with.

What differentiates Emory DPT from other schools, Wilkins adds, is the varied experiences that students are exposed to before they reach clinical training.

"With Northside's strong service line for oncology patients, we appreciate the fact that Emory values that as well when they're teaching their students about oncology diagnoses," Wilkins says. "They're giving them a good foundation for being able to treat the oncology population."

Emory DPT Associate Professor & Director of Clinical Education

Patricia Bridges, PT, EdD, thanks Northside for its commitment to providing physical therapy students with an optimal clinical experience.

"Northside Hospital Department of Rehab Services is an excellent clinical site demonstrating characteristics of effective management, positive morale, collaborative working relationships, and professionalism as well as providing excellent patient care and learning experiences for Emory DPT students," Bridges said. "Their desire for collaborative relationships with clinical partners has been evidenced by the annual meet and greet event for directors of clinical education. Emory DPT is grateful to have a partnership with Northside Hospital Department of Rehab Services." **EPT**



## 2019 CLINICAL EDUCATOR AWARD Jeff Lewandowski: 'A Role Model of the Highest Order'

After having what he described as a "bad" clinical training experience as a student several years ago, Jeff Lewandowski, PT, DPT, ATC, MTC, SCS, determined that he would be the clinical instructor that he wished he had had.

"I was only about a year out of college and I had already mapped out what I would and would not do as an instructor," says Lewandowski, who leads SportsCare Physical Therapy with two locations in Metro Atlanta.

It's safe to say that Lewandowski, who has been practicing since 1986 treating patients with general orthopedic and sports-related injuries, has accomplished his goal. This year, the Emory Division of Physical Therapy named Lewandowski, who estimates he has trained about 60 Emory DPT students over the past 25 years, its Clinical Educator of the Year recipient.

Lewandowski, who also serves as an adjunct professor for Emory

DPT, is committed to creating an environment for students that encourages them to prepare for each patient in advance.

"I assign directed reading for the students, exploring one joint system at a time," Lewandowski explains. "We spend time reviewing the information and then practice examinations, manual therapy and dosed exercise prescription before providing in-depth evaluation and treatment to patients. It is not good for the patient, student or my private practice to have students jump into a clinical situation if they are not confident and effective."

Emory DPT Associate Professor & Director of Clinical Education Patricia Bridges, PT, EdD, praised Lewandowski's years of dedication to educating Emory PT students.

"Dr. Jeff Lewandowski is a role model of the highest order," Bridges says. "Not only does he demonstrate expertise in orthopedic physical therapy and use clinical reasoning that integrates evidence, unique patient-centered knowledge and skills, he also fosters self-directed learning with every student. Emory DPT is fortunate to have a long history of Dr. Lewandowski making a difference in the professional development of Emory DPT students and the future of our profession." **EPT**



## AWARDS

# Class of 2019 Student Awards

Each year the Division of Physical Therapy presents awards to graduating students.

**Director's Award for Academic Excellence** | This award was given to **James Brooks** and **Phillip Kellogg** in recognition of exceptional academic work.

**Director's Award for Excellence in Growth Mindset** | This award acknowledged **Erin Wright** for modeling perseverance and courage in meeting challenges and who, through hard work and dedication, demonstrated resilience and a love of learning.

**Excellence in Service Award** | This award recognized **Nikki Bailys**, **Sarah Smith Hollingsworth** and **Payton Sims** for outstanding service contributions to the program and/or physical therapy's professional association.

**Frances A. Curtiss Award for Excellence in Community Service** | This award recognized the outstanding service contributions of **Jordan Marks** and **Alex Schilder** to the community at the local, national or international level.

**Ian H. Tovin Scholarship Award** | This award was given to **Heather Baeta** and **Abbey Misenheimer** in recognition of outstanding performance throughout the program and an intention to focus on orthopedics after graduation.

**Johnnie Morgan Award for Excellence in Clinical Science** | This award was given to **Sophia Artusa**, **Emily Bushman** and **Shantha Nithiananda** for going above and beyond what is expected of students during their clinical affiliations.

**Pamela A. Catlin Award for Excellence in Critical Inquiry** | This award was given to **Patrick Mason** and **Erika Rigel** who were deemed by the faculty and their research advisers to have shown leadership, mastery of content knowledge, problem-solving ability, enthusiasm, and value to overall research projects.

**Susan J. Herdman Award for Excellence in Clinical Practice** | This award was given to **Sophia Artusa**, **Liz Simmons** and **Colleen Varan** for exemplifying the drive to advance the profession and who demonstrated knowledge and skills in a specialized area of patient care.



(from left to right) **Shantha Nithiananda**, **Sophia Artusa** and **Emily Bushman** accept the Johnnie Morgan Award for Excellence in Clinical Science.



Former Emory DPT Director **Zoher Kapasi** (center) presents the Zoher F. Kapasi Award for Excellence in Leadership to **Kyle Buckham** and **Sarah Smith Hollingsworth**.

**Zoher F. Kapasi Award for Excellence in Leadership** | This award was given to **Kyle Buckham** and **Sarah Smith Hollingsworth** for showing considerable initiative and organizational skills related to class and program activities.

## ALUMNI NOTES

**Kaelen Arnold, 07DPT** is currently working in Aspen, Colo. and is a full-time traveling physical therapist. She is the owner/founder of Concierge Physical Therapy of the Rockies which is a mobile physical therapy practice.



**Rob Bell, 12DPT**, after seven years in the Pacific Northwest, recently accepted a position at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn. He is charged with developing a physical therapy treatment program specific to those with hemophilia, with an emphasis on joint health and orthopedic dysfunctions. Bell is pictured with his wife, Schaefer, and sons, Hudson and Walker.

**Mandy Blackmon, 05DPT** and **Emma Faulkner 15DPT**, dance medicine specialists, are now the primary physical therapists for Atlanta Ballet. They both started their own private practices, MandyDancePT and TriHealth PT, and are partnering in Atlanta Dance Medicine, which provides injury prevention, performance enhancement and continuing education services.



**Kristen Casperson, 07DPT** has served as a Neuro Certified Clinical Specialist through the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS) since 2015. She recently completed Six Sigma Green Belt Certification. She is

-serving a new role as the inpatient rehab program coordinator at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago where her focus is accreditation, quality, compliance and performance improvement activities for the hospital's inpatient rehab program.



**Geo Cesare, 05DPT**, formerly known as Brent Cesare, opened an outpatient physical therapy clinic in Del Mar, Calif. in 2011 and sold it in 2018. He recently authored a book, "Radiant Balance,®" which promotes a comprehensive program integrating physical therapy and yoga to help aging adults improve balance and reduce falls.



**Janae Finley, 12DPT**, who recently marked a one-year anniversary of breast cancer survival, began working at TurningPoint Breast Cancer Rehabilitation in Atlanta in January 2019. She specializes in breast cancer rehab and treats everything from lymphedema to chest wall dysfunction, ROM deficits and cording.

**Kat Hedden, 14DPT** passed the Pediatric Certified Specialist (PCS) exam last year and is working full time at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt in Nashville, Tenn. She has helped spearhead the Pediatric Early Mobility initiative in the hospital's PICU and PCICU and is col-

lecting data to validate therapy interventions in the pediatric critical care setting.

**Eric Henderson, 14DPT** works in acute care at Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville, Ga. In addition, he is an adjunct professor for the physical therapy program at Brenau University.

**Erica Hosken, 11DPT** opened her own outpatient orthopedic practice in Duluth, Ga. to better serve patients with scoliosis, kyphosis and other spinal deformities. At Align Physical Therapy, patients are treated using the Schroth Method as well as traditional physical therapy to decrease curvature, prevent surgery, improve cosmesis, improve vital capacity, reduce or eliminate pain and improve quality of life.

**Crystal Huber, 13DPT/MBA** and her husband, Emory graduate Michael Olsen, 13MBA/MPH, welcomed their first child, Charlotte Frances Olsen July 10, 2019.



**Anita Krishnan, 12DPT** was promoted to lead doctor of physical therapy and leads mentorship program development for Intecore Physical Therapy in Orange County, Calif.

**Melanie Rezaie, 18 DPT** recently started her own private practice called Movement is Life working with women and families in the Metro Atlanta area, with an emphasis on maternity wellness and rehab.

## FACULTY NOTES

**Kathy Lee Bishop, PT, DPT** served as the program chair of the Georgia Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Annual Meeting in March 2019. She was also part of a team that won the Best Poster Award at a spring conference of the Association of American Colleges.

**Edelle [Edee] Field-Fote, PT, PhD, FAPTA** was elected to serve as chair of the National Institutes of Health National Advisory Board on Medical Rehabilitation Research. She has served on the board since 2018 and will begin her term as chair in December 2019.

**Bruce Greenfield, PT, MA, PhD, FNAP** has been selected as a Catherine Worthington Fellow of the American Physical Therapy Association (FAPTA). FAPTA is APTA's highest membership category to recognize members who have demonstrated sustained

efforts to advance the physical therapy profession. Dr. Greenfield's nomination included supportive documentation from many nationally and internationally recognized leaders in the physical therapy profession who spoke of his prominent leadership, influence and achievements within the profession.

**Marie Johanson, PT, PhD** is now chair of the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS) and is the ABPTS representative for the Education Leadership Partnership. Both are part of the American Physical Therapy Association.

**Trisha Kesar, PT, PhD**, who was recently promoted to associate professor, was awarded a five-year R01 research grant from the National Institutes of Health. She is the principal investigator of a project titled, "Biomechanical and Neural Mechanisms of

Post-Stroke Gait Training." The co-investigative team includes Emory DPT's Michael Borich, PT, DPT, PhD, Joe Nocera, PhD and Steven Wolf, PT, PhD, FAPTA.

**Shilpa Krishnan, PT, PhD** was recently accepted as a Fellow in the inaugural Georgia Clinical & Translational Science Alliance TEAMS (Translational Education and Mentoring for Science) Program. Earlier this year, she was interviewed for an NBC News report detailing how caregivers of those with Alzheimer's disease can better care for themselves.

**Steven Wolf, PT, PhD, FAPTA** was named the 2019 Dean's Distinguished Faculty Lecture and Award recipient. This is among the most prestigious and celebratory honors that the School of Medicine can bestow on a faculty member.





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# ***Congratulations*** Class of 2019

