



GERONTOLOGY

SPRING 2014

PAGE I

Current Statistics:

- 85 Minors
- 27 Certificate Students
- 21 MA Students
- 6 Core Faculty
- 31 Affiliate Faculty

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From the Program Director...

Dr. Dena Shenk

As we head towards the end of another academic year, there is lots of exciting news to report from the Gerontology Program.

I will be stepping down as Director of the UNC Charlotte Gerontology Program this summer after 23 years in that role. My special thanks to the search committee (Boyd Davis, Chair, Cynthia Hancock, Jane Neese, Mike Turner, Jillian Tullis, and Diane Zablotzky) for conducting an external search that brought two candidates to campus. Thanks also to MA students Michelle Jeffries and Emily

Carleo for their involvement in the search process. The Dean is now proceeding with the hiring process and we anticipate announcing the new Director who will be joining us for the next academic year. I look forward to supporting the new director through the transition.

Students are preparing for registration for summer and fall beginning March 24. We are excited about new course offerings including Environments for Aging and the Experience of Dementia both being offered online this summer. Course listings are posted on the Gerontology Program website and hard copies are available.

Several Master's students are finalizing their applied projects and numerous important theses and projects are underway.

Please stay in touch with your professional and personal news so we can share it with our growing Gerontology community in future issues.



Dena Shenk, Ph.D

Director, Gerontology Program & Graduate Coordinator
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Announcements and Upcoming Events

Film Screening : Gen Silent

Sponsored by the Gerontology Program. Free and open to everyone
Denny 220 March 25th, 2014 5:00-7:45 PM (See page 2)

[Southern Gerontological Society Meeting](#) April 3-6, 2014 Little Rock, AK

Film Screening: Genius of Marian

Sponsored by AFA on Campus Free and open to everyone
April 2 and 4th from 7-9:30 in CHHS 155

Dr. Anita Blowers was appointed to serve on the *Strategic Alliances for Elders in Long Term Care Task Force* for the state of North Carolina.

Dr. Allison Burfield was awarded a highly competitive grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Faculty Scholars program (see page 4).

Dr. Cynthia Hancock was awarded the AGHE 2014 Distinguished Faculty Award (see page 4).

From the Undergraduate Coordinator...

Happy Spring! We are wrapping up another academic year and are looking toward the future with excitement! Please read the newsletter to learn about everything going on with our students and faculty.

I want to personally invite everyone to the public viewings of two exciting films. Gen Silent is being sponsored by the Gerontology Program, free of charge and open to everyone. This film asks six LGBT seniors if they will hide their lives in order to survive in the care system. Please join us on March 25th in Denny 220. Our Graduate Sociology of Aging Semi-

nar will lead the discussion following the film. The Genius of Marian is being sponsored by the Alzheimer's Foundation of America on Campus. This film addresses the challenging world of dementia. This is also free of charge and open to everyone. Showings will be April 2 and 4 at 7:00 p.m. in CHHS 155. Free food and drinks will be available.

Please bring your roommates, family, friends, co-workers and join us for these film events.



Dr. Cynthia Hancock

Spotlight on Faculty: Michael J. Turner, PhD, RCEP

Michael J. Turner is Associate Professor of Kinesiology and is also the MS in Kinesiology program coordinator. Dr. Turner earned his BS degree in Exercise Science and his MS degree in Exercise Physiology from Miami University in Oxford Ohio. Dr. Turner also earned his PhD in Education from the University of Tennessee -Knoxville.

Dr. Turner's background related to aging and gerontology consists of research on physical activity and aging and also, the mechanisms influ-

enced by regular physical activity that impact the functioning of our aging hearts. He has been doing this type of research for 20 years now. He has always been interested in the aging heart. The successful aging of his parents and grandparents led to his interest in aging and gerontology. Also, research in his discipline made him eager to want to learn more.

Dr. Turner teaches a Graduate class on Physiology of Human Aging. He is also doing research on following mice through their life span and seeing how

their heart functions change. This can be related to humans.

When Dr. Turner is not working he is with his family. He loves to do activities with them and just have fun away from campus. One thing Dr. Turner wants you to know about the Gerontology program is that it is a great environment and learning opportunity.



Gerontology Club/Sigma Phi Omega Gamma Psi News



Our 2013-2014 SPO/Club Officers are:

[Sarah Blanton](#), Co-President
sblanto6@uncc.edu

[Leland Stewart](#), Co-President
lstewa34@uncc.edu

[Emily Carleo](#), Treasurer
sebenso@uncc.edu

[Michelle Jeffries](#), Secretary
mjeffr4@uncc.edu

The Gerontology Club/SPO Fall 2013 semester was a huge success. Our club's purpose is to educate people about the aging process while advocating for older adults in our community. Fall semester our club focused on recruiting members, spreading the word about the Gerontology program, while making a difference in the community. The club has worked hard to organize events in the community and take part in campus activities. We sponsored our first major event on October 25th for the residents of Madison Saints Paradise South Senior Living in Charlotte, NC. We were able to bring food, fun and meaningful activities to the residents in an effort to increase resident participation within the community. The club has taken part in Explore Open Houses and Majors Day on UNCC campus to represent and spread the word about the Gerontology Program. Additionally, our club has volunteered at events held in the community as

well. We volunteered at the Alzheimer's Walk held at Symphony Park at South Park mall on September 28th. Our group helped the Alzheimer's Association encourage participants to sign a petition and sign up to be an Advocate for Alzheimer's. This semester the officers and members have shown a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication to make the spring semester equally successful.



Alumni Updates:

Dr. Ling Liou is completing her second year as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Miami University teaching Gerontology. After earning her MA from our program, she completed her doctorate at Virginia Tech.

Brandi Moore is completing her MHA at University of Kentucky. She works part-time at campus Healthcare.

Emily (Holtman) Jones is the Recreation Director for the new Kissito PACE Program in Roanoke, Virginia. This is the first PACE program for their area and they opened their doors on November 1. She is excited about the opportunity to have the creative freedom to use all that she's learned from her various experiences.

Karel Kalaw recently completed her dissertation research in the Philippines for her doctoral degree in Gerontology at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. She presented at the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education meetings in Denver.

AviElle Raymore is in her first year of the doctoral program in Gerontology at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

Patricia Morsch is enrolled in the doctoral program in Biomedical Gerontology from the Institute of Geriatrics and Gerontology of the Pontifical Catholic University at RS state (PUCRS). She recently defended her dissertation proposal and is continuing her research on falls risk.

Leah Hanrahan is the new Activity Assistant at the Haven at Highland Creek.

Avery Reep is an Engaged Life Instructor at Atria Merrywood working with both independent and assisted living residents.

Sara (Agner) Maloney is the Care

Manager, Lutheran Services Carolina and a Family Caregiver Specialist. Congratulations also on her recent wedding.

Julia Homans is the new In-Home Aide Supervisor at the Council of Aging, Union County.

Kina Jackson is enrolled in the BSN to Doctoral Nurse Practitioner (DNP) Program at Duke University.

Melissa (Graf) Dye is the Senior Life Coordinator at Westminster Towers, Rock Hill.

Jyoti Nunna Krishnamurty is working as a patient advocate/educator for Asian patients at both Presbyterian Hospital and Carolina Medical Centers. She acts as a liaison between the patient and the healthcare provider

Weddings

Hallie (Putt) Hegnauer was married to Brent Hegnauer on May 4th.

Jeena George has been the *Social Services* Director at the Park Central Care and Rehabilitation in Fremont, CA. She was married in India in December & will be returning to the US.

Kaitlin Stevens-Abernathy and Adam Abernathy were married September 28 2013 at Cody Creek in Dobson, NC



New Parents and Babies

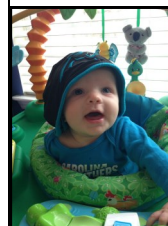
Gina Gonzalez Hofert welcomed Paisley, October 25, 2012.

Caleb Miller welcomed Magnolia Rain Miller, Sept 27, 2013.

Chanel Jackson welcomed Ethan A. Glover, March 23, 2013.

Denise Bordeman welcomed Clara Jo Bordeman, February 13, 2013.

Jennie (Leeder) Clark welcomed Lottie Rose on December 31, 2013.



Kellie (Visker) Gonyar welcomed Aayla on July 13th. Aayla has a special story that we are pleased to share...

Aayla's Story Bilateral Retinoblastoma Awareness

Aayla Gonyar, daughter of Kellie and Chris Gonyar, was born on July 13, 2013. At two months of age, she was diagnosed with Bilateral Retinoblastoma after her Uncle, a Pediatrician, saw a photo showing a white reflex instead of a red-eye reflex; a later sign of retinoblastoma. Retinoblastoma is rare – afflicting only about 250-300 children each year in the US. It develops from a single affected cell and is invisible at inception. Over time, the tumor grows and can impact vision and be detected by an eye exam. Most retinoblastoma cases are diagnosed at about 16 months of age when the cancer has advanced. Early detection was key in Aayla's case. Today, Aayla is finishing her chemotherapy treatments and is thriving. She is expected to have full vision in her right eye (but only peripheral vision in her left eye). We share this story because we cannot overemphasize how important it is for pediatricians to confirm red eye reflex in the children they examine (and for parents to request this exam every checkup). We hope that Aayla's story will help reinforce the significance of eye exams in babies and children.



Recognitions...



We welcome new Gerontology Faculty Affiliates

Nigel Zheng

Assistant Professor; Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Science

Scott Gordon Ph. D

Professor and Chair,
Department of Kinesiology

Parminder Juneja

Assistant Professor,
Engineering Technology

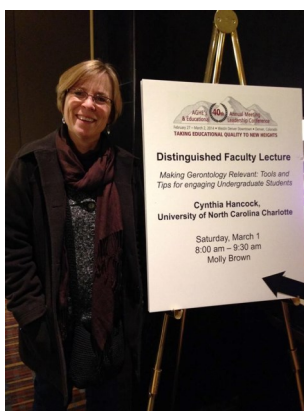
Tara O'Brien

Lecturer, School of
Nursing

New Books Published

Davis B and **Guendouzi J**, eds. 2013. *Pragmatics in dementia discourse*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Discourse and Pragmatics Series

Awards



Dr. Cynthia Hancock was awarded the 2014 Association for Gerontology in Higher Education Distinguished Faculty

Award. This national award is given to a person whose teaching stands out as exemplary, innovative, of impact, or any combination thereof. Dr. Hancock presented a lecture entitled "Making Gerontology Relevant" at the AGHE annual meeting in March in Denver. Congratulations Dr. Hancock!

Dr. Allison Burfield has been awarded a highly competitive grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Nurse Faculty Scholars program. The Nurse Faculty Scholar award is given to junior faculty who show outstanding promise as future leaders in academic nursing. For her research project, Burfield plans to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention to assess and treat pain in older adult suffering with dementia. <http://www.uncc.edu/spotlight/2013/spotlight-burfield-named-nurse-faculty-scholar#sthash.SOBPXsoz.dpu>

Conference Presentations

Judith Walsh presented a paper on "Impact of Medication aide Use in Nursing Home Quality" at the GSA Conference in November.

Drs. Sarah Laditka and James Laditka presented "More education may limit the impact of cognitive impairment on disability and life expectancy for older Americans", "High costs of poverty for active life expectancy after mid-life: Half the life expectancy, double the disability", and "Work disability: A central measure of public health, a health disparity affect-

ing African Americans" at the APHS Annual Meeting.

Dr. Boyd Davis, Maclagan M, Pope C. presented Looking at density and complexity in conversations with oldest-old persons with dementia, poster at the GSA Conference.

Drs. Dena Shenk and Boyd Davis organized and chaired two symposia for the GSA conference on Technology-supported Interventions for People with Dementia: Facilitators and Barriers and Using Technology to Support Communication with People with Dementia and their Caregivers and presented: Beyond Reminiscence: Increasing Engagement and Eliciting a Range of Conversational Phrases.

Dr. Tara O'Brien, Dr. Carolyn Jenkins, Dr. Elaine Amella, Dr. Martina Mueller, **Dr. Meredith Troutman-Jordan**, and Dr. Michael Moore, did a presentation on Internet Assisted Weight Loss Program Intervention for Older Rural Women at the GSA Conference.

Dr. Christine Davis and Margaret Quinlan presented Constructing the dead: Retrospective sensemaking in eulogies at the Communication as Social Construction Division, National Communication Association annual convention. Christine Davis also presented "A Dialogue with Death: Horror Films as a Discursive Attempt to Construct a Relationship with the Dead with J. Crane at the same conference.

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**Interested in learning more about or applying to the
MA or Graduate Certificate Program in Gerontology? Information
is available at gerontology.uncc.edu**