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# Salud y Saludos: The E-News of the College of Health Sciences

College of Health Sciences

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College of Health Sciences

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

# Salud y Saludos

The E-News of the College of Health Sciences

Salud y Saludos

April 2012

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## From the Dean's Desk



As we approach our Spring 2012 commencement festivities, we will observe another important "first" for the College of Health Sciences. Our first group of [Master of Rehabilitation Counseling \(MRC\) Program](#) students will receive their degrees this summer, marking the beginning of their careers in this growing field.

The MRC program enrolled the first 14 students in August, 2010, under the leadership of Program Director, Dr. Timothy Tansey. Shortly afterwards, Dr. Tansey was successful in securing a \$750,000 grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, which provided tuition support and stipends for the majority of these students. Together with [MRC program faculty](#), Dr. Barbara Schoen and Dr. Erin Barnes, Dr. Tansey will guide these students through their final internships this summer. Not only will we be celebrating the success of the UTEP MRC program, but most importantly the capacity we will be able to add to our regional community as these graduates enter practice. Program graduates will sit for the national certification examination in July to be qualified as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC).

Rehabilitation counselors provide key services for individuals with physical, mental and emotional disabilities. These services include promoting independent living, providing job coaching and skills training, and helping people with disabilities to secure employment and join the workforce. In the City of El Paso alone, estimates indicate that less than 10 percent of more than 25,000 working age adults with a disability that interfered with employment were actually employed, compared with 67 percent of working age adults without a disability.

The rehabilitation counseling profession is expanding rapidly in Texas and in particular in the El Paso region, with anticipated greater needs for services. With few certified rehabilitation counselors and growing needs in west Texas, program graduates will be assured of employment.

There are only six rehabilitation counseling graduate education programs in the state. The UTEP program is the only graduate education program for rehabilitation counselors in far west Texas or southern New Mexico, with the next closest program at Texas Tech University (TTU) in Lubbock, 425 miles from UTEP.

The rapidly growing Rehabilitation Sciences Department also includes programs that offer the [Doctor of Physical Therapy](#), the [Master of Occupational Therapy](#) and the [Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology](#) degrees. In fact, as you'll read below, April is Occupational Therapy month! The rehabilitation career fields are some of the hottest around, consistently making

## Calendar of events

Saturday, May 12  
3:00pm

[CHS Pre-Commencement and Graduate Hooding Ceremony](#)

Saturday, May 12  
7:00pm

[College of Health Sciences Commencement](#)

## In the News

[Ms. Hernandez Goes to Washington](#)

[Program Harvests Healthy Food Choices](#)

[Study Aims to Reduce Heart Disease in Hispanics](#)

[UTEP Announces 2012 Top Ten Seniors](#)

[Virtual Reality Helps with Balance](#)

[New Task Forces to Improve Outreach](#)

[UTEP Celebrates National Public Health Week](#)

the "Top 100 careers" list in major national publications. Please join us in celebrating the success of our graduates and help us to improve access to rehabilitation services throughout our region.

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## April is National Occupational Therapy Month

Occupational therapy enables people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping to promote health, prevent-or live better with-injury, illness, or disability. It is a practice deeply rooted in science and is evidence-based, meaning that the plan designed for each individual is supported by data, experience, and "best practices" that have been developed and proven over time.

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants focus on "doing" whatever occupations or activities are meaningful to the individual. It is occupational therapy's purpose to get beyond problems to the solutions that assure living life to its fullest. These solutions may be adaptations for how to do a task, changes to the surroundings, or helping individuals to alter their own behaviors.

When working with an occupational therapy practitioner, strategies and modifications are customized for each individual to resolve problems, improve function, and support everyday living activities. The goal is to maximize potential. Through these therapeutic approaches, occupational therapy helps individuals design their lives, develop needed skills, adjust their environments (e.g., home, school, or work) and build health-promoting habits and routines that will allow them to thrive.

By taking the full picture into account-a person's psychological, physical, emotional, and social makeup as well as their environment-occupational therapy helps clients to:

- Achieve goals
- Function at the highest possible level
- Concentrate on what matters most to them
- Maintain or rebuild their independence
- Participate in daily activities that they need or want to do.

Occupational therapists (OTs) help their clients to perform daily living and working tasks so that they are able to live the most independent and satisfying life possible. Clients that OTs work with may have mental, physical, emotional or developmental conditions that keep them from functioning adequately in their home, school, work or play environments. Occupational therapists help patients with a wide range of essential daily life activities, including bathing, dressing, cooking, eating, using a pencil, operating a computer, and many other activities that occupy one's time during each day. Occupational therapists work with patients and clients that range in age from neonate to the elderly.

The UTEP [Occupational Therapy program](#) is 15 years old. It enrolled its first class as a cooperative program with the [University of Texas Medical Branch \(UTMB\)](#) in 1991. Transfer of administrative control of the program transferred from UTMB to [UTEP](#) in 1997. The program moved from a bachelor's level program to an entry-level master's level program in 2005. UTEP currently offers the [Master of Occupational Therapy \(MOT\) program](#), which can be completed in about 2 ½ years. The program typically graduates 15-20 students a year. UTEP MOT graduates secure employment in hospitals, outpatient rehabilitation clinics, skilled nursing facilities, homes, public schools, early intervention agencies, pediatric clinics, and mental health hospitals, clinics and agencies. OT was recently ranked as one of the top 20 jobs in the "150 Best Recession-Proof Jobs" (JIST, 2008) and was named to [U.S. News & World](#)

Report's "Best Careers 2012" list. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects occupational therapist employment growth of 33.5 percent between 2010 and 2020, adding 36,400 more professionals to the 108,800 already-existing jobs in this field. The Bureau of Labor Standards estimated the median annual income for occupational therapists to be \$72,320 a year in 2010. Information on OT and the UTEP MOT Program can be found at <http://www.aota.org> and <http://chs.utep.edu/ot>.



### **National Public Health Week 2012 in El Paso, Texas**

Last month Students for Public Health submitted a petition to El Paso City Council to issue a proclamation in celebration of Public Health Month. In response to that petition, El Paso Mayor John Cook proclaimed the week of April 2-8, 2012, as [National Public Health Week 2012 in El Paso, Texas](#). He called upon the people of El Paso to observe the month of April by helping families, friends, neighbors, co-workers and leaders better understand the importance of public health in light of this year's theme, "A Healthier America Begins Today. Join the Movement."

The University of Texas at El Paso's [College of Health Sciences](#), the Students for Public Health, in partnership with the Department of Public Health educated the public, policy-makers, and public health professionals about issues important to improving the health of our community.

On April 3, Leilani Attilio & Jackie Mariscal, Master of Public Health students in the [Department of Public Health Sciences](#) represented the Students for Public Health (SPH) association and addressed the El Paso City Council to encourage organizations, communities, and individuals to band together to reduce the prevalence of chronic and infectious diseases such as diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and the Hepatitis C Virus. In addition, a week-long series of events to celebrate National Public Health Week were planned by the SPH in collaboration with the City of El Paso Department of Public Health. Activities including walking groups, public health promotional displays at the College of Health Sciences on tobacco, sexual, health, and healthy eating, and a series of lectures and films addressing public health problems were featured during the week.

### **Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) Annual Walk**

Accompanied by UTEP's own Paydirt Pete, over 140 College of Health Sciences and School of Nursing students, faculty and staff participated in the [Muscular Dystrophy Association \(MDA\) Annual Muscle Walk](#) on March 31 at Sunland Park mall. In addition to raising funds, the annual walk creates awareness about Muscular Dystrophy and facilitates opportunities for

individuals with muscular dystrophy to interact and engage with community participants. Sporting bright UTEP College of Health Science orange t-shirts with a MINER STRONG UTEP logo, UTEP participants walked the upper level of Sunland Park mall in support of MDA and its mission. Thanks to all who participated especially our student organizations that provided leadership in getting College of Health Sciences and School of Nursing students to wake up early on a Saturday morning in support of this annual community event.



### **Kinesiology Club with a Mission**

The [UTEP Kinesiology](#) Club's mission is to share how leading an active and health lifestyle can be fun as well as rewarding. By working with various organizations and other community service projects, it is a goal to make our El Paso area a healthier place. Throughout the Spring 2012 semester, the Kinesiology Club has participated and volunteered in multiple events.

The Muscular Dystrophy Association Muscle Walk took place on March 31 at Sunland Park Mall where over 70 Kinesiology students participated in the walk with fellow students in the [College of Health Sciences](#). Kinesiology students participated in a three day event at [La Fe Preparatory School](#) to build a new playground. The build was sponsored by [KaBOOM](#), an organization who travels throughout the United States to solve the problem of play deficits among our children. Two Kinesiology physical education graduates were part of the KaBOOM team that brought the grant to La Fe Preparatory School. Volunteers also included BlueCross BlueShield, Fort Bliss Engineers and other various members of the El Paso community. The other recent event that took place was the Mission Valley Health Fair where a small group of kinesiology students informed parents and children of the importance of physical activity by having the students participate in a jump rope contest and practice hand eye coordination with juggling scarves and Frisbees.

The Kinesiology Club has not stopped there. The next big events for the semester are [Marathon Kids](#) which will be held at Bowie High School on April 28, where elementary children will finish their last mile of their 26.2 mile goal for the school year. [Special Olympics](#) will be the final event on May 4 and 5 at Burges High School where over 150 Kinesiology students will be volunteering.



### **CLS Students at Centro Sin Fronteras**

[Clinical Laboratory Science](#) students hosted a health fair for migrant workers at [Centro Sin Fronteras](#) from 8 a.m. to noon Friday April 13, at 201 East Ninth Avenue. Sin Fronteras is a non-profit organization founded on February 23, 1983, to help migrant farmworkers empower themselves and solve the many problems they face. The first year professional phase students tested blood samples from 30 migrant farmworkers for blood glucose, cholesterol, hematocrits and blood grouping. In addition, participants were also checked for blood pressure, height and weight. The fair is part of the program's efforts to involve students in community outreach.



### **Junior Leadership El Paso Visits UTEP**

On Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, the UTEP [College of Health Sciences](#) and [School of Nursing](#) were visited by twenty seven area high school juniors involved in the [Junior Leadership El Paso \(JrLEP\)](#) Class IX. This is a free program to students, managed by volunteer committees made up of Leadership El Paso class alumni with the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce's (GEPCC). The program is designed for high school juniors with the potential to become El Paso's next generation of leaders. Participants tour the region and meet face-to-face with some of the area's top movers and shakers in business, government, the arts, health care, education, the military and economic development.

Upon arrival to the College of Health Sciences and Nursing building, the Junior Leaders were given a warm welcome and an informative presentation where students were told about further education, including how to apply for various scholarships, student finance, and student life in general. Presentations were offered by the Dean of the School of Nursing Elias Provencio-Vasquez and on behalf of Dean Kathleen Curtis for the College of Health Sciences, Ms. Connie

Gamboa, Assistant Dean of Students Affairs, Ryan C. Holmes, Associate Dean of Students and Director for Judicial Affairs, the scholarship and financial aid offices. The Junior Leaders excitement about UTEP grew as they were broken up into groups and toured the Nursing, Occupational and Physical Therapy Simulation labs. Many of the comments shared later by the students were that by far, the visit to the UTEP CHS/SON was the most important session they have attended all year and are very impressed by UTEP's Tier 1 goals and through their experience from the visit would consider attending UTEP. This visit proved to be a fabulous experience for the Jr. Leadership students. We hope they are inspired to aim higher and reach and go on to follow their goals at top universities.



### **Clinical Lab Students at the Nuestra Casa Exhibit**

[Clinical Laboratory Science](#) students presented at the [Nuestra Casa exhibit](#) in the UTEP Centennial Museum on April 25. Nuestra Casa activities focus on social aspects of tuberculosis and is a full-size three-dimensional house that makes real the life and stories of people affected by tuberculosis, their surroundings and their messages of reality and hope. The UTEP Clinical Laboratory Science program took this opportunity to increase public understanding on the social aspects of tuberculosis diagnosis. The presentation focused on the clinical diagnosis of tuberculosis and covered



current information about the bacterium that causes tuberculosis, how the bacterium is identified and multi-drug resistance of this pathogen. The presentation also covered the diagnostic process for tuberculosis and the reality that it often takes up to six weeks. The availability of new identification techniques were presented. These new

techniques may not be available in underdeveloped countries which will prolong the diagnosis of tuberculosis. The social aspects of having being diagnosed with tuberculosis were also discussed. For more information contact Dr. Delfina Dominguez at 915-747-7238 or the Clinical Laboratory Science Program at 915-747-8396.

### **Kinesiology Students Presented at the South Central Regional Meeting of the ASB Conference**

Graduate students from the [Biomechanics Lab](#) group (Pradeep Ambati,

Nicholas Murray, and Fabricio Saucedo) and Ross Moore Lab group (Chandra Bulusu) presented podium presentations of their current research projects at the annual South Central Regional meeting of the American Society for Biomechanics Conference in Dallas over the weekend of April 13. Dr. Rebecca Reed-Jones, Assistant Professor in Kinesiology and Director of the Biomechanics Lab, accompanied her students.

Fabricio Saucedo won the [SCASB Master's Student Research Award](#) for an outstanding research abstract and presentation. Fabricio is a first semester Master's student in the [Department of Kinesiology](#). Fabricio presented a collaborative research project between UTEP and The University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada that he began work on in his senior undergraduate year in the Kinesiology Bachelor's program. Nicholas Murray from the CHS Interdisciplinary PhD program was a runner-up for the Doctoral Student Research Award. The Biomechanics Lab group will continue to travel and present their research this summer at the annual American College of Sports Medicine conference in San Francisco, California and at the Canadian Society for Biomechanics conference in Vancouver, British Columbia.



### **TACSM Spring 2012 Lecture Tour**

On April 11, 2012, the Department of Kinesiology and the Texas Regional Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine (TACSM) hosted the TACSM Spring 2012 Lecture Tour featuring Dr. J. Timothy Lightfoot, the Omar Smith Endowed Professor of Kinesiology and the Director of the Sydney and JL Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance at Texas A&M University. Dr. Lightfoot spoke to a modest audience of students, faculty, staff, and member of the general public about the genetic influences of voluntary physical activity. The Department has a long history of hosting speakers and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.



### **CIHRE Research Profiles**

The [Center for Interdisciplinary Health Research and Evaluation \(CIHRE\)](#) staff

has completed the *Spring 2012 FACULTY RESEARCH PROFILES* booklet featuring all the College of Health Sciences faculty. The booklet lists the faculty addresses, their current academic position, rank, and department or program affiliation. It also lists their academic degrees and granting Universities and their current research interests, and a recent photo of each faculty member.



[The Faculty Research Profiles](#) booklet is used to identify faculty members that may be interested in a specific research topic to better target research opportunities.

### Health Research Symposium

The monthly on-line Health Research Symposium presented jointly with Victoria University in Melbourne Australia was conducted on April 18, 2012 and featured **Mr. Nicholas Murray**, a Ph.D. student in the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences PhD Program at the College of Health Sciences and School of Nursing, and **Dr. Aaron Verty** a research fellow at the [School of Biomedical and Health Sciences at Victoria University](#).

Nicholas Murray's current work is examining the effects of sport related concussion recovery of balance along with the neurological deficits. Additionally, he is designing concussion assessment tools that stress multiple systems during active activity/movements. His presentation was titled: "Assessment of Oculomotor Control and Balance Post Concussion".



Aaron Verty's current work examines the role of cannabinoid (CB1) receptor antagonist and hypothalamic peptides in the central neural of thermogenesis (heat production) and lipolysis (breakdown of fat) in obesity. His presentation was titled, "Obesity: Energy Homeostasis to Addiction".

