Dear Alumni and Friends of MU-

It is with great pleasure I deliver our first newsletter, MU Connections, a celebration and recognition of the faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Our goal is to forge a stronger relationship among alumni, and to highlight the amazing work of our graduates locally, nationally, and internationally. MU Connections will focus on both exciting alumni news and various current campus initiatives to help keep you engaged with the program and the profession.

This year marks the 17th anniversary of the first graduating class. Our new class has 38 students from 13 different states. Our current students continue to amaze us and we would love to create more opportunities for engagement with alumni both on and off campus. As many of you know we moved into our new building at 4040 N Fairfax Drive in August 2014 if you haven't seen the new space you must come take a tour. It is always such a treat when alumni come to visit, giving us a chance to catch up and hear what you are doing. We hope you look forward to each semi-annual newsletter and consider submitting content. If you would like to report any news/updates we would love to hear from you. Please send any updates or ideas for content to physical.therapy@marymount.edu. Finally, follow us on social media for the latest news and updates.

Best

Now in our 2nd year at the 4040 Fairfax location the PT program is thriving! Students (and faculty!) love the clean, innovative space to study and practice basic skills. Please schedule a time to come visit!
Many of the same faces grace the halls of the PT department, but some have new roles.

The current full time faculty include:

- Skye Donovan
- Cathy Elrod
- Julie Ries
- Marti Carroll
- Diana Venskus
- Marwan Kublawi
- Kelly Negley

This year Rita Wong has taken on the role of Interim Provost of the University and Dr. Jason Craig has stepped into the role of the Associate Dean of graduate students. Congratulations Jason and Rita on these prestigious appointments.

Becca Barnes and Susan Welch-Paris continue to keep the department running with their unique strengths and talents.

We also would not be able to provide a quality educational experience without the help of our adjunct faculty and clinical partners. Thank you everyone for your effort and dedication to the program.

**Award announcement:** The PT faculty are engaged in impressive scholarship. Marymount University through an interprofessional team of faculty, Dr. Rita Wong, Dr. Cathy Elrod, Dr. Diana Venskus and Dr. Jennifer Tripken, were one of eight organizations nationally that received a two-year $480,000 grant from the Administration on Aging, a program division within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), to embed evidence-based falls prevention programs across Northern Virginia. “Falls in older adults are a major public health issue,” said Dr. Wong. “You can’t prevent all falls, but can drastically reduce the number of older adults who fall, and particularly the number who fall and get hurt.” The goal of the grant is to establish Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL), a Matter of Balance, and Otago Exercise programs at more than 60 locations across Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church, and Loudoun County. Staying physically active and exercising regularly are key contributors to minimizing the risk of falling. A network of agencies and organizations will also be built that can sustain and continue to increase the reach of these programs once the grant is over. Inova Health Systems and Goodwin House are major partners and have significant roles in implementation of the grant.

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**Dr. Rita Wong**  
"Falls in the older adult are a major health issue"

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**INTERVIEW DAY 2016**

DPT Interview Day was held on Saturday, December 3, 2016, with the invaluable help of adjunct faculty, graduates, and current students. The MU DPT Admissions Committee reviewed 650 applications and invited the top 250 candidates to interview for the PT program. As is our tradition, we tried to create a welcoming atmosphere for applicants, as we introduced them to our program, faculty, and students. Thanks to the planning efforts and work of office administrator Becca Barnes the day went off without a hitch! We are currently enrolling our MU DPT class of 2020!
MU PT was well represented at the Virginia Student Conclave in Chantilly VA on October 7, 2016! Third year student Michelle Bomyea started the day as a panel member on the Oxford Debate where she argued the pro (winning!) side of the debate revolving around Clinical Residencies in PT. Two of the three TED Talks at the conference were given by 2nd year Marymount students! Carolyn Drislane gave a talk entitled "Hardcorps: an area of emerging practice." Carolyn shared her experience in working with drum line musician/athletes, explaining how this group can benefit from the expertise of physical therapists. Heather Littier combined her knowledge from her graduate research in Animal Science with her current PT education in her talk "Antibiotic resistance: Can physical therapy reduce the threat?" She made a compelling case for PT as a primary intervention over surgery whenever possible, citing the increasing risk of antibiotic resistant infections in post-surgical patients. Finally, alumnus Carlos Berio was an invited speaker; his presentation was entitled "Periodization for the Returning Athlete." We couldn't be more proud of Marymount's representation at this state level event!" Current third year student and class president, Michelle Bomyea, has jumped into PT advocacy with both feet! Michelle has been tireless in her efforts to increase student involvement at the local and national level. She has engaged in several important issues including student debt reduction and student advocacy. Michelle serves on the student SIG and the APTA membership committee and is the Core Ambassador for the state of Virginia. She has volunteered for the NEXT conference and ran for National student assembly in 2015, 2016.

I played field hockey in college at the University of Maryland. I always thought I'd end up in sports and orthopedic PT. When I went to Walter Reed as my last full time clinical, I learned that my true calling was Inpatient Rehab. When I graduated from Marymount in the first class of Physical Therapy, the PT world was much different. There were too many PTs and not enough jobs. I was lucky enough to meet and get to know therapists from NRH, as they were our instructors for Neuro rehab. This resulted in a job as a staff inpatient Therapist which began in June of 1999. I was involved in treating many patient populations and became an expert in many areas of Rehab while there- cardiac rehab, prosthetics, orthotics, stroke, SCI, vestibular, lymphedema, and wheelchair seating and mobility, to name a few. I was a Senior PT for the last 4 of my 10 years. In 2005, I was certified as a Neurological clinical specialist, which I just recertified 2 years ago. I left NRH after having my third child as the commute and hours weren't going to work for my growing family. I began working with Alison Lichy and Matt Elrod in a neuro focused outpatient PT clinic in 2009. I am currently still at NeuroPT in Falls Church and enjoy my adjunct faculty role in the Neurorehab course which I’ve done for many years. It’s great fun to teach with Julie Ries and Marti Carroll now, having been their student 20 years ago!"
In February 2016 a team of 34 students and 4 faculty headed to Costa Rica for MU PTs sixth service learning trip. This year we welcomed adjunct faculty Lisa DePasquale to accompany core faculty members Kelly Negley, Jason Craig and Diana Venskus. The students were divided into three teams and visited three different sites; Tres Rios, Santiago Crespo and of course Manos Abiertos. This year’s projects consisted of designing and renovating a PT gym space for elderly sisters at a local convent, working in a long term care facility in a rural setting, conducting wheelchair evaluations and adjustments for pediatric patients, and performing community musculoskeletal screens in the most impoverished areas of San Jose, Costa Rica. One particular student was so touched by the time spent with a young man ("G") living with Duchenne's muscular dystrophy he took it upon himself to fundraise for a new customized power wheelchair. Thanks to the generosity of many people, he raised $15,000 and delivered the chair with Diana Venskus in August. The Costa Rica experience and wheelchair delivery was documented on PT Pintcast (see inset below). Diana described the gesture as transformative, and stated this display of altruism was the very reason she started these trips. changes are in store for the program as the students are headed to both Costa Rica and Nicaragua in 2017. Additionally Diana Venskus has once again used her talents to forge a multi-disciplinary service learning experience for our students. A pilot group of students will be headed with her to Ecuador for spring break. we cannot wait to hear what they accomplish. Thank you to Diana and Jason for all they have done to design an amazing experience for our students.

"I just want to RIDE!" G. upon receipt of his power wheelchair

**PT PINTCAST**

Having trouble keeping up with current topics in PT since you have left school? Tune into PT Pintcast. Alumnus, Jimmy McKay is the host of this incredible podcast, launched in September 2015, achieving over 350,000 downloads to date. Jimmy was a prior radio DJ and combined skills and passions from his prior career with his life as a PT student at Marymount. Jimmy interviews world renowned clinicians, researchers and change agents from the field of PT. Many of whom also happen to be alumni! Now on episode 145, PT Pintcast is not slowing down, in fact Jimmy has recently introduced Spinal Tap- a 15 min debrief of the most pressing news in PT. You can listen to PT Pintcast free on iTunes or at PTpintcast.com. Congratulations Jimmy!
Several exciting events have been occurring on campus this past year. With a new space, the faculty and students feel energized to use our talents to help serve our community. This location not only acts as a wonderful facility for education and research but also a venue to host celebratory events highlighting and thanking our wonderful clinical partners (see inset below). Thanks to the leadership of Marwan Kublawi and Diana Venskus the department hosted several continuing education courses. Marwan created and led the the spinal and peripheral joint manipulation course while Diana continues her work in leading the CI credentialing courses. Even more courses are planned for the upcoming year, be sure to check our website and social media for updates. Another initiative in the department is the Go Baby Go program. For the past 2 years Julie Ries.

Jason Craig and Skye Donovan have built a few cars for children with disabilities, but wanted to do more. This past September MU PT in partnership with Good Beginnings Pediatric Clinic launched a Global Go Baby Go Program. State senator Barbara Favola and Dr. Cole Gallloway (founder of Go Baby Go) joined us to celebrate and build 12 cars for local children. Both CBS and CNBC were on hand to document the launch and filmed stories which received national coverage. We are in the planning stages for a March build and would love to have alumni involvement. More information can be found at www.marymount.edu/gobabygo.

This year marked our first official homecoming event celebrating our alumni and clinical partners. We had a beautiful evening of cocktails & catching up with friends and colleagues on the rooftop of 4040 N Fairfax. We recognized the recipients of our 2 annual awards; outstanding clinical educator of the year, Sarah White (NOVA Fairfax) and student clinical excellence, Sarah Barrows Class of 2016. Please consider joining us next year, for what is sure to be a bigger and better event! Invitations will be sent via email in August. If you were not invited this past year it means we do not have your current contact information; please send it to physical.therapy@marymount.edu so we may update our records and keep you up to date on departmental news and events.