

The Fall 2018 DPT Newsletter

THE GATOR PT

From the Director



Welcome to the inaugural Gator PT newsletter! As the semester is winding down, we wanted to provide our faculty, students, clinical sites, alumni, and friends a peek into the world of the University of Florida Doctor of Physical Therapy program - one of the top 10 in the nation. Keep an eye out for the Gator PT as we plan on distributing the newsletter every fall and spring semester.

This fall, we welcomed 72 incredible students to the program. So far we have only cut open one padlock from a locker, so we are off to a great start. In all sincerity, this is a bright group of students and I look forward to getting to know them as they evolve into extraordinary physical therapists.

Every year on Veterans Day, we take time to honor our veterans. We thank those who have served or are currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. You know the true meaning of selflessness and sacrifice. We all are grateful for your commitment to protecting us. Whether on the battlefield or in a clinic, you are willing to serve others and for that, we say thank you. In this edition of Gator PT, we highlight a few of our students who provide inspirational perspectives on what they have learned serving our country and how it has benefitted them in their learning process. We are proud to have them in our program!

I'm thankful to be a part of such an amazing team and I hope you enjoy reading about another great fall semester.

Wishing everyone happy holidays and a great New Year!

Bill

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Bishop Receives FPTA and APTA Legislative Awards

Mark Bishop, PT, PhD, FAPTA, associate professor, received two awards on behalf of the Florida Physical Therapy Association and American Physical Therapy Association for his legislative work fighting against the growing opioid crisis.

“These awards are a very great honor and a recognition of what the entire advocacy team has been doing in Florida and at the national level,” Dr. Bishop said. “It has been a team effort with UF PT alums, Melissa Day and Meryl Alappattu, as the driving force in Florida revising our practice act to get direct access increased to 30 days.”

On Sept. 29 at the 2018 FPTA Annual Conference, Dr. Bishop accepted the Rick Shutes Award for Legislative Advocacy for exceptional service in governmental advocacy efforts on behalf of the FPTA. Additionally, he received the APTA State Legislative Leadership Award, which recognizes the work of an individual APTA member on behalf of a component’s state legislative efforts.

Dr. Bishop’s recognition can be tied to the advocacy work and policy development he has completed over the past two years relating to pain, opioids, and the role of physical therapy as a non-drug alternative.

“Over time we have developed a strong cohort of people who are willing to speak to the legislature. Specific to what we did this past year, the declaration of the opioid crisis put our work into understanding pain in the front seat when the legislators had questions about non-pharmacological management of pain conditions.”



Alappattu Awarded APTA Lucy Blair Service Award

In June at the 2018 APTA NEXT Conference and Exposition, Meryl Alappattu, PT, DPT, PhD, research assistant professor, received the Lucy Blair Service Award recognizing exceptional contributions to the association.

Dr. Alappattu, who received her doctor of physical therapy and PhD in rehabilitation science from the College of Public Health and Health Professions, began her service to the profession when she was a UF DPT student. She led the reinstatement of the Florida Physical Therapy Association’s student interest group and its conclave. Her involvement continued after graduation with terms on the FPTA’s board of directors. She is currently in her second term as the association’s vice president.

She also served as co-chair of the FPTA’s Task Force to Modernize the Practice Act. The group’s efforts led to the passage of important Florida legislation that increases patient access to physical therapy.



Vandeborne Receives Distinguished Professor title

In June, Krista Vandeborne, PT, PhD, department chair and professor, was awarded the title of Distinguished Professor of Physical Therapy. This significant academic accomplishment was in the making since 2001 when she joined the University of Florida and accepted her position as professor and chair of the Department of Physical Therapy.

Dr. Vandeborne has over 20 years of experience in the implementation of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and spectroscopy (MRS), functional assessments and strength testing to characterize skeletal muscle. Over the last ten years, she had been leading the efforts at UF to develop a strong translational and clinical research program in Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD).

She is the director of the ImagingDMD project, an NIH funded multicenter study to examine the potential of MRI/MRS as a biomarker in Duchenne Muscular dystrophy. The ImagingDMD project represents one of the most comprehensive natural history studies in boys with DMD integrating MR imaging, functional and strength data, genetic information, and biosamples.



Welcoming New Faculty

Federico Pozzi, PT, MA, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at the University of Florida. His research focuses on the biomechanical and functional outcomes of patients with musculoskeletal disorders of the upper and lower extremities. His funding includes a Career Development Award of the Academy of Orthopaedic Physical Therapy. He is currently a phase one research scholar of the K12 Rehabilitation Research Career Development Program.

"I'm very excited to be joining the University of Florida's Department of Physical Therapy and be part of a team that is at the leading edge of both education and research," Dr. Pozzi said. "My wife, Jacqui, and I relocated from the west coast where I completed my post-doctorate at the University of Southern California. We are ready for our next step at UF and exploring all that Florida has to offer."

We are excited to welcome Dr. Pozzi to our PT family!

DPT Student Selected as Keynote Speaker at Disability Resource Center



Erin Waterman is pictured second from the right

On September 6, Erin Waterman, a second-year Doctor of Physical Therapy student, gave the keynote speech at the inaugural Disability Advocacy Assembly, which was hosted by the University of Florida Disability Resource Center.

With about 75 guests in attendance, the goal of this event was to provide insight and information about disability to students. Waterman's speech, "Mountain Leg," addressed those topics and explained how disability is a form of diversity.

"My speech was an extended metaphor on what living with a disability is like and how people with disabilities are equal contributors to the community," Waterman said. "People with disabilities live their life on a 'mountain' because everyday activities lack accessibility. Their diverse experiences bring diverse viewpoints, all of which strengthen ours and the university's abilities to meet today's challenges."

Waterman's research on students with disabilities and her advocacy in the Gainesville community gave her the right perspective to give this keynote speech, as well as another speech in 2016 at the Equity and Diversity Conference.

"My passion for working with people with disabilities stems from working with Dr. Christine Stopka out of the UF College of Health and Human Performance. Dr. Stopka was one of the first to show the effects of exercise on individuals with disabilities," she said.

Her passion to advocate for young people with disabilities led Waterman to choose the UF DPT Program — particularly because of the program's commitment to research, education, and service.

"We have more community service involvement and hands-on experiences in our first year than any other program," she expressed. "Our community involvement is further enhanced by the leadership roles we take on as second years."

Within the Rehabilitation Education Activity & Community Health (REACH) programs, DPT students participate in community engagement activities, enabling them to develop the necessary clinical leadership skills for when they graduate. Waterman currently serves as the co-leader for the Children on the Go REACH program, where she works with kids with developmental disabilities performing adaptive gymnastics at Balance 180.

"My goal is to be the best physical therapist I can be and contribute to the immediate and future well-being of people with disabilities. These are the same goals that brought me to UF DPT."

Erin Waterman, pictured on the right, working with a child on adaptive gymnastics at Balance 180 during Children on the Go.



DPT Student Participates in Federal Advocacy Forum



Pictured from the left: DPT student Hannah Belles and Dr. Elisa Gonzalez-Rothi

Hannah Belles, a second-year DPT student, visited Washington, D.C. with Elisa Gonzalez-Rothi, DPT, PhD, research assistant professor, at the beginning of May to take part in the Federal Advocacy Forum. More than 1,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students came together to advocate for the profession. Below are some of Belles' thoughts about her experience.

"The Federal Advocacy Forum was an incredible opportunity to be a part of to positively change our profession! The first half of the forum included talks on current regulatory items that are in consideration and utilization of the APTA's PT Outcomes Registry, as well as prep sessions that dove into the actual issues we would be speaking about during our meetings on the Hill. On Tuesday, we met with Senator Rubio's health care legislative aid, Eduardo Sacasa, as well as various Florida representative aids, including my own district's!"

The issues being discussed included: PT's role in the opioid crisis, the inclusion of physical therapists as telehealth providers under Medicare, our opposition of the PROSPER Act that sets an arbitrary cap on student loans, and finally the benefit of the PT Outcomes Registry, which will provide a standardized way to collect outcomes to guide clinical practice and demonstrate physical therapy's value. I was surprised that even as a student, I was encouraged to speak about my perspective and even had the chance to lead one of my meetings!

I felt like we were actually creating change by influencing those writing the policy. The meetings I took part in were full of thoughtful questions and engaging discussions showing me that these people truly care about our opinion on how we as physical therapists want to see change occur. More importantly, I was surrounded by such a passionate community of individuals taking the lead regarding the future of their profession. I left the forum feeling extremely hopeful and ready to conquer the world! I can't wait for next year!"

Getting Involved

Maria Hierholzer, a third-year DPT student, attended the 2018 Florida Physical Therapy Association (FPTA) Annual Conference in September as the current FPTA Student Special Interest Group (SSIG) Chair.

As the SSIG Chair, Hierholzer was appointed as the chief representative of the student assembly.

"I had the privilege of leading the student assembly meeting and presenting two amendments. I am thankful to now have a better understanding of the politics behind our professional organization," Hierholzer said.

The amendments she and her board proposed involved student membership fee allocation and they were successful in presenting this motion.

"I strongly encourage students to learn more about the FPTA bylaws and get involved with the organization to be well-informed young professionals," Hierholzer advised. "My FPTA involvement has been so important to my professional development. Being so closely associated with FPTA and APTA has educated me about my choices post-graduation as well as opened my eyes to all the challenges facing our profession."



10 Years Strong

In each newsletter, we will feature one of the REACH service programs or a community outreach project to highlight how our DPT students are participating in community engagement and developing clinical leadership skills.



From left to right: Anmarie Garis, Lindsey Ramirez, Candice Amat, Albert, Danielle Bencoter, Andrea Bowens, and Kelly Groth

This fall semester marked the 10 year anniversary of Gator Challenge. Through the years, the service program saw changes to the location and felt the impact of “Rainesville.” Additionally, the program is starting a new initiative to encourage further community participation.

“In talking with my classmates, we were all pleasantly surprised to see that Gator Challenge is still going after all these years,” said Andrea Bowens, PT, DPT, OCS, class of 2009 DPT graduate and assistant professor at Samford University. “It is exciting to think about how the course-required wellness project we created has expanded to serve more members of the Gainesville community.”

In 2008, Dr. Bowens and a group of classmates discussed different ideas for wellness projects, and they landed on a walking program. The class worked in small groups to host weekend walks across Gainesville and would give participants pedometers to track their steps.

Through the years, Gator Challenge has moved from general parks around Gainesville to Fred Cone Park, and is now located at Roper Park near the Thomas Center. The setting provides ample shade and two different paths, one longer and one shorter, so it appeals to walkers of all levels.

From the start, Gator Challenge was meant to challenge participants to increase their daily step count, and it hasn't changed much since then. Not only does the program aim to inspire the Gainesville community to live a healthier lifestyle through the weekly wellness walks, but it also promotes patient communication skills for the first- and second-year DPT students.

“Our walks were designed to help get members of the community up and active while providing a safe and motivational environment,” said Brandi Black, second-year DPT student and co-president of Gator Challenge. “In addition to building our patient communication skills while walking and talking with the participants, we also offer optional assessments of vital signs, like heart rate, blood pressure, and pulse oximeter.”

One Gator Challenge supporter, Elaine Green, has been participating in the walks for about five years, and she plans to continue walking with the DPT students.

“I think Gator Challenge helps people become aware of healthy behaviors, attitudes, and the importance of moving — keeping your agility, working on your balance, particularly as we age,” said the avid walker. “I know I can't prevent it all, but this is a start.”

The first few sessions in the summer were filled with record turnouts. Thanks to the location change, the students observed a higher participation rate, more miles walked, new family involvement, and repeat visitors despite the hot summer weather.

The walks have come to an end for the fall semester, but things are ramping back up in the spring. Our DPT students are proud of the progress they have made and are excited to see how the program will evolve. They have also implemented Walk with a Doc on select Saturdays at Depot Park to promote their weekly wellness walks, lead stretches, and answer any questions from participants.

“The emphasis on the importance of supporting general activity for patients, as it relates to prevention of chronic health conditions, maintaining function and socialization, is a vital part of student awareness,” said Kim Dunleavy, PhD, MOMT, PT, OCS, clinical associate professor and director of Professional Education and Community Engagement. “The walks provide an early opportunity to take on professional roles and develop teamwork and patient intervention skills.”

If you are interested in participating in Gator Challenge or know of a patient who would benefit from the walks, please email gatorchallengept@gmail.com or call 352-612-1887 for more details or referral information.

As we go through our day-to-day activities, we are surrounded by silent heroes who have served or are serving in the military. We thank all of our alumni and current DPT students who have dedicated a part of their life to serve our country. The following feature recognizes a few of our current DPT students who have made sacrifices to defend our freedom.



Tommy Coffey
United States Marine Corps:
5 Years
E-4/Corporal



Ashlea Adams
Army (active duty): 3 Years, 8
Months
Intelligence Analyst, Sergeant



Paul Auth
United States Marine Corps:
4 Years
E-4/Corporal

What does being a veteran mean to you?

Being a veteran translates to a sense of pride I never knew imaginable. At 18, I couldn't fathom the amount of knowledge, discipline, and respect for my predecessors I would gain throughout my 5 years of active service. More personally, it means seeking out success and never dragging my feet in pursuit of it.

What are some skills you've learned in the military that have translated over to your time in the UF DPT program?

Time management has been a tremendous skill I acquired from my time in the Marine Corps which has benefited me exponentially as a student physical therapist.

What does being a veteran mean to you?

Being a veteran means that at one point in my life I decided to put my country first. It means being a person who served with honorable intentions, pride, and sacrifice.

Please share a memorable story from your experience in the military.

I was stationed in South Korea for two years and during that time I worked at a joint intelligence center in Seoul. I befriended one of the young Korean soldiers that I worked with and he decided to teach me the word "stupid" in Korean but told me that it was a very "nice thing" to say to someone instead of its true meaning. He convinced me to say it to one of the Korean officers that I worked with and I did, completely unaware of what it meant. It ended up being a really good laugh and very productive work day.

What does being a veteran mean to you?

Being a veteran means that I have the responsibility to represent the military in the civilian population. I feel as though it's my duty to be an ambassador to my peers and everyone I meet to portray myself in the way I believe veterans should act.

Please share a memorable story from your experience in the military.

Some of my best memories in the military are those of comradery. It is a great feeling knowing that you are making a difference in the world and in people's lives even if it is just the man beside you. I believe this sense of purpose is one of the things that drove me to physical therapy.

Potential Breakthrough in the Treatment of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

In May, Krista Vandenborne, PT, PhD, department chair and distinguished professor, was featured in the UF Health newsletter, [“On the Same Page,”](#) for the favorable findings in a study of the progression of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a degenerative disease that causes progressive muscle weakness in young boys. The MRI methods used in the study were developed by Dr. Vandenborne.

The results from the MoveDMD clinical trial were reported in April at the American Academy of Neurology 70th Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. The clinical trial is composed of three parts – Phase 1, Phase 2, and an open-label extension. It was during Phase 2 and the open-label extension that the drug, Edasalonexent, substantially slowed the progression of DMD.

The MRI results were able to assess deterioration of the muscle in boys with DMD at a young age. Most patients with DMD will lose the ability to walk around age 12, and will not live past their 20s. These findings have the potential to change the disease trajectory and improve the outlook of children with this rapidly progressing disease.

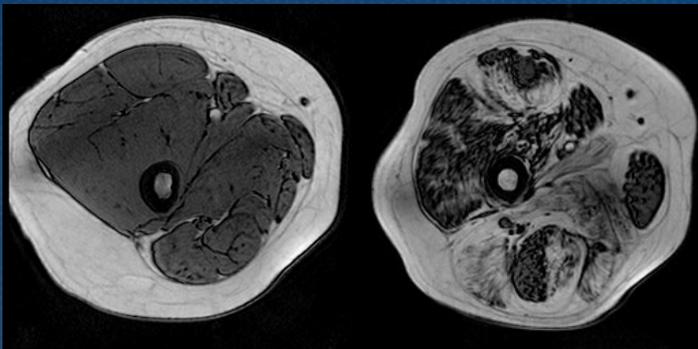


Figure 1

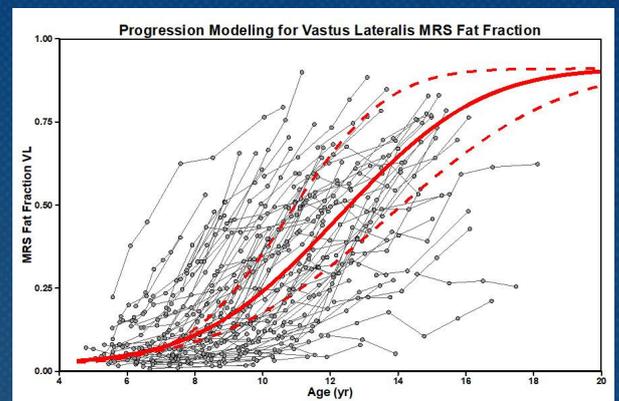


Figure 1C

As boys get older, muscles are progressively replaced by intramuscular fat, as shown in Fig. 1 (A: control, B: patient with DMD) to the point that only fat remains. Using localized spectroscopy or Dixon imaging, the fat fraction in the muscle can be accurately measured and serve as a robust biomarker to assess the disease trajectory in this patient population (see Fig. 1C). The measures developed by Dr. Vandenborne are now used in a number of clinical trials in DMD and are accepted by the FDA for accelerated drug approval, potentially providing patients access to therapeutic drugs years earlier.

Outstanding Alumni Awards

In early August, the College of Public Health and Health Professions recognized Outstanding Alumni for 2018. Barbara Connolly, PT, DPT, EdD, C/NDT, FAPTA, and Ali Parrish, PT, DPT, were among the 14 recognized.



Pictured from the left: UF PHHP Dean Michael Perri, Outstanding Alumni Dr. Barbara Connolly and Professor and Director of Physical Therapy Education Dr. Bill McGehee.

“UF has always been a special place for me. Over my 48-year career as a physical therapist, I have been proud to claim UF as my “University” due to its national recognition as an outstanding university. Being identified as an outstanding alumni given the large number of graduates from the Department of Physical Therapy is humbling.”

**Dr. Connolly, Professor Emeritus
Department of Physical Therapy, UTHSC
President- International Organization of Physical Therapists in Pediatrics (2007 - 2015)
President-Foundation for Physical Therapy (January 2015-December 2016)
Board of Trustee - Foundation for Physical Therapy (2008- 2017)**

“After being primed for leadership and excellence during my studies at the University of Florida, I felt empowered to carry these attributes into my professional practice. I am truly honored to have been recognized for this award alongside other deserving and distinguished alumni. I am incredibly grateful for my education at the University of Florida and now blessed to be working at my dream job because of it!”



Pictured from the left: UF PHHP Dean Michael Perri, Outstanding Alumni Dr. Ali Parrish and Professor and Director of Physical Therapy Education Dr. Bill McGehee.

**Dr. Ali Parrish, Physical Therapist
Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children
Outpatient Rehabilitation Center at Orlando Health**

DPT Alumna Receives 2018 FPTA Emerging Leader Award

This September, class of 2013 DPT graduate, CariAnn Litz, PT, DPT, received the Emerging Leader Award at the FPTA Annual Conference. This award recognizes extraordinary service early in one's career. Having started her practice in the acute neuro/ICU setting at Florida Hospital Orlando and being heavily involved in FPTA and APTA, Dr. Litz exemplifies what this award represents. In this Q&A, CariAnn offers insights and advice to our current DPT students about getting involved.



FPTA President Dr. Jamie Dyson, PT, DPT, nominated Dr. Cariann Litz (on the right) for the Emerging Leader Award.

What does this award mean to you?

It means that my efforts as the chair of the Early Professional Special Interest group and my time spent helping my peers in their first five years of practice were effective and made a difference in a way that was noticeable.

When you were a DPT student at UF, was being a part of the FPTA beneficial to you?

Definitely! As a student I realized the value of investing in the association because it's our professional "insurance," and the only group that is actively defending the future of our profession. It's a huge source of professional confidence and a networking resource that has helped me advance my career rapidly in the past five years.

Albert Sez 2018

To all of our alumni, the Department of Physical Therapy wants to hear from you! As the years pass by, things change and we want to keep in touch. If you have any career or family updates, or any fond memories of your time at UF, go to [Alumni News](#) and give us the details! We can't wait to hear from you.

1992

Puwol Receives Kuhns Scholarship

In early June, the Clinical Education team announced that Noella Puwol, a second-year DPT student, was the recipient of the Kuhns Scholarship.

“Noella was one of six finalists for the award based on the ratings from her performance on the first eight-week clinical experience,” said Bill McGehee, PT, PhD, director of the Physical Therapy Education team. “She demonstrated exceptional performance that far exceeded the expectations for a student on the first full-time clinical experience.”



Pictured from the left: Bill McGehee, PT, PhD, professor and director of Physical Therapy Education, Judi Schack-Dugré, PT, MBA, DPT, clinical assistant professor and assistant director of Clinical Education, Noella Puwol and Kevin McPherson, PT, DPT, MTC, OCS, FAAOMPT, clinical lecturer and assistant director of Clinical Education.

The Kuhns Scholarship is a \$1,500 award presented to a student who demonstrates outstanding performance in their first full-time clinical internship, thus showing promise as a future clinician of excellence.

Thanks to Rolf and Anne Kuhns' generous support to the College of Public Health and Health Professions and Department of Physical Therapy, students like Puwol can receive the recognition that encourages them to become forward-thinking clinical learners.

A recent contribution on behalf of the Kuhns was the support to the Equal Access Clinic, UF's student-run PT clinic, allowing the Department of Physical Therapy to provide continuous service to the community while offering our students valuable patient experience.

Casagrando recipient of VA Health Professional Scholarship Program

Nicole Casagrando, a second-year DPT student and SPTA treasurer, was selected as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Professional Scholarship Program (HPSP) recipient.

The HPSP scholarship is awarded to students pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree in order to increase the supply of physical therapists for the VA and the nation. This award particularly strikes close to home for Casagrando because her grandfathers and father are military veterans.

“When I discovered my passion for physical therapy, I learned about this scholarship program and became motivated to apply. My passion was further developed when I completed observation hours at Walter Reed Medical Center,” she explained. “Seeing the patients in the amputee rehabilitation center who were so motivated and determined to get back to a level of function we take for granted really inspired me and had given me a strong desire to work with this specific population.”



Now she can work toward her goals without worrying about a financial burden, as the scholarship will provide Casagrando with a monthly stipend for educational purposes, such as tuition, required fees, and books.

“This is something that I have wanted and worked towards for so long, so to see it pay off is something I will always remember.”

Family Weekend & Race for Rehab

Family Weekend was a hit! The Department of Physical Therapy welcomed over 100 guests to the Clinical Learning Center as they learned more about the DPT program and met with our dynamic faculty. We closed out the weekend with a social at First Magnitude and Race for Rehab, which raised over \$2,300 and around 150 people participated! We are so thankful for everyone who came out to make this event so successful and we are looking forward to next year.



CSM Reminder

APTA's Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) is always a great way to reconnect, so be sure to let us know if you plan on attending in Washington, DC in January! **We hope to see all of our Gator PTs at the Alumni and Friends on Thursday, Jan. 24 at the Marriott Marquis at 6:30 p.m.** More information will be posted on our website and Facebook page soon. We'll see you there!

Graduating DPT Students Receive Their White Coats

On May 3, over 400 guests attended the graduation dinner at the Touchdown Terrace to watch 69 Doctor of Physical Therapy students receive their white coats. We were honored to have Sharon Dunn, PT, PhD, president of the American Physical Therapy Association and associate professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences at LSU Health Shreveport, deliver the Barbara C. White Lecture.



During the ceremony, a number of students received awards, including:

Thad Boucher – Martha C. Wroe Outstanding Clinical Student – Recognizes a graduating student who has completed all clinical affiliations demonstrating outstanding clinical performance and great promise in the field of physical therapy as documented by their clinical instructors.

Dino Medic – The Dr. Mark H. Trimble Memorial Scholarship – Established in 2001 in memory of the late Dr. Trimble. This award is presented to an outstanding student in orthopedics who demonstrates a strong commitment to learning, initiative, and self-reliance in his/her studies.

Janeen McCormick Blythe – Scholastic Achievement Award – For Excellence in Academic Performance throughout the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program 2015 – 2018. This award is given to a graduating student in recognition of outstanding scholastic achievement and it is based on the highest cumulative GPA while in the physical therapy program. This year, Blythe was the only student to graduate with a 4.0.

Students who received pro bono and leadership recognition were recognized throughout the white coat ceremony and given cords to wear with their regalia at the UF Commencement ceremony.

We are so proud of the graduating class of 2018 — congratulations to our new Gator PTs!

Thank You!

The learning experience our DPT students have is unparalleled to others. After all of the long nights studying for practicals and exams, working up the nerve to go to the first cadaver lab, or just trying to learn to balance personal life with professional — it was all worth it. The community we build at UF and in our DPT program fosters students who become lifelong learners and compassionate, forward-thinking physical therapists. This is only the beginning of their adventure, but we could not accomplish all of these feats if it was not for the support we get from our alumni.

Whether you are a new donor or have been giving for over 20 years, we thank you. Your generosity has touched our students in ways that can only advance their education in this opportunity-rich environment. Being among the top 10 physical therapy programs, according to U.S. News & World Report, is a big accomplishment and we wouldn't be here without our alumni leading the way.

If you are looking for ways to give back, you can contribute during **UF Giving Day on February 26, 2019**. You can also contact the College of Public Health and Health Professions Associate Director of Development and Alumni Affairs, Samuel Wager, at samuel.wagner@ufl.edu if you have any questions about becoming a new donor or if you are considering other ways to give.

We can only go greater from here!