As the fall 2015 term comes to a close, I want to send greetings and best wishes for the New Year from the School of Health and Natural Sciences (SHNS). This issue of our SHNS newsletter highlights the activities and events from fall 2015.

In September, we welcomed students back to campus with an ice cream social. Students had the opportunity to meet faculty, catch up with peers and share their summer activities. We also welcomed several new faculty to the SHNS this fall. The new energy on campus is reflected in our activities: engaging students in new research, launching our new Generic Nursing Program, opening new labs and expanding programs and developing new community and interprofessional collaborations.

Our Natural Sciences Department has been working hard to strategically embrace the vision of science education in the 21st century. Walk past our new lab in Room 315 and to see for yourself – science is no longer hidden behind closed doors. Summer camps also took science on location. Programs in the health sciences have begun an interprofessional project that will help insure our graduates are ready for the intensive team work found in healthcare settings today. As we move into the spring, we are looking forward to our joint conference with Arc of Westchester on Tech Supports for Cognition and Learning.

Please remember to check out our web pages to learn more about our ongoing activities and programs.

Enjoy reading our newsletter! If you’re an alumnus from the SHNS, we’d love to hear from you.

Joan Toglia Ph.D., OTR, FAOTA
Dean, School of Health and Natural Sciences
Natural Science Summer Research Program

Mercy College undergraduate students participated in two multi-discipline Step Up to STEM summer programs, funded by the Department of Education Title III, Part F HSI-STEM grant. The STEM Summer Research Program, which ran from June 1st – July 13th 2015 at Mercy’s Manhattan campus, engaged students in authentic research experiences in biology, computer science or psychology. Dr. Renée Haskew-Layton, PhD, faculty member in the Natural Sciences, mentored students in a neuroscience research project involving subcloning the neuroprotective gene Akt in a chick embryo brain protection model. The second program, STEM in the City, ran from July 6th – Jul 30th and provided students with a range of opportunities from identifying microorganisms to decontaminating polluted water using biodegradable materials. Participants of the programs gained valuable hands-on experiences in the sciences, as affirmed by Mercy College student Margo McGrath, “The STEM summer research program was truly an invaluable experience. Through STEM, I was immersed into the world of biology in a way that was unique from any biology class or lab I had previously encountered. I not only learned about the novel findings and applications of complex biological processes, but also had a hands on exposure that made the rather abstract topics understandable.”

Health Science Does Art In The Lab

The Art in the Lab Workshop was held at Mercy College on November 14, 2015. These workshops give scientists and artists, students and professionals, the opportunity to collaborate to create art in a variety of media (pencil, charcoal, ink, etc.) based on active laboratory experiences including microscope work and interaction with gross scientific models. The workshops begin with a brief introduction to a scientific concept/theme which is the focus of the laboratory work as well as an introduction to an artistic technique, thus providing education to both the artists and the scientists and initiating an organic dialogue between participants from the different disciplines. The remainder of the workshop is run as a drawing class, beginning with a round robin of short (2-5 minute) warm-up drawings and then a series of longer (15 minute) drawings which allow the participants to engage more deeply with the subject matter. The workshop concludes with the opportunity for development of a larger piece (45 minutes). All workshop participants are given the option of displaying their work in a professionally-curated exhibit in Brooklyn Heights.

Sigma Theta Tau National Honor Society Induction Ceremony

The Zeta Omega-At-Large Chapter is one of the largest in the world with over 900 active members. This chapter is made up of nurses recruited from the top nursing students from Mercy College, Dominican College, The College of New Rochelle and Pace University. This year’s induction was held on Sunday, November 1st in the Rotunda at Mercy Hall. In 2015 there were 224 new members, 165 of which were present at the ceremony. The acceptance rate for the 2015 induction was ninety percent.

Dr. Peggy Tallier gave the keynote address which emphasized the role of nursing in health care and the importance of nursing education and scholarship. New inductees were introduced, presented honor cords, and signed the chapter’s register. Three students, including Maribel Becerra of Mercy College, received founders' awards and scholarships, presented by Dr. Bernadette Amicucci, chair of the Research Awards Committee.
Natural Science Holds Monthly Seminar Series

The Department of Natural Sciences continues to hold their monthly Seminar Series. This has been a great opportunity for SHNS Faculty and students to build a relationship both with each other and with the variety of seminar speakers. This fall, Natural Science has had the pleasure of hosting four seminar series speakers. Dr. Glen Prusky spoke about Identifying and Treating Visual Complications of Diabetes. Dr. Lori Morton from Regeneron gave a talk on VEGF Inhibition and Hypertension. Dr. Ruth Johnson, a seminar on a conserved adapter protein. Finally, Dr. Dianna Willis whose seminar focused on axonal mRNA transport and protein synthesis in regeneration and disease.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony For The New Natural Science Lab

On October 15, 2015, School of Health and Natural Sciences Dean Dr. Joan Toglia welcomed College administration, faculty, staff and students along with Congresswoman Nita Lowey to the opening of the new Visions of Science Laboratory. This new lab bid farewell to the last of the original science labs dating back to the 1950s. The state-of-the-art laboratory design permits students to perform advanced work in a collaborative setting. The glass façade brings a vision of science to those passing by and conveys the dynamic and exciting nature of science in action. The lab supports the continued growth and expansion of our science programs. Dean Toglia and President Timothy Hall thanked Congresswoman Nita Lowey for her support in obtaining the United States Department of Education’s Title V HSI-STEM grant that made the lab renovations possible. Thanks were also extended to the Title V STEM team, Assistant Professor Amanda Gunning and Professor Nagaraj Rao, co-directors, Professor Anthony Canger, Natural Science Department Chair and Ms. Carolina Hernandez, grant coordinator. Staff from Operations, Facilities, Information Technology and the Office of the Provost were also acknowledge for their collaboration and efforts in making the lab a space to support students learning.

Title V HSI-STEM Program Science Activity Director Dr. Anthony Canger said: “This showcase laboratory represents the new vision for science education in the School of Health and Natural Sciences that aims to teach science as it is practiced.” Next time you are in Main Hall, visit the third floor and see the lab space in Room 315. The glass walls permit visitors to see science in action and encourages students to envision a future in a STEM field.
National Science Foundation MISTI Camp
Mercy College undergraduate students participated in an immersive STEM summer program funded by a National Science Foundation Robert Noyce Grant. The program entitled Mercy College Intensive Science Teaching Initiative Program (MISTI) ran from June 1st until June 18th. This program was designed to engage students in study of the Hudson River through collaborative research projects and introduce participants to the rewards of teaching science at the college level. The program was created and run by Mercy College faculty Dr. Meghan Marrero, Dr. Marion Ben-Jacob and Dr. Anthony Canger along with Dr. Charles Maliti from Bronx Community College.

OT and OTA Programs at State Conference
Faculty from the Occupational Therapy (OT) and Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Programs were well represented at the 2015 New York State Occupational Therapy Association (NYSOTA) conference in November. Dr. Toglia co-presented a workshop entitled Weekly Calendar Planning Activity (WCPA): A New Performance Based Assessment for Executive Function. Associate SHNS Dean, Dr. Kathleen Golisz, co-presented a workshop entitled Technology to Support Independent Living Skills, along with Donna Roberto, an OT adjunct, and Kristen Schurek and Eric Weiss, two OT graduate students. Dr. Debra Zizik co-presented a workshop on OT Management of the Distal Radius Fracture. Several of Prof. Dumitrescu’s OTA students presented digital stories about occupational therapy history at the Friday evening poster sessions. The professional contributions of faculty were recognized. SHNS Dean, Dr. Joan Toglia, was presented with a Merit for Practice Award for her work in Neurorehabilitation and Higher Education, and OTA Associate Director, Professor Cristina Dumitrescu, was presented with a Merit for Service Award. Prof. Dumitrescu serves as the NYSOTA Historian, documenting NYSOTA’s rich history of occupational therapy in New York State.

Image: NYSOTA President Gloria Lucker and OTA Associate Director Cristina Dumitrescu

STEM Career Day
The second annual STEM Career Day, sponsored in part by the Department of Education Title III, Part F HSI-STEM grant, was held on November 11, 2015. Students and faculty engaged in several cross-discipline STEM breakout sessions and seminars covering a range of topics from engineering, mathematics and computer science to neuroscience, physiology, art in science and health care. Keynote speaker Susan Greenridge, MD, inspired participants with tales of the extraordinary perseverance and dedication that led to the launch of her OB/Gyn clinic Woman to Woman, for which she currently serves as CEO and Medical Director. Participants attended a panel discussion on Big Data and engaged in several workshops including those given by Natural Sciences faculty:

- Neuroscience Research in the Department of Natural Sciences: Anthony Canger, PhD, Renée Haskew-Layton, PhD, and Juan Bruses, PhD
- Drawing Science: Irina Ellison, PhD
- Discover Exercise Science at Mercy College: Patrick Davitt, PhD
Natural Science Represents Mercy College at MACUB Conference

The 48th Annual Conference of MACUB (Metropolitan Association of College and University Biologists) was held at Montclair State University in Montclair, New Jersey, on Saturday, November 7, 2015. Mercy College was fully represented by the attendance of four faculty members and nine students.

Learning Together Today For Better Practices Tomorrow

The Interprofessional Education (IPE) Committee worked together to develop and implement the school’s first pilot IPE activity this fall. On Friday, November 13, 2016, sixteen students in the Communication Disorders, Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy programs participated in this pilot activity, facilitated by the SHNS faculty. Students were placed in interdisciplinary groups. Two clients, each which have significant health issues, were recruited by the faculty for the students to interview and obtain a case history. Faculty introduced the plan, assigned the students to groups, and observed the students while they prepared, and while they interviewed the client. After the interview was complete, the students met with faculty to discuss the experience. Student participants reported that they found the activity to be a wonderful learning opportunity and an amazing experience that provided a chance to become more familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the other professions.

What’s next: A pilot activity using the simulation lab on the Bronx campus has been scheduled for March 18, 2016. Students from the Communication Disorders, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physician Assistant and Physical Therapy programs will participate in that experience. An expert in using simulated patients in IPE activities is scheduled to come to Mercy College in January 2016 to provide additional training for the faculty for facilitating and debriefing a simulated case scenario.

SHNS Missions - Where Will We Be Next?

SHNS Programs visit both local and global locations throughout the year to give students and faculty the opportunity to bring their classroom skills to life. The missions are two-fold, as they bring much needed assistance to some of these communities while simultaneously providing an engaging and hands-on learning environment for students and faculty alike. We take this time to look at our future missions.

Communication Disorders will travel to Pune, India.
Physician Assistant will be returning to Nicaragua.
Veterinary Technology will travel to Belize.
Communication Disorders will be returning to Ica, Peru.
Laurie Buell's Retirement

The students and faculty of the Veterinary Technology Program, along with the entire School of Health and Natural Sciences, bid a fond farewell to Professor Laurie Buell who is retiring in December. Prof. Buell taught at the college for 17 years, served on committees, and was always willing to advise faculty on their own pets’ health needs. We wish Laurie and her husband good health and happiness as they head west to enjoy the sun and new life adventures. You will be missed.

Service Awards Presented in 2015

This year’s Service Awards Brunch was held on October 3rd, 2015. Many of our SHNS Faculty and Staff were honored for their years of service. We would like to thank them for their commitment to the School of Health and Natural Science, furthering our mission: Transforming Health Through Science.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Years of Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claudia Fenderson</td>
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<td>Gloria Schlisselberg</td>
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<td>Helen Buhler</td>
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<td>Miriam Ford</td>
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<td>Maryanne Oleksowicz</td>
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<td>Nancy Paciullo</td>
<td>15 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephen Fong</td>
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<td>Jeanine Stancanelli</td>
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<td>Sabrina Timperman</td>
<td>5 years</td>
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Welcome, New Faculty!

Irina Ellison
Natural Science

Davida Smyth
Natural Science

Michelle Naylor
Natural Science

Ferdinand Esser
Natural Science

Mairead Casey
Physician Assistant Program

Congratulations To Our Faculty:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculties</th>
<th>Award</th>
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<tr>
<td>Shari Berkowitz:</td>
<td>Tenure</td>
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<td>Lorraine Cashin:</td>
<td>Tenure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renu Varughese:</td>
<td>F.Scholar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debra Zizik:</td>
<td>Asst. Prof</td>
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FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PUBLICATIONS:


ABSTRACTS & REPORTS:


PRESENTATIONS:


Undergraduate Programs

Department of Natural Science
Biology, Clinical Lab Science, Exercise Science, and Health Science
Anthony Canger, PhD - Department Chair
ACanger@mercy.edu

Biology
Bachelor’s Degree
Renee Haskew-Layton, PhD
Program Head
RHaskewLayton@mercy.edu

Clinical Laboratory Science
Bachelor’s Degree
Michelle Naylor, MS, MT(ASCP)
Program Director
MNaylor@mercy.edu

Exercise Science
Bachelor’s Degree
Astrid Mel, PhD, HFS, CISSN, CSCS
Program Head
AMel@mercy.edu

Health Science
Bachelor’s Degree
Irina Ellison, PhD
Program Head
IEllison@mercy.edu

Communication Disorders
Bachelor’s Degree
Helen Buhler, PhD, CCC-SLP
Program Director
HBuhler@mercy.edu

Nursing (RN to BS)
Bachelor’s Degree
Peggy C. Tallier, MPA, EdD, RN
Program Director
PTallier@mercy.edu

Nursing (BS)
Bachelor’s Degree
Peggy C. Tallier, MPA, EdD, RN
Program Director
PTallier@mercy.edu

Occupational Therapy Assistant
Associate’s Degree
Christine Sullivan, OTD, OTR/L
Program Director
CSullivan@mercy.edu

Veterinary Technology
Bachelor’s Degree
Lisa Schenkel, DVM, CCRT, CVMA
Program Director
LSchenkel@mercy.edu

Veterinary Technology: Pre-Vet. Medicine
Bachelor’s Degree
Lisa Schenkel, DVM, CCRT, CVMA
Program Director
LSchenkel@mercy.edu

Graduate Programs

Communication Disorders
Master’s Degree
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Physical Therapy
Doctorate
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Director
NHyland@mercy.edu

Nursing Administration
Master’s Degree
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Director
PTallier@mercy.edu

Nursing Education
Master’s Degree
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Director
PTallier@mercy.edu

Occupational Therapy
Master’s Degree
Jeanine Stancanelli OTD, OTR
Interim Director
Jstancanelli@mercy.edu

Physician Assistant Studies
Master’s Degree
Lorraine Cashin, MPS,PA-C
Director
LCashin@mercy.edu

For more information on our programs please call 914-674-7467