LSUHSC SCHOOL OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

2025

LSU Health NEW ORLEANS

School of Allied Health Professions

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WHITE COAT CEREMONY CLASS OF 2028



LSUHSC STARTED OUR PT MONTH CELEBRATIONS EARLY THIS YEAR!

ON SEPTEMBER 12, THE DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROUDLY HOSTED THE WHITE COAT CEREMONY FOR THE CLASS OF 2028 —A POWERFUL AND INSPIRING EVENT THAT ALSO SERVED AS AN EARLY KICKOFF TO NATIONAL PHYSICAL THERAPY MONTH.

THIS ANNUAL CEREMONY MARKS A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE FOR OUR STUDENTS AS THEY TRANSITION INTO THE PHYSICAL THERAPY PROFESSION, SYMBOLIZED BY THE DONNING OF THE WHITE COAT—A REPRESENTATION OF PROFESSIONALISM, RESPONSIBILITY, AND COMPASSIONATE CARE.









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THE AUDITORIUM WAS FILLED WITH ENERGY AS STUDENTS, FACULTY, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS FILLED BOTH LEVELS OF THE VENUE. THE PROGRAM FEATURED MOVING REMARKS BY DR. ERIN DUGAN, A POWERFUL KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY DR. SHARON DUNN, AND AN INSPIRING MESSAGE FROM THE JACOB KIEFF, CLASS OF 2027 PRESIDENT—EACH SPEECH REINFORCING THE VALUES OF SERVICE, INTEGRITY, AND LIFELONG LEARNING.

WITH THIS INSPIRING EVENT, WE NOT ONLY WELCOMED THE CLASS OF 2028 INTO THE NEXT CHAPTER OF THEIR JOURNEY BUT ALSO SET THE TONE FOR A MONTH OF CELEBRATING THE IMPACT AND IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY.

HERE'S TO A STRONG START AND A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR OUR STUDENTS AND THE PROFESSION.



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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

KATHRYN PERRY, SPT



We're excited to highlight Kathryn, a standout first-year student who has already made a remarkable impact in her class. Her dedication to learning, collaboration, and community shines through in everything she does. As one of her peers shared:

"Kathryn is an established first-year student who has contributed greatly to our class' education in just the few short months we have been here. From sharing extra notes to creating in-depth Quizlets on almost every PowerPoint we are given, she is committed to furthering her own education and the education of those around her. She will never shy away from volunteering to be an example in class and always asks questions to gather more information about and to clarify aspects the content being taught. Kathryn is a group player and loves to form study groups both on- and off-campus which further demonstrates her dedication to her education. Outside of the classroom, she is a friendly face to everyone she encounters— always taking the time to ask how you are and to formulate intimate responses. Overall, she embodies the image of a physical therapist perfectly: committed to expanding her education, to strengthening her relationships with classmates and professors, and to showing up and being the best student physical therapist she can be."

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

MICHAEL HILDEBRAND, PT, DPT, FAAOMPT

Nominated as “a champion for the profession, a perpetual student of the craft, business owner, and advocate,” Michael has made his mark in Northeast Louisiana. He founded M3 Physio in 2019, offering science-based, individualized care for people with orthopedic and neuro-musculoskeletal conditions.

A graduate of LSUHSC–New Orleans, Michael is a Fellow of the AAOMPT through OPTIM Manual Therapy, certified in orthopedic manual therapy (COMT) and dry needling, and active as the Monroe District Chair of APTA Louisiana. He also shares his expertise by teaching continuing education courses and hosting community clinics on topics like running injuries, pain management, and low back pain.



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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

NGOZI AKOTAOBI, PT, DPT, COMT, FAAOMPT



Dr. Ngozi Akotaobi, PT, DPT, COMT, FAAOMPT, joined our faculty in November 2022 and has quickly become a valued leader in both education and the profession. A graduate of Loma Linda University and a Fellow of the North American Institute of Manual Therapists (NAIOMT),

Dr. Akotaobi is passionate about advancing physical therapy through teaching, mentorship, and professional service. She was recently appointed to the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy Item Writer Task Force (2025–2028) and elected to the AAOMPT Nominating Committee (2024–2027). She has also contributed to diversity and engagement initiatives with AAOMPT and serves on the APTA-Louisiana Research Committee. Beyond her classroom and committee work, Dr. Akotaobi strengthens the profession through residency accreditation site visits, bringing her expertise and dedication to every level of physical therapy practice.

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PEDIATRIC LABS

The first and second year DPT students recently participated in pediatric labs to build their foundational knowledge and confidence in working with children. The students worked together to observe developmental milestones, complete outcome measures, and motivate the children through play.

We're proud of the energy, curiosity, and professionalism our students bring to these learning opportunities—and we're excited to see how these early exposures to pediatric care will shape their future practice.

Special thanks to our participants, and especially to these alumni who contributed to to the labs with their expertise and their own babies: Kristen Cavalier, Kelcey Roy, Juliana Haslitt (Shreveport), and Madison Randle.

If you are interested in bringing your children to these types of experiences in the future, please reach out to Chrissy MacMaster (cmacma@lsuhsc.edu).









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MAKE GOOD NOLA COLLABORATION

Dr. Rachel Wellons and Emily Sabido (Class of 2027) participated in a design and fabrication workshop with Make Good NOLA. They had the opportunity to learn about 3D printing, and worked with an interdisciplinary team to design/modify a prosthetic cover device for a woman with an amputation. They designed a pink sparkle cover with LED lights!

We look forward to future collaborations with this amazing local organization.

@makegoodnola





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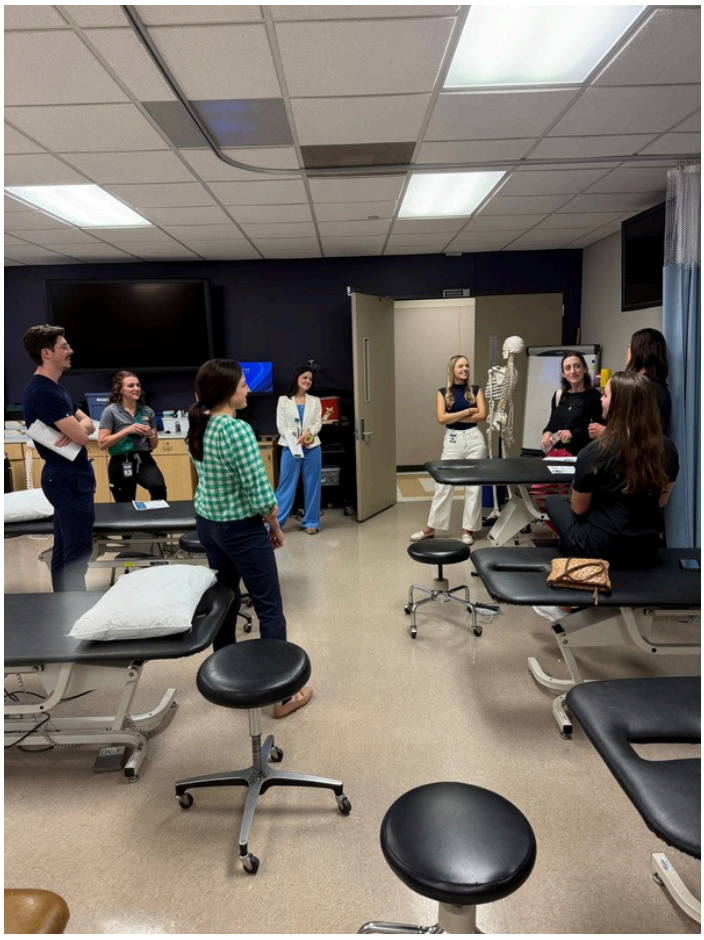
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APTA-Louisiana District Meeting

On September 17, 2025, LSUHSC New Orleans had the honor of hosting the APTA Louisiana district meeting, welcoming nearly 70 attendees, including students, faculty, and local clinicians. Our students had the opportunity to connect with representatives from residency programs such as Ochsner, the VA, Touro, and PT Solutions, gaining valuable insights into future training opportunities and career pathways.







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CONGRATULATIONS

We're proud to recognize
Easton Guilbeau, DPT '25
as recipient of the
APTA LA Dave Pariser Student Service Award



This honor recognizes students who exemplify leadership, service, and advocacy for the profession.

"Easton truly exemplifies the spirit and legacy of Dr. Dave Pariser—his leadership is grounded in service, compassion, advocacy, and a sincere desire to elevate those around him."- Dr. Ha Hoang

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CONGRATULATIONS MARY CLAIRE SAIA, SPT CLASS OF 2025!

first female overall finisher at the 9/11 Heroes Run in New Orleans LA September 13, 2025



"Nothing I do would be possible without the support of others!! I've been running for over 10 years now and after high school I decided that instead of running collegiately, I wanted to pursue distance running in the form of half and full marathons. Running makes me feel strong, but also gives me a daily reminder that I can do hard things and the importance of consistency (inside and outside of the sport!). There was never a doubt about continuing training in PT school, and I have an awesome coach who helps me with scheduling and keeping me healthy. Most recently, I raced a 5K for fun, and ended up being the first female overall finisher, which was my first win! Right now, I am training for another half marathon in October and the Houston marathon in January, which will be my 5th full. I am so grateful to my classmates who support me and to all the PTs that have been in my journey along the way!" MC Saia

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SCHOLARSHIP

Poster & Platform Presentations

- Lee V, **Hoang H.** Using health humanities to integrate structural thinking in challenging and uncertain times. Presented at: *APTA Educational Leadership Conference*; October 18, 2025; Kansas City, MO.
- **Guilbeau E, Robinson K, Galloway J, Henry C, Zeigler L, Akotaobi N, Hoang H.** Examining DPT programs' use of technology for recruitment of underrepresented minority students. Platform presentation at: *APTA-Louisiana Fall Meeting*; August 22, 2025; Baton Rouge, LA.
- **Wellons R, Dugas C, Goff L, Hauth E, Gerrets A, Schouest E.** Effectiveness of vestibular therapists in instructing the vestibulo-ocular reflex X1 exercise. Poster presented at: *Academy of Neurologic Physical Therapy (ANPT) Annual Conference;* October 17, 2025.

Symposia/ Education Sessions

- **Giordano KA.** Common Analytical Mistakes in Strength and Conditioning Research – How to Spot Them, How to Interpret Them, and How to Correct Them. 2025 *National Strength and Conditioning Association Annual Meeting*. Kansas City, MO.

Grants

- **Giordano KA,** Phillips IV P, Hartman M. Factors Contributing to Shoulder Girdle Compensation in Patients with Rotator Cuff Tears. *LSUHSC Wide intramural Research Program*. 2025. **$166,000.**
- **Giordano KA, Akotaobi N.** Rehabilitation Exercise Muscle Activation Across Resistance Modalities Through a Full Arc of Motion. LSUHSC School of Allied Health Professions Intramural Research Grant. 2025. **$10,795**
- **Liu H**, Lord K, **Atiyeh K**, Booth B, Franc I. Effects of Deep-Breathing Emphasized Progressive Tai Chi Exercise on Multimorbidity in a Senior Living Community – An Exploratory Crossed Randomized Controlled Trial. LSUHSC School of Allied Health Professions Intramural Research Grant. 2025. **$11,620**

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SCHOLARSHIP

Publications

- **Liu H.** Salem Y, Murphy C, **Akotaobi N**, Arguello E. Analysis of exercise programs in assisted living facilities – A cross-sectional study. *Geriatric Nursing*. Accepted, 2025.

Future: APTA CSM 2026

- Symposia/education sessions
  - **Giordano KA,** Wasserberger KW, Palasiewicz J. Fastball Velocity, Injury Risk, and Performance: A Major League Perspective on the Tommy John Epidemic. *APTA Combined Sections Meeting*, 2026. Anaheim, CA.
- Poster Presentations
  - **Deshotels G, Henssler H, McInnis M, Velez N, Liu H, Atiyeh K.** Efficacy of Core Training in Females with Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *APTA Combined Sections Meeting*, 2026. Anaheim, CA.



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Acknowledgements

Congratulations to Dr. Howe Liu on his appointment as Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Physiotherapy Research International (PRI), a leading global journal advancing the science and practice of physiotherapy! This honor reflects his leadership in shaping the future of physiotherapy research and showcases the global impact of our department.



50th REUNION LSU-PT

We would like to thank Sandy Prejean Mullins and David Regan for their outstanding efforts in coordinating the 50th Reunion for the Class of 1975. It has been a pleasure to work with them on this event, and the PT department is looking forward to celebrating this milestone on October 24.

Help us continue hosting meaningful student and alumni events by donating to the LSU Health Foundation Physical Therapy department. Your contribution directly supports initiatives that strengthen our PT community and future professionals.

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