

Impact

Expanding the boundaries
of research, teaching
and patient care



**Students gain clinical
and collaborative skills
while closing gaps in care**

Page 16

The Future of CHS Edition

defining growth, professional development, and philanthropic success

The positive impact of caring and collaboration

At the Rush University College of Health Sciences (CHS), collaboration and care are key values that influence how we relate to each other in our classrooms and clinics. They also guide how we work with the people we serve in our local communities.

It is also through caring and collaboration that we strive to take the lead in designing better solutions to make health care more effective and more equitable for everyone.

In this issue of *Impact*, we provide stories of inspiring CHS students, faculty and alumni who have lived these values of caring and collaboration and had a truly meaningful impact on others.

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On the cover: Second-year AuD student Ruth Stabosz-Danyo

Having an impact for a brighter future

A Message from the Dean

A Message from the Dean

At the College of Health Sciences, we have never been more optimistic about the future, despite the pandemic-related challenges of the past two years. I think I can speak for all CHS faculty when I say that we've seen the potential in our students and alumni, and we can't help but feel confident that our future is in the hands of expertly trained, highly capable leaders.

Training students to be leaders has long been a priority here at CHS. In addition to enhancing our curricula to include more topics to help aspiring leaders be successful in their careers — whether they manage others or not — we've also enhanced our undergraduate programs to focus on personal development and provide more support. That's because we understand that today's leaders need to be multidimensional to be successful, no matter what type of health care career they pursue.

I'm also optimistic because our faculty have developed new academic programs at CHS, made possible through our collaborative relationships within the college, university and entire health system. We've added new tracks and moved programs online to reach new populations of students and help reduce barriers for those interested in allied health careers. At the same time, we've enhanced our programming on diversity and inclusion across all our academic programs.

We've also had great success expanding our philanthropic support, which is so imperative as we strive to offer more scholarships to students ready to make an impact in the allied health professions.

In the pages that follow, you'll read more about how our committed faculty, engaged students and talented alumni have given us all reasons to hope for a better future in health care. That is why I am thrilled to share this latest issue of *Impact* with you. I hope you find the stories full of optimism as well.

Charlotte Royeen, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, FASAHP, FNAP

Dean, College of Health Sciences

MLS program promotes laboratory leadership skills

Nadine Lerret, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, associate professor and MLS program director, in the new MLS lab with students working in the background, from left to right: Skye Gray, Annie Cheung, Alayna Jones and Emma Melendez-Scherer.

Demand for medical laboratory scientists is high — and growing — across the country. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, MLS jobs are expected to grow about 17% through 2030, much faster than the average job rate.

“In 2021, every single one of our graduates who wanted a job had a job by graduation,” says Nadine Lerret, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, associate professor and MLS program director. “And that’s usually the case every year.” New MLS graduates are finding positions in hospitals, the pharmaceutical/biomedical industry and education, she adds.

This job growth also presents many opportunities for recent graduates to take leadership positions early in their careers. Some graduates of the master’s program at Rush land in leadership roles within a year or two after earning their degree. “They are often presented the opportunity to climb the ladder a lot faster,” Lerret says.

To prepare students for such leadership roles, Rush’s master’s program covers practical management topics such as public speaking, conflict resolution and working with difficult people.

Courtney Booker, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, who grew up in California and graduated from Rush’s MLS program in 2016, says this coursework has prepared her for her management roles. She is currently a supervisor for chemistry in the Rush Core

Laboratories and oversees eight people. Before coming to Rush, she had another leadership role for several years at another Chicago hospital. “Our roles are just as people-oriented as they are technical,” Booker says. “And the more that you grow in the field, the more that you are going to deal with people.”

Christine Hoang, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, a 2020 Rush graduate who also came from California, agrees that the curriculum’s emphasis on management helped prepare her for her role as an evening shift supervisor managing six people at Swedish Hospital in Chicago. “It helped me build the confidence that I need to be a good leader,” she says.

Hoang also valued the experience she gained during a teaching assistant rotation at Rush. In the future, she is considering pursuing a doctorate of clinical laboratory science and becoming an academic because she enjoys training her team. “In the lab, I’m already teaching others,” she says.

“**In 2021, every single one of our graduates who wanted a job had a job by graduation. And that’s usually the case every year.**”

Nadine Lerret, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, associate professor and MLS program director

New MLS lab creates realistic learning environment

The Department of Medical Laboratory Science at CHS recently unveiled a newly remodeled and upgraded 1,900-square-foot dedicated student laboratory space that mimics what MLS students will encounter in the real world.

The lab is also stocked with modern equipment and has dedicated areas for specimen preparation, along with plenty of storage.

“We designed it based on conversations with our faculty and students,” says Nadine Lerret, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, associate professor and MLS program director. “Our students are extremely proud of the space, which really highlights who we are.”



The new student laboratory is similar to a lab in the real world.



Clinical nutrition students benefit from a competency-based curriculum and a collaborative environment.

Aspiring dietitians pursue their goals

People from underrepresented backgrounds and career switchers who want to become clinical dietitians are often discouraged when they learn they need to complete a four-year undergraduate program in dietetics before applying to a master’s program in clinical nutrition. But now, aspiring dietitians with any type of bachelor’s degree can apply to Rush as long as they complete their prerequisites.

“We want to provide an avenue for career changers and bring more representative voices into the classroom,” says Sarah Peterson, RD, PhD, CNSC, LDN, acting program director and assistant professor, Department of Clinical Nutrition.

Two tracks reduce barriers to higher education

Rush offers two graduate tracks in clinical nutrition: a stand-alone part-time or full-time master’s track and a full-time, combined master’s degree and dietetic internship. Currently, students with any type of bachelor’s degree may apply to the stand-alone master’s track. And starting in 2023, the combined master’s degree and dietetic internship track will also be open to anyone with a bachelor’s degree who has completed their prerequisites. Rush also has reduced the number of credits required to graduate in the combined master’s degree and dietetic internship.

Another big change is that CHS plans to offer the stand-alone master’s degree track fully online in the near future. “We want to be able to reach people anywhere,” Peterson says. “And we want to get people working in the field more quickly.”

National changes mean master’s degrees will be required

These changes are occurring at the same time that eligibility requirements for becoming a registered dietitian are changing at the national level. Starting in 2024, dietitians will need a master’s degree to be eligible for their registration examination.

Fortunately, students who enroll in either of Rush’s graduate tracks will be well-positioned for these changes, says Mark McInerney, DHSc, RD, LDN, assistant professor. In addition, students benefit from Rush’s competency-based education, which allows individuals with relevant work experience to demonstrate their competencies so they can reach their career goals more quickly.

“With competency-based education, we’re eliminating another huge barrier to enter the profession,” he says.



Yocelin Bello, a second-year perfusion student, at her first clinical rotation at Baptist Hospital of Miami.

Cardiovascular Perfusion

ECMO raises the profile of perfusionists during the pandemic

The pandemic has put the spotlight on the important role that cardiovascular perfusionists have in providing extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) support to COVID-19 patients outside of the operating room. Working as part of the critical care team, cardiovascular perfusionists have been on the front line of the battle against COVID-19 by offering critically ill patients a chance at survival.

Second-year perfusion student Yocelin Bello witnessed this firsthand during an observation in February 2020 in a COVID-19 ECMO unit at a Chicago area hospital with Julie Collins, CCP, LP, MS, program director. “She saw more during those six hours than I saw during my first five years as a perfusionist,” Collins says. “We did post oxygenator blood gases, evaluated and changed a failing oxygenator, primed a backup one, assisted with physical therapy, walked a patient and were there to withdraw support on a patient.”

For Bello, who grew up in Chicago and graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, being part of an ECMO team was exciting because it provided the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with COVID-19 patients. “It was really cool to see something different, something outside of the OR,” she says.

Given the importance of ECMO during the pandemic, students now learn the basics of the technology during their first semester at Rush, followed by more advanced lectures, case studies and simulations in their subsequent semesters.

Besides the opportunity to work with this important technology, Bello also appreciates the support she receives from faculty in the program. “They’re very approachable,” Bello says. “I am very comfortable calling my teachers at any time because I believe they sincerely want us to be successful in our field.”

“
It was really cool to see something different, something outside of the OR.”

Yocelin Bello,
second-year perfusion student

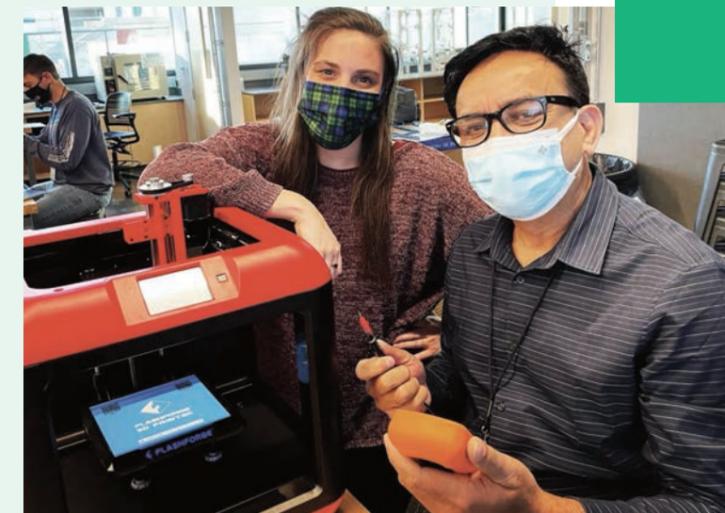
Cardiovascular Perfusion

3D printer offers new research opportunities

Last December, first-year cardiovascular perfusion student Morgan Shoaff and Gurinder Singh Gill, assistant professor of cardiovascular perfusion, learned how to build their own 3D printer at a workshop at Carnegie Mellon University. The machine, which can print soft and biological materials including hollow structures, is now at Rush so faculty and students can utilize it for research projects.

“If we have any new incoming students who are fascinated by this area of research, they now have a means to do it,” Shoaff says.

Shoaff, who is originally from Austin, Texas, plans to use the 3D printer for a research project to print heart valves that cardiovascular fellows can use to practice their suturing techniques. In the future, she hopes the printer can be used in conjunction with computed tomography (CT) images to build valves based on real patients, giving fellows a unique opportunity to practice on personalized structures.



First-year perfusion student Morgan Shoaff and faculty member Gurinder Singh Gill built a 3D printer and brought it back to Rush.

Grainger Scholars aim to improve health equity



From left to right: Katherine Satterberg, Dominique Goodman and Zebedee Cluff earned scholarships to help improve health equity in Chicago.

Accessing health care is difficult for many marginalized populations, including members of the LGBTQ+ community, even in a large city like Chicago. “Nationwide, there’s a chronic problem of accessing care, especially care that fits the needs of the person,” says Zebedee Cluff, a first-year PA studies student from Salt Lake City who hopes to help more LGBTQ+ residents of the West and South Sides of Chicago find the services they need.

Cluff is among three PA studies students at Rush who have earned \$40,000 scholarships, with generous endowed support from The Grainger Foundation, as they aim to address health disparities in Chicago. During the past year, Rush was able to secure additional funding from The Grainger Foundation to offer three scholarships to PA studies students, instead of two scholarships as originally planned.

The central component of the scholarship program is each student’s community service project, which they develop with a faculty mentor. Cluff’s project will involve establishing a formalized referral system between local LGBTQ+ organizations and Affirm: The Rush Center for Gender, Sexuality and Reproductive Health.

“**Through projects like these, we are really able to help students understand how to help people in their environment and address the needs that they have at the ground level.**”

Regina Chen, PhD(c), MS, PA-C, chairperson of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies

Other projects focus on timely topics

Another Grainger Scholar, Katherine Satterberg from Seattle, is developing a project to improve access to care for people with substance use disorders. As part of her project, she is working with a local rehabilitation center to help connect their clients to primary care services. She aims to recruit student volunteers from across Rush University to help clients identify primary care providers covered by their insurance and schedule their first appointments. “When there is a link between primary care and addiction medicine, you can have more positive outcomes,” she says.

The third Grainger Scholar, Dominique Goodman, believes access gaps can be closed by bringing more underrepresented minorities into the health care field. When she experienced a medical emergency as a child, Goodman recalls not seeing women of color like her in health care. A first-generation college graduate from the San Francisco Bay area, she plans to discuss her own journey, including graduate school and pursuing a career as a PA, at West Side high schools with large populations of underrepresented minorities. “I’m really passionate about letting people know that this is an option and that they can do it, too,” she says.

A positive ripple effect

“Through projects like these, we are really able to help students understand how to help people in their environment and address the needs that they have at the ground level,” says Regina Chen, PhD(c), MS, PA-C, chairperson of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies. “When we raise students’ awareness of marginalized populations during their training, we produce much more effective practitioner-clinicians.”

Chen believes these scholarships will continue to highlight the innovative work created by students in the program and inspire future students. “The ripple effect of this is huge, both from an educational standpoint and raising awareness,” she says. “This will inspire multiple classes of students who are moved by the innovation and real call to caring that these scholars are demonstrating.”



New track helps executives realize their leadership potential

Nupur Shah, DO, considers herself a lifelong learner and chose the new Master's in Health Systems Management (HSM) Executive Track at Rush so she could be an effective partner with administrators. "What I'm learning through the master's program will really help me be the type of leader that I want to be," says Shah, one of 30 students in the track's first cohort.

Shah's classmates include other clinicians, revenue cycle leaders, IT professionals and administrators with five or more years of experience who value the program's practical coursework and opportunities for cross-collaboration.

Shah says the HSM program has helped her build skills that she can apply in her clinical informatics fellowship at Rush, where she is working as part of a team to roll out a new virtual scribe technology. "I'm able to come in with a systematic way of thinking through problems and not be 100% reliant on other team members, and that's been helpful," she says.

One of the nation's best

Rush's health systems management program is one of the top 5 programs in the country, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. The executive track curriculum mirrors the full-time curriculum but includes more opportunities for students to apply their knowledge to their real-world experiences, says Diane Howard, PhD, MPH, associate professor and chairperson of the Department of Health Systems Management. Students learn about topics such as crisis management, finance and health policy from C-suite executives and other national health care leaders.

"For students, this program opens their vista so they consider the possibilities that they can do and be more," Howard says. "It's interesting to see how many people say that the program has really improved their self-confidence. They're learning things that are current, digestible and that they can actually use. It's made them better administrators."

Adding a health care focus to an MBA

Charles Buell is already applying what he's learned in the HSM executive track to his current role as manager of business operations for inpatient services in the Department of Pharmacy at Rush. "We had a course that dove deep into the payer landscape, which helped me see the bigger picture while I was working on a pharmacy claims audit," Buell says. "This is a good example of how the program provides an immediate return on investment."

Buell recently earned his master's in business administration from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and believes a master's in HSM offers the health care perspective that his MBA did not. "While the MBA gives a broad view of the world of business, the HSM program really helps 'laser-focus' onto the business of health care delivery, management and leadership," he says.



Nupur Shah, DO, is already applying what she's learned in the HSM program to her fellowship in clinical informatics.

“For students, this program opens their vista so they consider the possibilities that they can do and be more.”

Diane Howard, PhD, MPH, chairperson of the Department of Health Systems Management



Charles Buell says the HSM program brings a health care focus to the concepts he learned while gaining his MBA.



Second-year AuD student Ruth Stabosz-Danyo helps a young patient in the SCOPE clinic.

Students gain clinical and collaborative skills while closing gaps in care

Working in fast-paced clinical settings can be intimidating for students, while student clinical laboratories often lack the “real world” feel that helps aspiring clinicians learn how to deliver patient care. At Rush, faculty in the Doctor of Audiology (AuD) and Master’s in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) programs have developed a clinic called the Student Community Outreach Program of Excellence (SCOPE) that offers the perfect balance for students while fulfilling a vital need for services in the community.

Enhancing Rush’s award-winning programs

Both the AuD (#8) and SLP (#16) programs at Rush University are ranked among the top 20 programs in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report* and are highly regarded for their high-caliber training that goes beyond building clinical acumen.

“Rush has a mission to bring services to underrepresented, underserved populations, and we want to train clinicians with conscience who care about the community they serve,” says Emily Wang, PhD, CCC-SLP, associate professor and chairperson of the Department of Communication Disorders and Sciences. Wang first conceptualized the idea of SCOPE three years ago, which got immediate interest and strong support from Christina Tragos, MD, a plastic and reconstructive surgeon and co-director of the Rush Craniofacial Center. Tragos shared the data from her center, which showed an unmet need for such speech services, as many of her pediatric surgical patients do not have insurance coverage for their post-surgery speech treatment. Without speech therapy, these patients would continue to have significant communication difficulty and would never realize their true potential even after the reconstructive surgery, Wang explains.

The SCOPE clinic, which started accepting patients in 2021, gives students a chance to learn while providing pro bono care to patients of all ages who don’t have medical coverage. “What we hope to do with SCOPE is to be a bridge for people who wouldn’t otherwise have access to services, which is really in line with the Rush mission,” says Megan Worthington, AuD, CCC-A, assistant professor and audiology clinical education manager.

Learning while giving back to the community

During their clinical rotations through SCOPE, students learn evidenced-based practices for evaluating and treating patients under the supervision of faculty. On the audiology side, students learn to conduct a full audiologic assessment to determine if patients have hearing loss. They also fit hearing aids and provide aural rehabilitation, among other services, to patients in need.

“There’s a certain aspect of working with patients that you can’t really get from the student clinical lab that you can get in SCOPE,” says Ruth Stabosz-Danyo, a second-year AuD student from the Philadelphia area. “And at SCOPE, the slower pace gives you more room to learn.”

On the SLP side, students routinely conduct full speech and language evaluations on patients, who are typically children. They also work as part of the team to help patients cultivate expressive language goals, develop pragmatic language skills and learn intentional communication strategies.

“**Rush has a mission to bring services to underrepresented, underserved populations, and we want to train clinicians with conscience who care about the community they serve.**”

Emily Wang, PhD, CCC-SLP, chairperson of the Department of Communication Disorders and Sciences

Suzanne Coomer, a second-year SLP student who grew up in Scotland, had the opportunity to work remotely with her first patient who had a cleft lip and palate repair and needed additional speech therapy. “This gave me the opportunity to make what I was learning into something real, and that felt really valuable to me because what I was doing was having a direct impact on the Chicago community,” Coomer says.

Students also develop cultural competence skills working with patients who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, says Faviola Camarena, MS, CCC-SLP, a 2020 graduate of the SLP program who is now a clinical instructor in SCOPE. “It’s really important for students to start building these skills before they graduate and start working in the field,” she says.

Learning teamwork together

Having AuD and SLP students work side by side in the clinic helps them learn the value of teamwork, says Shannon Theis, PhD, CCC-SLP, assistant professor and director of SCOPE. “It’s another way for us to get our graduate students to think more about interdisciplinary and collaborative care for the whole patient,” she says.

“Students also appreciate the fact that they’re gaining very specific and specialized skills that will help them gain a fellowship later on.”

In addition, Rush students have an outlet to channel their passion for improving health equity. “They feel like they’re advocates even though they’re still students, which really gives them some good advocacy skills later on in their professional lives,” Theis says.

Students coach early childcare providers while learning vital skills

Through the Student Community Outreach Program of Excellence (SCOPE) clinic at Rush, speech-language pathology (SLP) students learn to coach early childcare providers who are working with children with developmental delays.

The innovative, four-month program pairs a childcare provider and child from the Austin Childcare Provider Network with a graduate student and a faculty member. Each week, they meet remotely to set goals and develop solutions to enhance each child’s communication skills. Eventually, students take the lead in coaching.

Melanie Schwartz, a second-year SLP student from the Philadelphia area, valued the opportunity to coach the caregiver of a four-year-old boy who was nonverbal. “I really had to step back and look at what the caregiver was doing instead of what he was doing,” Schwartz says. She also learned how to use questions to help the childcare provider identify her own solutions. That experience has given Schwartz the confidence to counsel pediatric patients in an outpatient clinic during her current rotation.



Second-year SLP student Melanie Schwartz learned to coach a childcare provider through the SCOPE clinic.

“We’re training students to do this because caregiver coaching is a really important tool that they don’t always get a lot of exposure to in other graduate programs,” says Anne Hoffmann, PhD, CCC-SLP, assistant professor in the Department of Communication Disorders and Sciences, who leads the initiative. “A big strength of Rush and the SCOPE clinic is that we’re opening up so many doors for our students to get clinical experiences that they might not have otherwise.”

“**A big strength of Rush and the SCOPE clinic is that we’re opening up so many doors for our students to get clinical experiences that they might not have otherwise.**”

Anne Hoffmann, PhD, CCC-SLP, assistant professor

OTs advance telehealth training

As states across the country passed laws to allow allied health professionals to deliver services via telehealth on a permanent basis, Rush OT faculty were already embracing the change. And to prepare the next generation of OTs, they helped develop and validate the effectiveness of an innovative Interprofessional Education (IPE) course using telehealth.

“OT is in a good position to lead because we’re one of the only health professions with specific curriculum standards set forth by our national accrediting body related to telehealth,” says Lauren Little, PhD, OTR/L, associate professor of occupational therapy and associate dean of research for CHS.

Innovative training for patients and students

The IPE course at Rush brings together nearly 700 students from 17 programs across the university who work together for two semesters on patient-centered teams. Each interprofessional team (which might include students from OT, physician assistant studies, speech-language pathology and audiology, for example) is assigned a community health mentor, typically an older adult managing at least one chronic health condition.

For nine weeks, the student teams engage with the community health mentors during telehealth sessions and help them set goals for their health.

To support the new course, IPE faculty developed telehealth training modules and published them on a dedicated website, [Accesstelehealthtraining.org](https://www.accesstelehealthtraining.org), that any organization can use to enhance its telehealth training.

Research validates the effectiveness of telehealth

Using telehealth was found to be highly effective for both students and older adults, says Steven Taylor, OTD, OTR/L, who developed measures of effectiveness for the IPE course and serves as course co-director for the IPE curriculum.

“We noted statistically significant improvements in perceived wellness through participation with these telehealth sessions,” Taylor says. “I’m really excited that our community partners benefit from experiential learning and participating with students through this telehealth, which is such a novel platform for our education.”

OT faculty helped develop an Interprofessional Education (IPE) course leveraging telehealth that benefited students and older adults.

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progress in Jacksonville.”

David Vines, PhD, MHS, RRT, FAARC, FCCP, professor
and director of the Master’s in Respiratory Care program



Respiratory Care

Innovative partnership builds pipeline of leaders in respiratory career

Respiratory Care

Respiratory therapists at Rush helped develop a new master’s degree program in respiratory care at Jacksonville University.

Demand for respiratory therapists with master’s degrees is high across the country as hospitals continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet only five entry-level master’s degree programs in respiratory care exist in the United States.

To help meet the need for more leaders in respiratory care, Rush University has partnered with Jacksonville University in Florida to develop the state’s only graduate program in respiratory care, based on Rush’s own award-winning program (Rush has earned Apex recognition awards from the American Association for Respiratory Care in the acute care hospital and educational program categories).

High demand, low supply

Like many other allied health professions, demand for respiratory therapists — especially those with master’s degrees who can enter leadership positions more quickly — is higher than the supply. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, demand for respiratory therapists will grow 19% by 2029, much faster than the average for other health care jobs.

The partnership between Rush University and Jacksonville University is supported by a donation from Baptist Health South Florida to build the pipeline of respiratory therapists in the area. The first cohort of students in Jacksonville began taking classes in May 2022.

Respected faculty lend their expertise

At Rush, respiratory therapists practice with a great deal of autonomy, participate in care team decisions and help drive outcome changes. This expertise translates into a higher caliber of training that benefits students at Rush and will also benefit students in Jacksonville, says David Vines,

PhD, MHS, RRT, FAARC, FCCP, chair of the Department of Cardiopulmonary Sciences and director of the Master’s in Respiratory Care program.

Rush faculty are serving as course developers for the program in Jacksonville while local faculty are putting the curriculum into action. Courses are designed to develop both clinical and leadership skills and give students advanced practice preparation in areas like critical care, neonatal care and cardiopulmonary diagnostics.

“The majority of our graduates at Rush are in leadership roles within three to five years,” Vines says. “We’re hoping to see the same progress in Jacksonville.”

More opportunities for research

Vines also believes reproducing the success of Rush's program in another region of the country will offer more opportunities for respiratory care research that advances the practice nationwide.

"Master's degree therapists are able to analyze data on

outcomes and build protocols, but they can also practice," Vines says. "They can be at the bedside but they also understand systems affecting respiratory care and how to ultimately use therapy to improve outcomes. And that's the real focus of graduating someone at this level who is capable of making those decisions and following literature to help continue to advance their level of practice."

CHS celebrates respiratory therapists

Last October, faculty and students at Rush took a break from their demanding schedules to observe Respiratory Care Week. The event included virtual lectures, raffles and other special events. Some faculty and students even took the national spotlight when their photo was featured on the "Sunday Today Show."

At the national level, the theme for the week was "Resilience, Strength, Hope," according to the American Association for Respiratory Care. Locally, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot issued a proclamation recognizing respiratory therapists in Chicago for their outstanding work during the COVID-19 pandemic and for helping patients with other respiratory diseases.

"Respiratory therapists are the front line for COVID-19, and it is up to us as leadership for the department and for the profession to give them as much recognition for the phenomenal work that they do and as much nurturing as we can to help them feel supported," says Steve Mosakowski, MBA, RRT, RRT-ACCS, RRT-NPS, CPFT, FAARC, assistant professor and director of the Department of Respiratory Care Services.

National lectures highlighted

Two Rush faculty offered national, virtual lectures during the week. Tyler Weiss, MSc, RRT, RRT-ACCS, AE-C, FCCP, assistant professor and clinical education coordinator in the department, lectured on proning COVID-19 patients for UNC Health. J. Brady Scott, PhD, MSc, RRT-ACCS, AE-C, FAARC, associate professor and director of clinical education, offered lessons learned from aerosol drug delivery in the era of COVID-19, based on an article he co-authored in *Chest* journal.

Students receive faculty recognition

Faculty also presented respiratory care students with personalized gray jackets to recognize their hard work. Including students as part of the festivities was a priority for faculty, Mosakowski says.

"Students see the way that respiratory therapists are really respected here at Rush and the trust that they've earned from the health care team," he says. "We want them to soak that in and see that we have a collegial atmosphere here at Rush."



Steve Mosakowski, MBA, RRT, RRT-ACCS, RRT-NPS, CPFT, FAARC, and other faculty presented respiratory care students like Ernest Yu, Ashley Rodriguez and Jacob Rintz with personalized gray jackets during Respiratory Care Week.

OTD pursues PhD to gain research acumen needed for academics

Becoming an academic wasn't a career goal for Steven Taylor, OTD, OTR/L, until he began teaching at Rush in 2012. "I was surprised by how much I liked the interactions with students, and I began to feel like I could make a larger impact than if I was only providing clinical care," he says.

But Taylor, an assistant professor of occupational therapy, soon realized that not having a PhD was limiting his ability to take the next step in his career. "I saw my colleagues within Rush and other universities developing these comprehensive research protocol programs that were really innovative for OT, and it was so inspiring to see that," he says. "I wanted to learn how to do that whole process."

So in 2017, he made the leap. Now Taylor is on track to earn his PhD in health sciences from Rush this year after studying the efficacy of a service-learning curriculum delivered through telehealth for his dissertation. Unlike many PhD programs that still require some in-person classroom time, Rush's fully online PhD program allows doctoral students like Taylor to keep working while they pursue their degree.

Health sciences PhDs are in high demand

Rush's doctorate program helps address a growing need in colleges of health sciences across the country to have more PhDs on their faculty, says Douglas Kuperman, PhD, RRT, chair of the Department of Health Sciences and director of the PhD in Health Sciences program.

"Faculty members at universities are expected to both disseminate knowledge by teaching and also to generate knowledge by research," Kuperman says. But in the health sciences, many faculty do not have PhDs and have not

gained research skills. "The field of health sciences is still catching up," he adds.

The highest degree offers the most options

Rush's fully online PhD in Health Sciences program attracts candidates who have been hired as assistant professors with master's degrees and who recognize that attaining a PhD is essential for their promotion to associate professor or higher at their university. The program also appeals to clinical leaders who wish to move into an academic setting and recognize that having a PhD will make them more competitive for a future assistant professor position. Rush's PhD program also attracts aspiring leaders from private industry.

"Having a PhD opens up many, many doors, and so whatever direction you go in life, it will only be facilitated by having that degree," Kuperman says.



Steven Taylor, OTD, OTR/L, discovered he loved teaching and enrolled in the PhD in Health Sciences program at Rush so he could become a knowledge creator.

Offering more support to undergraduates on the path to success

For CHS alumna Natalia Wright, MSN, RN, returning to Rush as an instructor this summer is more than an important career move — it's a chance to support the college's undergraduates and show them that they, too, can achieve their goals.

Wright will teach students in the college's undergraduate health sciences (BSHS) program a course on human development across the lifespan.

Wright graduated from Rush with a BSBS in 2015 and a master's degree from the Generalist Entry Master's (GEM) nursing program in 2017. When she came to Rush after attending community college, she found the transition overwhelming at first. Using her experience, she hopes to help other Rush undergraduates who might need some extra guidance and alleviate any fear or anxiety they may have.

"I'm excited to have that connection with the students who come to Rush via the same pipeline that I did," says Wright, who is currently working as a psychiatric nurse at a community health center while pursuing her doctorate in nursing. "I can tell my story, and I have the experience to tell them what they need to do to be successful."



Alumna Natalia Wright, MSN, RN, will return to Rush as an instructor this summer.

Keeping alumni and students connected

Hiring CHS alumni like Wright is an example of how Rush provides additional support to undergraduates to improve their chances of success, says Mary Jo Guglielmo, MPH, assistant dean and director of undergraduate studies at CHS. "Our goal is that after some of our students go on to get their master's and doctorates, they will come back and teach our students," she says. "We really try to keep that connection and help them mentor our students. This is not only for the BSBS program but for all the undergraduate programs, including the imaging sciences and vascular ultrasound programs."

CHS' undergraduates represent the college's most diverse student population, with the majority being underrepresented minorities in health care. "Bringing in students who are going to change the face of health care is how we help Rush meet its mission of reducing health disparities," she says.

A roadmap for success

Faculty advisors at CHS work closely with undergraduates to help them plan their courses and develop strategies to manage their workload. And recently, the college has increased opportunities for group coaching and mentoring for undergraduate students.

One example is a required workshop series offered every semester called Professional and Personal Roadmap of Opportunities (PRO), led by Kenya McGuire Johnson, PT, MA, CHC, manager of student, professional and career development for undergraduate studies and the college's first director of diversity, equity and inclusion programming (see sidebar). The roadmap helps students build the skills they need to be successful in the classroom and covers issues such as self-care and achieving balance. As students advance, the workshops address topics such as inclusion and social justice.

Beyond this formal programming, students also receive individualized support from faculty like Johnson, who has a master's degree in counseling. "I approach counseling and advising from a holistic space," she says. "When a student is having a difficult time, I never just say 'you need to study harder.' I try to find out what is going on in their life."

More support, better outcomes

Many of the undergraduate students at CHS are balancing jobs, financial pressures and family responsibilities along with their rigorous coursework. Despite these challenges, these dedicated students are still attaining their goals, Guglielmo says.

"The students in imaging and vascular ultrasound are graduating and immediately working in the field," she says. "And the students in the BSBS program are graduating and typically working in health care with the intent of going on to graduate school. Within three years of graduation, approximately 80% of BSBS students pursue graduate/professional studies. By offering additional support to our undergraduates, we're hoping that we can boost our outcomes even more."

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Mary Jo Guglielmo, MPH, assistant dean and director of undergraduate studies at CHS

New DEI programming director empowered by mission and music

Kenya McGuire Johnson, PT, MA, CHC, manager of student, professional and career development for undergraduate studies and the college's first director of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programming, loves watching her students bloom.

"It's really fascinating to see when students start to feel empowered by who they are and not feel minimized by who they are," Johnson says.

This understanding of who they are also helps aspiring health care professionals develop a meaningful connection with their patients. "It allows them to be present with people who may be suffering in a way that has authentic empathy," she says.

In her new DEI role, Johnson has been developing programming for undergraduates at CHS related to identity development and other topics based on principles from Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED), a national organization that created a curriculum for students to have conversations about these important issues.

One of Johnson's goals is to help students embrace their multiple identities based on factors like race, gender and religion as well as their personal and professional roles. She tries to model this by letting students know about one of her roles outside of CHS as a published recording artist and songwriter (Instagram: @kenyamjmusic).

"Being an artist helps give me the energy to be present and to take on really challenging things," Johnson says. "Creativity is my space where I get to feel a sense of balance. And it helps me be more innovative when I am at work."



Kenya McGuire Johnson, PT, MA, CHC, lets students know about her role as a musician outside of CHS so she can help them embrace their many identities.

“It’s really fascinating to see when students start to feel empowered by who they are and not feel minimized by who they are.”

Kenya McGuire Johnson, PT, MA, CHC, manager of student, professional and career development for undergraduate studies and the college's director of DEI programming

Social workers enhance the effectiveness of care teams

Recognizing that team-based care can lead to better outcomes for patients, many forward-thinking organizations like Rush are integrating social workers into their multidisciplinary care teams.

Robyn Golden, LCSW, chair of the Department of Social Work at CHS and associate vice president of social work and community health at Rush University Medical Center, says a social worker often takes on the role of an "empathy ambassador" on a care team. "We can help other providers understand the patient within the context of their life and history," she says.

That's exactly what Therese Byrne, LCSW, does as part of a care team for Rush@Home, a program that provides house calls to patients with complex medical needs further complicated by social issues, such as food insecurity, lack of transportation or limited family support.

As a social worker, Byrne helps the two physicians and the nurse practitioner on the Rush@Home team assess the home for factors that can impede a patient's care and develop collaborative solutions with the patient and family. "I see what needs to get done so that patients do not have barriers to their health care," she says.

Rush@Home is just one example of how social workers can add value to the care team by doing what they are uniquely trained to do. "There are so many opportunities for us to partner even closer with our interdisciplinary team members," says Elizabeth Cummings, MSW, LCSW, manager of clinical excellence and training in the Department of Social Work at CHS and the Department of Social Work and Community Health at Rush University Medical Center.

To make sure that future clinicians understand the value of this partnership, social workers help train Rush medical, nursing and allied health students as part of the

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Robyn Golden, LCSW, chair of the Department of Social Work

university's Interprofessional Education (IPE) coursework. Topics covered include administering social determinants of health screenings, responding to trauma disclosures and identifying what motivates clients to change.

This training helps students from multiple disciplines recognize that social workers enhance the effectiveness of the entire team by bringing a holistic view of the patient, says Eve Escalante, MSW, LCSW, manager of program innovation in the Department of Social Work and Community Health at Rush University Medical Center. "The future will be bright if we can have a social worker at every table," Escalante says.



Therese Byrne, LCSW, makes a house call to a patient through Rush@Home.



Rush chaplains have found creative ways to modify observances, such as for Ash Wednesday and the blessing of the hands, and to provide one-on-one pastoral counseling to those in need. Staff featured here include Mackenzie Mahon and Will Roelofs, Kryz Springer, Wesley Sun and Angela Parkinson.

Chaplains provide support to staff during the pandemic

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, health care workers at Rush hospitals and around the country have experienced fear, isolation, anger and exhaustion. But the chaplains at Rush want staff to know that they are not alone during this ongoing crisis.

“One of the things that we try to do, both formally and informally, is help people feel seen and supported in their work,” says Rev. Paige Stephan, DMin, BCC, staff chaplain and assistant professor in the Department of Religion, Health and Human Values at CHS.

Finding new ways to deliver pastoral care

Each day, Rush chaplains help weary nurses regain their focus by offering “mindfulness moments” at the beginning of their meetings. They also check in with staff during regular wellness rounds on the floors and arrange informal one-on-ones with those who need extra support.

Rush chaplains have also found creative ways to modify observances like the blessing of the hands for nurses. Normally, this event would involve touching the hands with oil or water, but the chaplains developed an alternative approach that followed strict safety protocols, using gloves and droppers so nurses could still share the experience.

“One of our greatest gifts is drawing near to people, but the pandemic asks us not to do that,” Stephan says. “We pivoted with the liturgy and words to offer something that was similar but unique to the moment.”

Chaplains have also helped health care workers process grief by holding bereavement rounds to remember patients

who have died during the past week. “We know that avoiding grief doesn’t make it go away,” Stephan says. “But my hope is that our department might offer a space for people to feel the safety and vulnerability of being supported while they express whatever grief lives in them.”

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Rev. Paige Stephan, DMin, BCC,
staff chaplain and assistant professor

Advancing evidence-based pastoral care through research

The past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic have offered many opportunities for pastoral care research, says Clayton Thomason, JD, MDiv, associate professor and chairperson of the Department of Religion, Health and Human Values. At Rush, pastoral care research has been going on for decades, thanks to the work of many faculty including George Fitchett, DMin, PhD, BCC, the department’s director of research and co-principal investigator of Transforming Chaplaincy, a project to promote research literacy to improve patient outcomes.

“Rush has been at the forefront of a transformation of professional chaplaincy into a research-informed profession,” Thomason says. As part of the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program curriculum, students learn how to read research effectively. “We’re training them to be intelligent consumers of research and to not be afraid of statistics,” Thomason says. “Some will go on to gain their MPHs or PhDs and continue to transform the profession.”



Flexible programs build future lab leaders

While many colleges scrambled to take their coursework online at the start of the pandemic, two programs at Rush have been fully online since their inception more than a decade ago: the Master's in Clinical Laboratory Management (CLM) program and the Specialist in Blood Bank (SBB) Technology certificate.

The SBB certificate program and its asynchronous format attracts students from around the globe, including individuals in Rwanda and the Bahamas. The graduate CLM program, which is also asynchronous so students can learn on their schedule, has enrolled students from Europe, Japan and Singapore.

“These programs give students a springboard to go into other things. Opportunities will just present themselves.”

Laurie Gillard, MS, MT(ASCP)^{CM}, SBB^{CM}, associate professor and director of the SBB program

Both programs prepare students for their next level of professional development, says Laurie Gillard, MS, MT(ASCP)^{CM}, SBB^{CM}, associate professor and director of the SBB program. This is especially important as the nation faces the worst blood shortage in more than a decade as well as rising demand for laboratory leaders.

“Our faculty want to give students the skillset, and also the motivation, to realize they can rise above just doing basic lab work,” Gillard says. “With blood banking and with clinical laboratory management, you need to understand regulatory and quality standards, the overall spectrum of laboratory operations and

how to work with medical directors if you are going into leadership. You don't necessarily learn that when you're just on the bench doing the work.”

The programs at Rush cover these important issues. “When students come out, they've got these skills, and they're ready to move into an advanced role,” Gillard says. “These programs give students a springboard to go into other things. Opportunities will just present themselves.”

One 2021 SBB graduate taking advantage of such opportunities is Matthew Hukill, who recently won a leadership award from the Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies (AABB) for a research paper on “Comparison of Two Enzyme Treated Adsorption Techniques: An Adjusted Process to Improve Efficiency and Sensitivity,” which he completed during his time at Rush. He presented

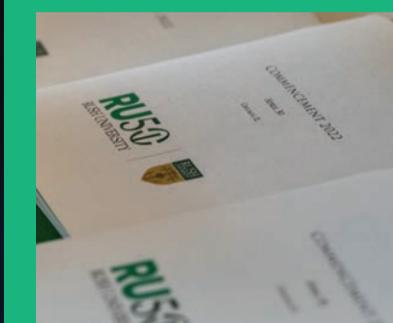
his findings at a recent Illinois Association of Blood Banks meeting, and his paper will be published in *Lab Medicine*.

Hukill credits Gillard for encouraging him to work on the project. “The Rush program helped me take an idea that I had been playing with in my head for several years and actually put it into action,” he says. “The biggest thing I got from the program was a mentor who believed in me and pushed me to put my work out there, which has been absolutely invaluable for my professional growth.”



Matthew Hukill won a leadership award from the Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies (AABB) for a research paper he completed as a Rush student.

Celebrating the CHS 2022 graduates



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