

HEALTH UAMS | College of PROFESSIONS Health Professions

FALL 2021





**COLLEGE OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS
FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER**

**The UAMS College of Health
Professions Mission**

The mission of the UAMS College of Health Professions is to improve the health of culturally diverse populations by:

- Offering education, research and service opportunities for students in the allied health professions
- Providing students with a total educational experience that emphasizes lifelong learning
- Collaborating with other health care professionals to be an innovator in allied health education

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All photos in this newsletter were taken before the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Message from the Dean



When I joined the faculty of the College of Health Professions, it was turning 21. I count myself lucky to be here as dean to celebrate its 50th birthday.

In all that time, I have seen the college grow to have the largest enrollment of the five UAMS colleges and Graduate School, about 1,100 students this semester. We continue to add new programs and expand existing ones.

One of the newest is the Department of Physician Assistant Studies. Recently, the 38 students of the Class of 2021 graduated from it. They have never been needed more than today. During the COVID-19 global pandemic, these new physician assistants acquired the best and latest knowledge of the disease as they begin their careers.

One of the oldest, the Department of Respiratory Care, educates and trains students to become respiratory therapists. I can't think of another profession more needed and as visibly providing care to patients hospitalized with the virus. I can't imagine how dire things would be without them. When the department was founded, the state had only one respiratory therapist.

I can think of many similar examples of how the college is meeting the needs of the state's health care sector. Those are only two of the departments among our many departments and programs, each one equally worthy of the spotlight.

In an earlier message, I expressed hope that with vaccination, society at large and UAMS could return to a pre-pandemic condition. The latest surge in infections may have dimmed that optimistic outlook some. Nevertheless, I am happy to report that with a high level of vaccination at UAMS and other precautions like masking, the college has been able to return to in-person instruction in most of its courses.

That resumption is vital to one of the most significant and nearly unique elements of the college, interdisciplinary collaboration. Unlike other colleges, ours contains such a wide variety of professions and areas of study, from clinical nutrition and genetic counseling to medical sonography and dental hygiene.

Members of our faculty typically have multiple opportunities to encounter new ideas in another field that are applicable to their own, new ideas they might not come across in a less academically diverse college. The college's diversity also fosters interdisciplinary collaborations in research and teaching that have been remarkably fruitful.

Someone once said it is the burden of teachers to see their students grow beyond them. Nevertheless, it is fulfilling and sustaining to see the colleges and universities in which we work expand, do more to advance knowledge and learning, and contribute to the professional work force. That is a deeply satisfying experience because it ultimately means people living longer, healthier lives.

If as William Shakespeare wrote, the "past is prologue," then we and the next generation of educators will continue to see the college thrive and even surprise us with unimagined, new achievements. Now, that is something to look forward to.

Susan Long, Ed.D.
Dean and Professor, College of Health Professions

College of Health Professions Turns 50

By Ben Boulden



For 50 years, the UAMS College of Health Professions has been educating allied health professionals.

In 1971, an academic marriage of five existing UAMS educational programs – dental hygiene, radiologic technology, medical technology, biomedical instrumentation technology and surgical technology – established the School of Health Related Professions, now the College of Health Professions. Fifty years later, the college trains students in 16 diverse, allied health programs, filling a vital need for health care professionals in Arkansas and across the nation.

Allied health professionals make up about 70% of all health care workers in the U.S. An allied health professional is someone who provides specialized healthcare services but isn't a doctor, nurse, dentist or pharmacist. Most allied health professionals also are certified, registered and licensed by a state agency.

Founding Dean Tip Nelms, D.D.S., M.Ed., said in 1996 of those early years, "Just bringing all the health

professions together was a challenge. The programs had been working independently or in the College of Medicine, so we had to get everyone to work together. There was a lot of give and take."

Over the years, the college has grown significantly. In 2021, 16 programs in the college educate students in:

- Audiology
- Clinical Nutrition
- Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Cytotechnology
- Dental Hygiene
- Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Dietetic Internship
- Genetic Counseling
- Medical Laboratory Sciences
- Nuclear Medicine Imaging Sciences
- Occupational Therapy
- Ophthalmic Medical Technology
- Physical Therapy
- Physician Assistant Studies
- Radiologic Imaging Sciences
- Respiratory Care

First Year continued on Page 4

1918

Medical Technology program established in the College of Medicine.

1946

Radiologic (X-ray) Technology program established in the College of Medicine.

1968

Cytotechnology program established in the College of Medicine.

1970

Dietetic Internship Post-Baccalaureate Certificate program established in the College of Medicine.

1971

College of Health Related Professions established on June 4, 1971; Tip C. Nelms, DDS, named first dean.



50 Years Year Continued from Page 3

The college also oversees a dental General Practice Residency, which is a post-doctoral program. In a state without a dental school, the dental residency program brings post-doctoral dental education into the state.

Phyllis Lloyd, UAMS registrar for student records and certification, started work as the college's registrar in 1974.

"I never thought it would grow like it has. I didn't think they could," Lloyd said. "When they started taking programs out of Little Rock and into Texarkana and Fayetteville, things started advancing. They added hospitals for internships and programs, too."

Under Dean Ronald Winters, Ph.D., who succeeded Nelms in 1982, the college also began working with what is now UAMS Regional Campuses to make programs available across the state in several Arkansas cities like Texarkana and Fayetteville. The dean's office had moved from University Tower to the Shorey Building the year before along with the Department of Dental Hygiene.

Computerization of records and processes were non-existent when Lloyd joined the college. She had a typewriter, and programs were scattered around the main campus and at locations off campus to include North Little Rock.

Faxes often were relied on for communication, and recorded video of in-person class instruction sometimes substituted for in-person presentations.

The College of Health Professions was the first UAMS college to pioneer distance education, using recorded CDs, then-rudimentary, online technology and interactive video to reach and teach students throughout Arkansas. The college now has several programs that are 100% online. While

the COVID-19 pandemic was disrupting traditional in-person teaching nationwide, the College of Health Professions was well prepared to make the transition from in-person instruction to online.

"It's a college where everyone knows each other, and there is a friendly, collaborative atmosphere. We work together, we write together and solve problems together. Nobody can do anything by themselves."

Reza Hakkak, Ph.D

In 1984, the college established the Dietetic Internship program in its new Department of Dietetics and Nutrition.

"My experience as a dietetic intern at UAMS was a positive one," said Shannon Hendrix, R.D., L.D. "I think it's a strong internship program. The instruction and clinical experience were very helpful. The UAMS instructors were phenomenal in preparing us for the certification exam in order to become a registered dietitian. I passed the first time."

Today, Hendrix is chief administrator at Arkansas Children's Northwest, and she still stays in touch with instructors and professors like Reza Hakkak, Ph.D, who has been department chair for the last 23 years.

1972

Dietetic Internship Post-Baccalaureate Certificate program receives accreditation.

1973

Nuclear Medicine Technology program established in the College of Health Related Professions.

1974

Communicative Disorders (*subsequently renamed Audiology and Speech Pathology*) master of science degree program established in the College of Health Related Professions.

1979

Total CHRP program enrollment for fall semester reaches 200 students.

1982

Ronald H. Winters, Ph.D. appointed dean of the College of Health Related Professions.

Hakkak in turn feels a bond to the college and the people who make it up.

"I love the college," said Hakkak, who is also the associate dean for research. "It's a college where everyone knows each other, and there is a friendly, collaborative atmosphere. We work together, we write together and solve problems together. Nobody can do anything by themselves."

The college continued to add programs like the Nuclear Medicine Technology program in 1985, Health Information Management in 1994, Ophthalmic Medical Technology in 2000 and the Respiratory Care and Surgical Technology programs which combined to form one department in 2003.

Five departments in 1990 moved into a remodeled building on Elm Street. Lloyd can remember when some classrooms were held in large trailers parked at an on-campus lot. The year of 2009 was a watershed moment for the college when 13 programs moved into renovated facilities on the west side of campus that formerly had housed part of the Arkansas State Hospital.

Existing programs continued to expand, adding more names like Hendrix's to its roster of alumni and educators like Hakkak to its faculty. By 2003, the college had an enrollment of 500 students.

Winters retired in 2011 after more than 28 years leading the college. He was succeeded by Douglas Murphy, Ph.D.

The next year, the college dropped 'Related' from its name and became the College of Health Professions. The old name had been adopted during the college's founding because at the time nursing was considered an allied health profession, and nursing already had its own college at UAMS.

A year later, two milestones were achieved. The UAMS Oral Health Clinic opened on the first floor of Ward Tower and began accepting patients. It also became a venue for the training of dental residents. The clinic is part of the UAMS Center for Dental Education which is housed in the college.

The Physician Assistant Studies department enrolled its first class of students, too.

"As the first group of physician assistant students at UAMS, you are trailblazers who will light the path for future classes to follow," then-UAMS Chancellor Dan Rahn, M.D., said at the first white coat ceremony for the incoming students. "In a time of great changes, our country's health care system needs you more and more every day as demand for care is poised to significantly increase in the years ahead."

The college welcomed the first group of physical therapy students in 2015. This was the first UAMS education program to be solely offered on the Northwest campus. This cohort (who graduated in 2018) achieved a 100% first-time passing rate on the board examination.

On the retirement of Murphy, Susan Long, Ed.D., was appointed interim dean in 2017, then named as his permanent successor in 2018. Long had been a member of the UAMS faculty since 1992 and began serving in 2012 as the college's associate dean for academic affairs.

Several associate degree programs moved from the college in 2018 and 2019 to the University of Arkansas - Pulaski Tech, and UAMS assumed full sponsorship of the Doctor of Audiology and Master of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders program after the dissolution of a

First Year continued on Page 9



1984

Department of Dietetics and Nutrition established with its Dietetic Internship program in the College of Health Related Professions.

1985

Nuclear Medicine Technology program reopens as its own department in the College of Health Related Professions.

1996

Diagnostic Medical Sonography program established in the College of Health Related Professions.

2004

Department of Genetic Counseling and its Genetic Counseling program established in the College of Health Related Professions.

2005

Radiologist Assistant program established in the College of Health Related Professions.



Department of Laboratory Sciences Undergoes Explosive Growth

By Ben Boulden

At 103 years of age, the Department of Laboratory Sciences in the UAMS College of Health Professions

has proven growth is still possible even when more than a century old. The Department of Laboratory Sciences is comprised of the traditional on campus Medical Laboratory Sciences program, the 100% online Medical Laboratory Technician to Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLT-to-MLS) program, and the Cytotechnology program. When Nathan Johnson, Ph.D., settled into his new role as chair of the department in late 2017, 10 students were enrolled in the department's bachelor's degree program —four in the online MLT-to-MLS program

and six in the face-to-face traditional MLS program. Enrollment now exceeds 600, with most of the expansion in the department's online MLT-to-MLS program. Johnson and the existing faculty did some strategic planning to spur the growth and then shared that plan with College of Health Professions Dean Susan Long, Ed.D. "Dr. Long and her team has been fully supportive of efforts to grow. They have been amazing!" Johnson said. "Anything we have needed they've gotten us."

As part of that growth, the department also has doubled the number of faculty it employs and added several adjunct faculty and additional administrative staff. "We have an all-star team, faculty, staff, and support personnel. I helped with the vision and then got out of the way and let them do their magic. It has been impressive to watch," Johnson said.

The on-campus Medical Laboratory Sciences (MLS) program, although considerably smaller, with 28

2009

Total enrollment = 707 students.

2010

UAMS Center for Dental Education was established in the College of Health Related Professions.

2011

Physician Assistant Studies program receives approval from the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

2011

Douglas L. Murphy, Ph.D. appointed as the third dean of the college.

2012

Name of the College of Health Related Professions is changed to the College of Health Professions.

2013

UAMS Oral Health Clinic opens on the first floor of the Ward Tower.



vacant positions. Many jobs in the field sometimes can come with large sign-on bonuses and good salaries, Johnson said. However, many people are not even aware the degree program and the career path even exist.

“COVID-19 has put a spotlight on the laboratory profession,” Cherika Robertson, M.Ed., said. “When you tell someone you’re a medical laboratory scientist, more than likely the average person is not going to really know what you do as one. COVID-19 has highlighted all the people who are doing all of the testing. I think that has helped raise awareness of our profession.” Robertson is a medical laboratory scientist, assistant professor and assistant program director of the on-campus MLS Program. Jason Key, M.Ed., said, “The growth is a culmination of all of our efforts, recruiting success and the critical shortage in labs right now. Word of mouth plays a huge role in the increase of students.” Key is a medical laboratory scientist, assistant professor and assistant program director of MLT-to-MLS online program. An overwhelming proportion of the department’s

online students are already working as certified technicians, but they want to advance in the profession and need a bachelor’s degree to do so. Because of their practical knowledge and experience working in medical laboratories, they don’t need the hands-on training that might be almost impossible online, Johnson said. This makes the UAMS MLT-to-MLS program very attractive.

Most of the on-campus students either have completed prerequisite coursework or already have a bachelor’s degree, and are looking to obtain the training and education to enter the laboratory field. Some of them even already have master’s and doctorate degrees. Most of the online students have years of lab experience, too, but despite having an associate’s degree, they need the bachelor’s degree to qualify for supervisory positions, Robertson said. The Department of Laboratory Sciences also houses the Cytotechnology program. Cytotechnology deals with a different set of specimens than those in the laboratory sciences.

Laboratory Sciences continued on Page 9

new, incoming students this semester, the largest class in 41 years, is especially important because many of the students who graduate will stay in Arkansas and help address the critical workforce shortage of medical laboratory professionals.

Johnson said the online program gives the department the resources to help provide for both the on-campus MLS program and Cytotechnology program. Not only is the Department of Laboratory Sciences more than twice as old as the College of Health Professions, it’s one of the oldest laboratory training programs in the United States. Nationally, laboratory training programs are only producing half of the required graduates to fill

2013

Physician Assistant Studies program enrolls first class.

2014

General Practice Residency program in the Center for Dental Education enrolls first class of dental residents.

2016

Doctor of Occupational Therapy program was approved by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

2017

Douglas L. Murphy, Ph.D. retired after serving 6 years as the dean of the College of Health Professions.

2018

Susan Long, Ed.D. appointed as the fourth dean of the College of Health Professions.

2018

Total enrollment: 616 students.

Former Dietetic Intern, CHP Alum Working as Hospital's Chief Administrator

By Ben Boulden



More than two decades after she completed a dietetics internship in the College of Health Professions, Shannon Hendrix, R.D., L.D., early this year became the chief administrator of Arkansas Children's Northwest in Springdale.

She in part credits her career success to lessons she learned during her internship—lessons of listening and empathy. Hendrix completed her bachelor's degree in dietetics at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, and then began the yearlong dietetics internship at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS). Her first semester was an administrative rotation, while her second rotation was a clinical one. She worked in several central Arkansas hospitals during that academic year. During her internship, Hendrix was assigned to work in food service at one of those area hospitals. She and her fellow students found the food service staff there hard

to engage with until she and her fellow interns tried a new approach. "Working in food service is challenging, period," she said. "We had to find a way to engage with the staff. Working alongside them and learning their day-to-day roles helped earn their respect, and they were more willing to help us, too." After she completed her internship, Hendrix returned to UCA and graduated with a master's degree in dietetics. Eventually, she was promoted into a management role at Arkansas Heart Hospital. There, she did the same thing she had done before as an intern, working alongside the kitchen staff and learning every role including dishwashing, cooking and inventory management. "To gain respect and to have staff follow you as a leader, they want to know you will work beside them," Hendrix said. "In a challenging environment, engagement is really important in getting a job done. It's helped me to be successful in every management job that I have had." The second life lesson she has put into practice is listening. "When you step into an administrative role, I think one of the things that makes you successful is being a great listener, really listening to your team, taking the time to hear their voices and where they are coming from," Hendrix said. She said the feedback from employees she supervises has been overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of her taking the time to listen to them. "You want them to follow you, and earning that respect from the beginning is important in relationship building," Hendrix said. "I learned that during my administrative rotation at UAMS."

Hendrix worked for eight years at Arkansas Children's in Little Rock. While there, she was the clinical nutrition director and vice president of clinical and diagnostic services before being promoted to her new position at Arkansas Children's Northwest. Although it's been more than 20 years since she finished her internship, Hendrix still maintains professional ties with members of the college's faculty and calls them on occasion. She also serves as a preceptor for the college. "The UAMS internship really prepares interns for the working world," Hendrix said. "The instructors at UAMS were phenomenal. My experience at UAMS prepared me extremely well to pass the certification exam to become a registered dietitian."

Instead of blood, urine and other similar specimens, cytotechnologists examine biopsies and assist pathologists in rendering diagnoses. With about eight students each year, the Cytotechnology program hasn't had the exponential growth of the MLS program, but its graduates usually have multiple job offers when they finish and starting salaries of \$80,000 to \$100,000, said Catherine Smith, M.Ed., program director and an assistant professor in the department. In cytotechnology, the instruction is hands-on and face-to-face. Students sometimes sit for hours studying cases and looking at cells through a microscope, Smith said. The program is one of only 20 in the nation. "We haven't had the explosive growth like the MLS online program, probably because of the intensive training students have to have," Smith said. "There is a lot of one-on-one, so we can't support 20 to 30 students each year. However, our top notch curriculum allows us to train nationwide leaders in cytopathology." Smith herself serves on a national accreditation committee for cytotechnology and is a former president of the American Society for Cytotechnology. Despite the lack of public awareness of what medical laboratory science and cytotechnology are, Smith and Johnson both have found teaching their respective subjects to be rewarding.

Before retiring from the Air Force, Johnson headed up the medical laboratories of the Department of Defense.

"I talked to someone the other day who was in the military and getting ready to retire, he said, 'You're the first person who retired from the military who likes their job,'" Johnson recalled. "It's fun to work here. Our team is fantastic and I feel

consortium with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

In January 2020, the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program accepted its first class of students as part of the first joint program between UAMS and the University of Arkansas. The program is housed in Fayetteville on the UA campus and the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus.

"We want to produce students who think and act as authentic occupational therapists," Sherry Muir, Ph.D., OTR/L, department chair said as the first academic year drew to a close. "Therapists need to be able to design innovative interventions for people of all ages who have physical, cognitive, mental and neurological challenges — and that is what we are teaching our students."

Four other programs are also located at UAMS Northwest including bachelor's degree programs in Diagnostic Medical Sonography and Radiologic Imaging Sciences, a master's degree program in Genetic Counseling and a Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

This spring the Speech and Hearing Clinic moved to a newly renovated space in the Education South Building. Also in 2021, the Dental Hygiene Clinic found a fresh new home on the fifth floor of the Freeway Medical Building with 20 separate treatment

rooms, five X-ray rooms and the latest dental equipment and technology.

The Speech and Hearing Education Clinic provides speech, language, literacy, and hearing evaluations and therapies tailored to an individual's needs. The Dental Hygiene Clinic offers routine cleanings and examinations, X-rays, preventative periodontal treatments and sealants.

All services at the clinics are provided by students under the direct supervision of licensed and certified faculty. They provide services at low or no cost to patients.

"It's an exciting development for these programs and the college. The college turns 50 this year, and change and growth have been constants for most of that time. These openings are evidence of that," Long said in March.

Change has been constant in the college's history. In the 1978-1979 academic year, the college had 192 students, and in the 2020-2021 academic year, about 1,100.

"As we celebrate our golden anniversary, it is exciting to look back and see where we've been, even as we look forward to where we are headed," said Long. "I'm proud of what the College of Health Professions has accomplished, and I'm excited about what comes next for us."

2019

UAMS assumes full sponsorship of the Doctor of Audiology and Master of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders programs.

2020

On March 12, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face classes end and clinical placements come to a halt, ushering in a period characterized by unprecedented uncertainty and anxiety for everyone. Our programs continue online learning where appropriate, with in-person interaction saved for classes, labs and clinical.

2021

New Dental Hygiene Clinic opened on the 5th floor of the Freeway Medical Building.

2021

New Speech and Hearing Clinic (Audiology & Speech Pathology programs) opened in the Education South Building.

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Nov. 30, 2021

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This 24-hour event will be held Nov. 30, 2021, and will kick off the holiday season with a celebration of generosity.

Be on the lookout for more information about how you can make a gift to the College of Health Professions during this nationwide giving day.

We hope you'll join us to support the future health care professionals at CHP as they bravely take the first steps toward a career in health care during such a tumultuous time.

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