

‘Increasing rapidly’: COVID case numbers small but rising

BY HELEN ADAMS

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For the first time in a while, the words “increasing rapidly” appear on a weekly update from MUSC’s COVID-19 Epidemiology Intelligence Project. COVID cases in the Charleston area rose 80% compared with the previous week. In Florence, the growth rate hit 191%. And the Midlands saw a 289% increase.

But the numbers those percentages represent are small. The Charleston area had seven cases per day per 100,000 people. Florence: just two per day per 100,000. The Midlands: eight.

“I think there’s a real chance, to a large degree, that we’re kind of flying into the dark,” said Michael Sweat, Ph.D. He leads MUSC’s COVID tracking team. He’s also a professor in the College of Medicine at MUSC, an adjunct professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and a former research scientist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“I can’t stress enough that these are clearly radical undercounts that we’re looking at nowadays. The vast majority of people are testing with home test kits. But I really feel like the growth rate continues to tell you a lot. Some people go on to get a PCR to confirm the home test or if they’re having symptoms. It’s probably a fairly consistent rate. So if the growth rate is up, it tells you something is happening,” Sweat said.

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Photo Provided

MUSC Health’s Dr. Aundrea E. Loftley will address graduates at the North Charleston Coliseum.

Medical alumna, health disparities champion to speak at May 21 Commencement

BY CINDY ABOLE

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Aundrea E. Loftley, M.D., an MUSC College of Medicine alumna and advocate for health disparities related to diabetes and other endocrine disorders, will address the graduating class of 2022 during MUSC’s 193rd Commencement on May 21.

The Commencement ceremony will take place at 10 a.m. at the North Charleston Coliseum, 5001 Coliseum Drive in North Charleston.

Approximately 726 candidates are expected to receive their degrees from MUSC’s six colleges: Dental Medicine, Graduate Studies, Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy.

Loftley was nominated to serve as Commencement speaker by students due to her strong passion and dedication to teaching and precepting. Her nomination was later approved by members of the Commencement Committee as well as MUSC leadership.

Graduating pharmacy student

and MUSC Student Government Association president Elizabeth Davis serves on this year’s Commencement Committee and was among many students who supported Loftley’s nomination to address the graduating class.

“We are very excited and pleased to have such a strong MUSC figure speak at Commencement,” she said.

Originally from Columbia, South Carolina, Loftley is an assistant professor of medicine and endocrinology and serves as vice

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A polymerase chain reaction test, or PCR, is what you get if you go to a COVID testing site and your sample is sent to a lab. Your result becomes part of the state’s official tally. If you test for COVID at home, of course, state health officials don’t know about it.

So Sweat is advocating for an additional way of monitoring COVID. “I do think the one thing that we should be doing is wastewater testing for the COVID-19 virus. It would give us early detection, but it’s got to be done regularly, and the data has to be released.”

A spokesman for the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control said in an email that the agency has been working on building the capacity for wastewater testing and analysis at the Public Health Laboratory and within the Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology as part of

Septima P. Clark Poetry Contest and Awards Ceremony May 6

Celebrate the poetic achievements of children and youth from across South Carolina and the legacy of a great Charlestonian at the 2022 MUSC Septima P. Clark Poetry Contest and Awards Ceremony at 6 p.m., Friday, May 6, MUSC Drug Discovery Auditorium or via Zoom.

Keynote remarks will be shared by Marcus Amaker, Charleston’s first poet laureate. Register at <https://musc.libguides.com/scpoetrycontest>.

the National Wastewater Surveillance System. He also noted that severe cases of COVID-19 – those that result in hospitalizations and deaths – remain on the decline.

In the meantime, Sweat continues to predict another surge this summer. “I just don’t know how big it’s going to be. I’d say at worst, it may be similar to what Delta looked like in terms of the number of infections, but we will likely have fewer people being hospitalized than we saw with the Delta wave.” That Delta wave hit last September. Its peak, while the highest of the pandemic at the time, was much smaller than the Omicron wave that would follow and peak in mid-January 2022.

At best, Sweat said the current uptick could peter out. “That has happened in the past. But normally, with a new variant, that doesn’t happen. You tend to see it play out. And there are a lot of people not boosted, so their immunity is kind of weak. So it’s complicated.”

Omicron subvariants have caused cases to rise across most of the United States. But the national COVID death rate is falling. “I think it’s likely it won’t overwhelm the hospitals like before,” Sweat said. “I think most people are going to have mild cases. There’s a lot of immunity out there.”

But immunity wanes, even from vaccination. “About 60% of people who got two doses did not go on to get the third, which produces a profound improvement in your ability to not get seriously ill. Getting the booster is really important. I would not wait to do that. Now’s the time.”

President’s
Blog

CUT TO THE CHASE



Farewell Endurance

BY DAVID J. COLE

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On March 5, the Endurance, a 1914 expeditionary ship carrying celebrated polar explorer Ernest Shackleton and his crew, was discovered beneath the frigid Antarctic ice. Incredibly, the subzero waters kept the shipwreck so well intact that images taken underwater show clearly the ship’s name above the stern, among many other amazing details.

You may recall in one of my first blog posts that I wrote about how Shackleton’s mission, when judged by its initial goals, was a colossal failure, yet, after two harrowing and massively challenging years, Shackleton and all 28 of his crew returned home alive. The overall story is a great reminder that disaster, or multiple disasters, can be overcome when it strikes again and again. At the time, I likened it to the need for effective leadership and teamwork during the COVID pandemic.

After almost 100 years of others trying to locate the wreckage, the captain, crew and research team aboard the Endurance22 swiftly accomplished in only two weeks what others dedicated lifetimes to finding. An amazing achievement enabled by today’s technology.

The ship’s discovery has me thinking in a slightly different direction – about transformation. In addition to finding

the Endurance actually intact, the most remarkable part about the finding is what was not in the subzero waters awaiting discovery: the remains of Ernest Shackleton and his crew.

As a group, they were forced to leave, under very dire circumstances, the one entity that had defined their lives, enabled their future successes and represented their only known means of return to civilization. And yet it was clear to them, as the ship was slowly being crushed by the unrelenting sheets of ice, that staying onboard was not an option. And as a result, they embarked on their only path forward for survival.

In many ways, their decision to abandon ship and chart a new path forward was a simple one because they were faced with an immediate issue that demanded change, with looming consequences readily apparent. The case for change is rarely so apparent.

I have spoken and written many times about our imperative to transform – to become more fully a culture of innovation, to flip the script on health care delivery with our patients at its epicenter and doing so by embracing a future fully enabled by digital transformation.

MUSC has done remarkable things over the past five years that have set us clearly on a path of growth, transformation and change – our



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Innovation Week showcases creative ideas from faculty, students

By REECE FUNDERBURK

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"The value of an idea lies in the using of it," said Thomas Edison, discussing the impact of innovation.

Last week's Innovation Week at MUSC built on that concept, investing over \$500,000 in new projects across the enterprise and launching some of its brightest and most innovative ideas from faculty members and students.

During a return to a live format, MUSC's Office of Innovation funded 25 new projects and awarded a total of \$521,000. Overall, 11 live sessions, two pitch sessions, three Shark Tanks and a Stress Less Bash, complete with live music, art therapy and even puppies, were held in person throughout the week. Between the downtown Charleston campus and MUSC's regional hospitals, 26 videos were produced to be viewed on demand by attendees.

The week's events started on Monday with the announcement of the recipients of the Blue Sky Award. Developed as a partnership between the Office of Innovation and Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR), two winning research projects were awarded at the Innovation Week kickoff event. The award recognizes innovative, promising projects that are rooted in collaboration between researchers across MUSC colleges and provides \$100,000 per year for two years to aid in preparing the project for future funding opportunities.

Midweek, in collaboration with the Office of the Provost, the inaugural class of Education Innovation Advocates was announced. This group of eight will include at least one faculty member from each of the colleges and representatives from Academic Affairs and MUSC Libraries. The advocates are expected to receive \$3,000 each for a project to help to foster a culture of innovation within their respective areas.

"The Education Innovation Advocate program is a unique and exciting opportunity for our faculty to grow education innovation in the six colleges

and the Academic Affairs Faculty," said Gigi Smith, Ph.D. "The advocates will have meetings with key MUSC groups across campus to promote collaboration and further support for faculty education innovation."

To wrap up the week, MUSC's version of "Shark Tank" returned to its live format after being hosted online for the last two years. This was also its first year at MUSC Health's regional hospitals. The Charleston session saw MUSC's top leadership bite on three projects from employees and faculty, each of whom received \$15,000 on Thursday. Meanwhile, the combined sessions of Florence/Marion and Lancaster/Chester each awarded \$15,000 to their own top projects.

Chief innovation officer Jesse Goodwin, Ph.D., said it was good to see the innovators in person this year after two years of virtual presentations, due to the pandemic, and touted the importance of innovating. "I think it's really important to build the culture where we're not feeling stuck with problems but one in which we're saying, 'Well, let's look at this as an opportunity to really problem solve,'" she said. In total, more than \$80,000 will be distributed to the winners and selected other pitches.

With Innovation Week 2022 successfully in the rear view, innovators can go ahead and mark their calendars for next year, as Innovation Week 2023 is already set to return April 24 through 28.

For a full breakdown of the week's awards, see below.

Blue Sky (\$200,000) – Monday

Funded by the VPR and the Office of Innovation, each of these projects received \$100,000 in funding.

Donna Roberts, M.D., and Jill Harvey, Ph.D.: "A Feasibility Study of the Incorporation of a Portable MRI in a Telemedicine-Equipped Ambulance for Field Triage of Stroke Patients."

Baerbel Rohrer, Ph.D., and Andrew Jakymiw, Ph.D.: "Delivery of mtDNA via Nanoparticles for Restoration of Tissue Homeostasis in Age-Related Macular Degeneration."



Photo by Nancy Lemon Carney

Shark Tank competitions were among the many events that celebrated innovation at MUSC.

Student Pitch (\$2,500) – Monday

Sponsored by the Office of Innovation, Benjamin Ellison, James McGinnis and Reece Blackwood, faculty advisor Adam Tanious, M.D., won the Student Pitch Competition and their "Endovascular Organizer" was awarded \$2,500.

COM Community Engagement Grant (\$15,000) – Tuesday

Focused on a community-focused initiative, Jessica Tarleton, M.D., and team received \$15,000 to fund their project titled "The Lowcountry Doula Initiative."

AI (\$100,000) – Wednesday

Sponsored by the AI Hub, a total of \$100,000 was awarded to the following MUSC and Clemson faculty members for their joint projects:

George Magrath, M.D., (MUSC) and Feng Luo, Ph.D., (Clemson): "Computer-assisted Classification and Screening of Retinal Optical Coherence Tomography Images."

Xinyi Li, Ph.D., (Clemson) and Stephen Ethier, Ph.D., (MUSC): "AI Analysis of Cancer Cell Line Drug Sensitivity to Predict Targeted Drug

Sensitivity in Patients."

Jeremy Gilbert, Ph.D., (Clemson/MUSC) and Rahul Rai, Ph.D., (Clemson): "AI for Scanning Electron Micrograph Segmentation."

Fatemeh Afghah, Ph.D., (Clemson) and Mohamed Elshazly, M.D., (MUSC): "AI Based Heart Monitoring Systems."

Liangjiang Wang, Ph.D., (Clemson) and Stefano Berto, Ph.D., (MUSC): "Machine Learning Models for Molecular Neuroscience Research."

Shark Tanks (\$80,000) – Wednesday and Thursday

Florence:

The project "Socializer, Teacher, Evaluator, Mentor (STEM) Preceptorship", was the winner at the Florence and Marion divisions' Shark Tank, and the team received \$15,000 to advance its idea. Team members included: Ashley Hudson, R.N.; Lathrum Johnson R.N.; and Michelle Thompson, R.N.

Lancaster:

The project "Enhancing Throughput by Creating a Behavioral Crisis Team," was the winner at the Lancaster and

See INNOVATION on page 7

Presidential Scholars' Day features ideas, leadership

BY HEATHER N. HOLMES

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On Tuesday, April 19, the Raymond S. Greenberg Presidential Scholars Program held its annual Scholars' Day event. While each year's presentations are special, this year seemed to be even more so because it was the first time in two years that an in-person event was held. For some in attendance, it was their first time being together since the pandemic began.

MUSC President David Cole, M.D., FACS, kicked off the event with a warm greeting and a special message to the scholars. He said the pandemic taught us many things but perhaps the most important being that there is a lot of opportunity for growth. He praised the students as being the ones who will soon be out making those changes, and he was excited that the lessons learned during the pandemic can be taken with them into their careers as future health care providers and leaders.

This year, there were 24 students who participated in the program, and they worked in four groups of six to address this year's themes: innovation, impact, influence and inclusion.

Each team coordinated panel presentations with speakers around its theme and surveyed the participants about the learning objectives. Nearly every presentation showed increased understanding of the topics at hand post-presentation.

A light reception followed the presentation and gave students and faculty members a chance to mingle and talk about their projects as well as their future plans.

Donna Reinbeck, Ph.D., took over leadership of the program this year and led the scholars through a tumultuous year of uncertainty. As the pandemic began to see slight improvements, and the campus began to reinstate in-person events, Reinbeck worked diligently to make sure everyone's needs were met for those who attended in person as well

as for those who still chose to attend remotely. Everyone is looking forward to next year's cohort and hopefully being able to move back into fully in-person events.

On behalf of the faculty scholars, we offer many thanks to our student scholars who have endured many challenges over the past two years but have remained committed to the work of the program. Their resilience and ability to adapt with little to no notice is a true testament to the excellent leaders they will become as their careers develop.

Each team prepared a brief overview of their projects.

❑ Team 1: Innovation

Reagan Owens, Ann Collins Josey, Kathryn Collins, Ify Okonkwo, Francisca Onyike and Nate Oberholtzer

OneMUSC defines innovation as addressing a problem or opportunity through a creative solution with the purpose of changing what is possible in organizational and operational effectiveness. As we brainstormed different ways in which people utilize innovation on our campus, we decided together that our presentation would be focused on the new partnership between MUSC and Helix, which is an initiative in South Carolina that aims to improve health care outcomes by integrating genomics into clinical care and research.

We were fortunate enough to be able to host four panelists who spoke on behalf of MUSC and Helix and elaborated on this groundbreaking program. This project's intention is to overcome some previous barriers in this area, including access to care and availability of this technology. These reports allow patients and providers to develop personalized health care plans; this innovative idea could have enormous implications in the field of preventative medicine. According to our Poll Everywhere results from our fellow presidential scholars, most agree that genetic testing is currently lacking in S.C., and that population genomics can be used



Photo Provided

Members of the Presidential Scholars Innovation Team present details about OneMUSC and the partnership between MUSC and Helix that integrates genomics, clinical care and research.

as a tool for improving population health in the state.

❑ Team 2: Impact

Caroline Gable, Katherine Flynn, Nick Schuster, Eve Bahler, Jamila Labee and Hiral Patel

Our project's objective was to highlight one of MUSC's main pillars: impact. We wanted to foster a dialogue as to how a worthwhile impact can be achieved at a program and population level through individual and community interactions. We introduced two speakers, Michael Cuenin, D.M.D., and Quenton Tompkins, who were able to illustrate and define what it means to be a leader. These presenters also introduced many different leadership styles to our audience, perhaps allowing those in attendance to identify with one certain type of leadership versus another.

Our speakers also discussed how applying leadership principles and playing an active role in local initiatives can ultimately create ripple effects in our community, leading to positive and substantial change. Furthermore, these principles would help to establish a foundation for future generations of leaders, paving the way for a recurrent cycle of change, growth and advancement. Our presentation allowed the audience to

listen, engage and communicate with each other, all the while forging a new group of leaders who are sure to make an impactful change in their respective communities.

❑ Team 3: Influence

Christina Kingsley, Marquise Snipes, Gina Arconti, Sarah Lorick, Kenjorie Ware and Brande'a Hardie

Community influence is a two-way street. First, it is instrumental in shaping health care providers' perceptions of themselves, and secondly, it is a quality that providers can possess — a way by which they impact those around them to have positive health care outcomes.

We had two speakers, each exhibiting one of the aforementioned examples. Our first speaker, Jimmy Pruitt, Pharm.D., described the impact that his community, specifically his environment and individuals around him, shaped his career path as an emergency pharmacist and further, an advocate for others from similar backgrounds to succeed in health care professions. Our second panelist, Father to Father Inc., exhibited how providing economic, educational and health care resources can have a positive influence on those around them to improve outcomes for those whom they serve. All in all, our group was able to

MEET BROOKE

**Brooke Floyd, R.N.**

Department; Years at MUSC *MUSC Health Marion Medical Center–ED; 2.5 years*

How are you changing what's possible at MUSC *By providing excellent care, education and intervention to each of my patients in accordance to the most up-to-date practices and in spite of any obstacles along the way*

Family and pets *Husband, Kyle; twin sons, Carter and Miles, 10; son, Roman, 4; and cat, Asher*

First thing you notice about a person *In the ER, we rely on a fast assessment of body language sometimes, and because of this, body language is usually the first thing I notice.*

Something you've accomplished and are proud of *In my 2.5 years of nursing, I'm proud to receive the peer elected "Rookie Nurse of the Year" award in the first year; an NAACP Heroic award after a mass trauma event in the ER in my second year as a nurse; and the DAISY Award in 2022, all while surviving a pandemic.*

Favorite quote *"My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor and some style." – Maya Angelou*

Nurses Week Events

MUSC Health Charleston Division

May 6-12, 2022

You Make a Difference

Wellness

6:00 am - Sunrise Yoga, Wellness Center rooftop
 7:30 am - Pilates mat class, Wellness Center
 Lunch time - Meal deals on the Greenway
 11:00 am to 3:00 pm - Bike share demo, registration and helmet giveaway, field next to Urban Farm
 12:00 pm - Fleet Feet shoes, socks demo and foot evaluation, Wellness Center
 5:00 pm - Group cycling class, Wellness Center
 7:00 pm - Charleston Battery Nurses Night
 7:05 pm - Charleston Riverdogs Nurses Night
 Urban Farm and Arts in Healing events all day!

Breakfast

6:15 am to 8:15 am - Leader Rounding and Breakfast grab-and-go
 Wear your favorite pajama tops

Unit Celebration

Decorate your unit, and enjoy a potluck meal with dishes from across the globe!
 7:05 pm - Charleston Riverdogs Family Sunday

Recognition Day

7:30 am - DAISY Team Celebration, DAISY Garden
 11:00 am - Nurse of the Year Ceremony, St. Lukes Chapel
 2:00 pm - DAISY Leader Celebration, DAISY Garden

Education

Nursing Annual Report Unveiling
 7:30 am - Nursing Grand Rounds: Incivility, SJCH 7010 Auditorium (or teams), Breakfast provided
 12:30 pm - Nursing Grand Rounds: Incivility, 2 West Amphitheater (or teams), Lunch provided
 9:30 am and 9:30 pm - Blessing of the Hands, Main/ART chapels, 4th floors and 10:30 am SJCH chapel, 7th floor

Ice Cream Social

Unit decorating contest, and dress in your favorite holiday outfits!
 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Leader Rounding and Ice Cream
 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm - Leader Rounding and Ice Cream

Florence Nightingale's Birthday

6:45 am to 8:30 am - Leader Rounding, Coffee and Cupcake cart
 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm - Celebration of Wisdom Reception, Drug Discovery Building Lobby
 9:30 am and 9:30 pm - Blessing of the Hands, Main/ART chapels, 4th floors and 10:30 am SJCH chapel, 7th floor

Scavenger Hunt - entire week, submit photos, for a chance to win prizes

For detailed information: musc.edu/medcenter/nursing/homepage/index.htm
 Questions? Contact Jennifer Gowder at gowderj@musc.edu

Home visiting program spends a day at the farm

By LESLIE CANTU
cantul@musc.edu

As Germaine Jenkins confidently chomped on a weedy-looking plant’s stem and flowers, a group of moms and dads tentatively followed her lead. It tasted like broccoli – which made sense, since the plant was a broccoli that had bolted, growing tall stems and delicate yellow flowers. Most gardeners work hard to prevent bolting, but Jenkins allows this natural process at Fresh Future Farm in North Charleston, since this is what produces seeds for next year’s crop.

In addition to the broccoli, the parents got to taste borage and several types of mint as they toured the farm, which Jenkins established in 2014 on the grounds of the old Chicora Elementary School, one block off of Rivers Avenue.

“There was nothing here in 2014 but grass,” Jenkins told the group. “And fire ants.”

The parents were part of the nationwide Healthy Families America program, which is run locally by MUSC Children’s Health. It’s a voluntary home-visiting program with the goal of preventing child abuse and neglect.

Pediatrician Luke Edmondson, M.D., oversees the grant that funds MUSC’s program. It’s something he wishes he could offer to every new mother, but funding limitations mean it’s restricted to children considered at risk because of the young age of the mother, low education levels, poverty, drug or alcohol abuse, lack of social support or past Department of Social Services involvement.

Family support specialists make regular visits to each family’s home,



Photo by Sarah Pack
Staffers, board members and program participants listen as Germaine Jenkins shows how easy it is to grow mountain mint.

where they talk about child development milestones; offer ideas for activities; and help the families to access resources for food, housing, education, child care or other needs. Many of the families are immigrants from Mexico or Central America, so language and cultural education is also a component.

The pandemic was particularly challenging to the program’s typical operations. Home visits were replaced by virtual visits. The family support

See **FARM** on page 11

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INSPECTIONS

INNOVATION *Continued from Page Three*

Chester divisions' Shark Tank, and the team received \$15,000 to advance it's idea. Team members included: Keia Hewitt M.D.; Camille Filoromo, Ph.D., R.N.; Scott Broome; Richard Warrin; Portia Brown; Patsy Hawkins; Kelly Cauthen; Cody Johnson, R.N.; and Angela Mackey.

The Lancaster and Chester divisions also selected the project "Creating Nursing Workflow Efficiency Through Kanban Methodology in the ED" to receive \$5,000 in funding to advance their idea. Team members included: Camille Filoromo, Ph.D., R.N.; Aruna Anand; and Janeen Rawlings R.N. Charleston:

In Charleston, each of these three projects were chosen as \$15,000 winners:

Clinical care: "Automation of Claims Attachment." Project team: Dan O'Donnell, Dianna Pelay, Diane Story, Franco Cardillo, Lynn Waters, Cathy Dickey, Megan Cecutti, Patricia Jenkins, Kimberly Curry, Dan Darling, Carlton Hawkes, Pam Helms, Sabrina Holloway,



Photo by Nancy Carney Lemon

Puppies helped to take the edge off any stress during Innovation Week.

Shalonda Holmes, Angela Malphrus, Cheryl McWilliams, Leanne Shattuck and Tisa Whack.

Education: "Innovative Virtual Global Health Program for Nursing Student." Project team: Suparna Qanungo, Ph.D.;

Courtney Soll; Kate Ague-Kneeland; Kezhia Newman; Madison Bynum; Rachel Nichols; Saddie Sofia; Catherine O. Durham, DNP; Sharon L. Kozachik, Ph.D., R.N.; Kathleen Ellis; Jessica Southern, R.N.; and College of Nursing

Dean Linda S. Weglicki, Ph.D., R.N.

Research: AppBuilder: a novel content management system to simplify app development, Project team: Jessica Chandler; Tonya Hazelton; Jonathon Tindell; Bernie Jansen; Les Lenert, M.D.; and Kenneth Ruggiero, Ph.D.

MUSC-Siemens Joint project grant (\$50,000)

Maria Spampinato, M.D., was awarded the co-sponsored MUSC-Siemens Photon CT project grant to study how CT angiography plays a key role in the noninvasive evaluation of cerebrovascular disease in acute stroke and stroke prevention. She will receive \$50,000 to pursue her work.

Entrepreneurial Sciences in Cancer Award (\$50,000)

Jointly funded by Hollings Cancer Center and the Office of Innovation, Philip Howe, M.D., received \$50,000 to fund his research in the role that the protein ARIH1 plays in breast tumor metastasis and investigation into novel ways to generate small molecule inhibitors.



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Employee – Pam Knox
OurDay Change Champion and business administrator, Office of the Provost

What is the biggest challenge with the implementation of OurDay?

Our sheer size as a large organization with different policies and procedures creates challenges for the implementation of a new platform like OurDay; however, once the platform is built, we will be able to handle those differences more efficiently, ultimately creating more consistency and unification. Antiquated systems will be replaced, and we will finally have integration of the day-to-day HR and financial programs that are used across the enterprise.

For more information or if you have questions about OurDay, visit <https://horseshoe.musc.edu/everyone/ourday> or email ourdayquestions@musc.edu.

Editor's note: OurDay Change Champions are part of a group of 50+ MUSC employees from across the enterprise who have volunteered to advocate for the new platform and share information to their teams.



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Retiring faculty members come together to create endowed PT scholarship

BY JEFF VERVER

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When the familiar strains of a Beatles song wafted down the hallway, everyone knew that David Morrisette was working in his office. It was a signature moment for the friends and colleagues who worked together in the Division of Physical Therapy.

From memories like this of finding joy in teaching and collaborating, a group of five retiring faculty members decided to make their swansongs a resounding statement for future physical therapy (PT) students. Collectively, they created the Come Together Physical Therapy Endowed Scholarship.

"The Fab Five," as they like to call themselves – in deference to the Beatles – came up with the idea in the middle of 2021. Sandra Brotherton, PT, Ph.D.; Debora Brown, PT, DPT; David Morrisette, PT, Ph.D.; David Sword, PT, DPT; and Holly Wise, PT, Ph.D., worked together in the division for decades and knew they would be retiring around the same time. The idea for the scholarship came about during one of their many conversations about mitigating the impact of their retirements on the PT program.

As for the scholarship's name, that was an easy decision. "Come Together" is the lead song on the Beatles' 1969 Abbey Road album. "Most everyone knows how much Dave loves music," shared Brown. "One of his favorite groups is the Beatles, and he requested a picture of the faculty retiring in 2021 in our version of the 'Abbey Road' sidewalk pose for fun. The rest is history!"

With their contributions pledged and collected, the College of Health Professions (CHP) established the endowment with the hope of it becoming the centerpiece scholarship for the PT program.

For years, the five faculty members had contributed to the existing PT scholarship but desired to make a bigger impact on students. "I have donated annually to support the PT scholarship for nearly 20 years," said Morrisette. "I remember having students in the

program who lived on peanut butter and crackers for weeks at a time. I have received messages from graduates about the burden of loan payments, thinking we cannot recruit people who would be really good physical therapists because they cannot afford to attend graduate school or live in Charleston."

So, instead of competing for donations with the existing PT scholarship, the CHP Development team suggested combining the two. In doing so, the newly established scholarship grows exponentially through the endowment and will eventually expand to offer multiple awards to multiple students.

"My long-term desire is to be able to fund as many scholarships as possible," shared Brotherton. "Through my role as the admissions coordinator for the Doctor of Physical Therapy program, I observed desirable candidates for our program decline offers for admission in favor of a university that was able to provide financial assistance through endowed scholarships. These factors combined increased my desire to contribute in a way that would benefit students now."

The scholarship will provide a \$2,000 annual award for a CHP physical therapy student to use toward tuition. Interested students must apply for consideration. Awardees are selected by the CHP Scholarship Committee based on academic performance and financial need.

"We hope creating this scholarship will allow some of the long-term collegiality and professional commitment to be felt not only by the recipients but the entire student body as a whole," Brown said. "It represents a commitment to them and the physical therapy profession at large!"

While their general sentiment was the same in creating the scholarship, each faculty member had a personal inspiration for giving. Wise was inspired by her grandfather, an immigrant who loved the United States and was appreciative of the opportunities given to him here. He founded his own company and believed in giving back. She used Merck stock given to her by her grandparents more than 30 years ago to



Photo by Anne Herford

College of Health Professions retiring faculty Drs. Debora Brown, from left, David Morrisette, Holly Wise, David Sword and Sandra Brotherton.

"We hope creating this scholarship will allow some of the long-term collegiality and professional commitment to be felt not only by the recipients but the entire student body as a whole."

Debora Brown, PT, DPT

fund her portion of the scholarship. "My grandparents would be happy to see their Merck stock used for the Come Together Physical Therapy Endowed Scholarship,"

she said.

The success and continued growth of the scholarship are very important to "the Fab Five," not for themselves but for students. "I hate to think of potential students not being able to realize their dream of becoming a PT due to the lack of financial resources. This scholarship provides the opportunity to make that dream happen," said Sword.

They hope that the award will relieve some of the financial stress of rising education costs and help students to recognize the importance of service and the value of giving back to assist others. Morrisette said he hopes that recipients will put their educations to good use, help people and have very productive careers. "And in turn, support something like this once they get financial stability."

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SPEAKER *Continued from Page One*

chair for diversity and inclusion in the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolic Diseases in the Department of Medicine. She is a graduate of the College of Charleston and went on to complete her medical school training in 2010, her internal medicine residency in 2013 and an endocrinology fellowship in 2015, all at MUSC.

Upon completing her fellowship, Loftley established the first outpatient endocrinology practice for McLeod Physician Associates at McLeod Regional Medical Center in Florence. Board certified in internal medicine and endocrinology, she previously worked as the area health education center physician preceptor and residency program physician preceptor for McLeod Regional Medical Center.

In 2018, she returned to MUSC and the adult clinical services team in the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolic Diseases. Loftley is a master clinical skills teacher for the College of Medicine and associate program director for the internal medicine residency program. In 2019, she was part of a clinical team awarded a \$1.28 million Duke Endowment grant to create a joint endocrine and obstetric clinic model to improve health outcomes for pregnant mothers diagnosed with diabetes. Combining her clinical work, community outreach interests and educational



Photo by Anne Thompson

In 2021, MUSC President David Cole addresses graduates and guests at one of two Commencement ceremonies held at the North Charleston Coliseum. The 2022 Commencement will be a single ceremony on May 21.

experiences led Loftley to be named vice chair for diversity in the Department of Medicine in 2021.

Loftley is an active member in several professional, scientific and national societies, including the Academy of Medical Educators, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, the Endocrine Society and the American Medical Association. Locally, she is a member of the Diabetes Initiative of South Carolina and Diabetes Free S.C. as well as an academic editor for the Journal of Diabetes and Clinical Research. Among other honors, Loftley was awarded an Excellence in Healthcare Top Performer Award by Professional Research Consultants.

In addition to Loftley’s address, two South Carolina state representatives will receive honorary degrees during the May 21 ceremony.

□ Rep. William G. “Bill” Herbkersman (District 118), an eco-developer and community leader who collaborated to provide COVID-19 testing and vaccination statewide, for his continued support to elevate cancer care in South Carolina: Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa.

□ Rep. J. Gary Simrill (District 46), S.C. House majority leader and an advocate for South Carolina colleges and universities serving on the Ways and Means Higher Education Subcommittee: Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa.

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WORD SEARCH

SPRING SEASON
This is the word search puzzle for the third week of April.
Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

- WORDS**
- | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| AERODYNAMIC | CHAMOIS | FREESTYLE |
| BIBS | COG | HANDLEBARS |
| BIKING | CRANKSET | LEVER |
| BRAKES | CYCLING | MOUNTAIN |
| BREAKAWAY | DERAILLEUR | PEDAL |
| CADENCE | ENDURANCE | RACES |
| CASSETTE | FORK | SPROCKETS |
| CHAIN | FRAME | TRIATHLON |

B	M	O	V	Y	L	G	S	V	W	K	N	G	K	O	C	U	R	O	M
G	B	P	C	E	L	L	T	V	T	N	S	A	L	T	N	A	A	W	C
P	A	V	F	L	R	G	E	H	I	R	G	I	T	L	C	T	K	E	A
E	P	W	V	O	E	R	K	W	A	P	U	O	O	E	Y	F	K	C	S
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I	A	M	L	B	N	V	D	A	P	U	Y	S	W	I	C	O	D	B	O
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T	O	P	H	L	H	D	I	M	B	S	C	C	I	C	T	C	C	O	G
H	N	I	Y	C	D	C	F	M	C	N	I	A	T	N	U	O	M	R	R

SCHOLARS *Continued from Page Four*

overcome professional boundaries and work collaboratively to discern how to distinguish the community influences in our lives as well as how to be a positive influence in order to improve quality of care to our patients in the future.

Team 4: Inclusion

Jessica Zielinski, Chase Huston, Ann Ludlow, Almeera Lateef and Jason Stroud

The theme for our Presidential Scholars Program presentation was "Inclusion." The goal for our presentation was to discuss inclusion through the lens of rural health care disparities in South Carolina. Additionally, we were interested in understanding how telehealth is or is

not addressing this gap in health care services. Sabra Slaughter, Ph.D., and former MUSC associate chief medical information officer David McSwain, M.D., spoke on a panel during our presentation to discuss these ideas.

Some of the key takeaways were that there is a need to look for ways to sustain the progress made in telemedicine and demonstrate efficacy of hybrid telehealth models, and that the prominent drivers of health care disparity are income and location. Our audience learned about the nature of health care disparities in S.C., and that further work is needed to improve telehealth equity. Collectively, our conversation brought attention to the ongoing work needed to address health care disparities in our state and a perspective on how telehealth



Photo Provided

MUSC President David Cole congratulates Jason Stroud from the inclusion team for his team's presentation about health care disparities.

stands to tackle such issues. Work across all disciplines in health care will

undoubtedly play a role in equitable and inclusive health care moving forward.

CHASE *Continued from Page Two*

purpose best described by OneMUSC's statement of strategic intent: to be a preeminent and innovative academic health system. I believe that these past several years, highlighted by all things COVID, will be viewed as critical milestones in our history as an organization. We have successfully done three things simultaneously as an enterprise – provided care and leadership through COVID; continued our day jobs as a leading academic health system; and, remarkably, charted our course for the future rather than sitting in a state of stasis induced by COVID crisis response. These truths make me very proud of our organization; I'm not sure many institutions can claim the same progress.

I do not mean to imply that any of this is, or will be, easy. Charting a course for the future is a difficult thing to embark upon as an enterprise because success requires culture change. This is more than a willingness to change but real and meaningful actions that place us on this path. And ironically, the case for change is not quite as in our faces as the sound of the ship's hull cracking – although, it's equally as real

"Difficulties are just things to overcome, after all," Shackleton said. A challenging reality of facing change is the willingness to leave our collective

comfort zone (i.e., the deck of the ship) and not only move forward but embrace the unknown (moving through the ice floes) with the certainty and knowledge that together we can and will succeed (return to a new life and future beyond Antarctica). We cannot afford to go down with the ship – the embodiment of the "way we've always done it" – or stay in some form of suspended animation, eventually becoming irrelevant.

Shackleton knew that to stand still

was to perish. "I chose life over death for myself and my friends... I believe it is in our nature to explore, to reach out into the unknown. The only true failure would be not to explore at all," he said. As we continue to explore what lies beyond our institutional horizon, we must leave behind the vestiges of our past, our own Endurance, to be discovered as a unique relic on the bottom of the Southern Ocean.

Farewell Endurance.

FARM *Continued from Page Six*

specialists might swing by a family's home to drop off food or diapers on the doorstep. But Edmondson was surprised and pleased that families didn't give up on the program during that time. Most remained engaged.

And on this beautiful blue-sky day, the families gathered together for a bit of community bonding and a bit of learning about organic gardening and nutrition.

The event was held to mark Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Jenkins, who sits on the local Healthy Families America community advisory board, shared some of her personal story – how she arrived in Charleston as a single mother with a 3-year-old and 18-month-old. She talked about how

it could be stressful, trying to figure out how to pay bills and to get nutritious food for her children. But she also discovered the calming power of nature.

"For some reason, when I stuck my hands in the soil, a lot of answers came," she said.

Jenkins' children are now grown and help with running the farm. Jenkins started it with the idea of providing fresh, healthy food to a neighborhood that lost its last grocery store back in 2005. There's a small grocery store on site, which sells the produce on a sliding scale and hires locals at a livable wage.

"Along with the vitamins and the beautiful space, we're growing community," Jenkins said. "The idea is that if we can figure it out here, then other communities can come together and figure out how to do something similar."

Charleston bike share program kickoff set for May 6

MUSC and the City of Charleston announce the kickoff of the bike share program, Lime, a new mobility service provider to downtown Charleston on Friday, May 6, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the MUSC Urban Farm. Stop by and see the electric bikes and learn other details. MUSC faculty, staff and students can expect to receive 70% off the cost of using the system.

Jenkins noted that although the produce within the farm is sold, anything that grows over the fence is free for foraging.

"I get excited when I see peach pits because I know the kids are tasting a food that tastes like what their parents would have eaten, without chemicals. It has a lot of flavor and nutrients when you pick it right off the tree," she said.

After the farm tour, the parents split into two groups. One group helped to lay down wood chips, which suppress weeds and retain water during hot summers, and the other group used some of the site-grown produce to create a chicken pasta salad with a light vinaigrette.

Then, the entire group of parents, children and program staff sat down to enjoy the locally grown, delicious meal.

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