From the Program Director:

The CU Physical Therapy Program continues to thrive at the Anschutz Medical Campus. Our mission is to provide Colorado with programs of excellence in education, clinical care, research and scholarship, and community service. We are strongly committed to improving the health of our community through each of these pursuits. This past spring we successfully graduated another class of students to who have begun their careers as caring and competent physical therapists in their communities. We also welcomed a new class of students who will participate in our re-designed curriculum and clinical education experiences.

Service to community stands out as a common passion among our alumni, students, and faculty. Inside this issue you will read about the many ways our colleagues are improving their communities. One example of this is alumna, Yolanda Azimi, who has made an impact on physical therapy services in rural Colorado for more than 30 years. Azimi is a shining example of how physical therapists improve the lives of their patients and communities.

Our students and faculty participate in many volunteer activities, both in the PT Program and in the community. You will read about their involvement in Spoke N Motion, Stout Street Clinic, and Night Owls programs. We are fortunate to have such a group of professionals committed to service to others.

We continue to develop scholarship funds to support students with an interest in practicing physical therapy in rural areas, to promote diversity within our profession, and to attract highly meritorious students. Our scholarship recipients are outstanding students who are committed to the physical therapy profession and their communities.

I hope you enjoy reading about students, faculty, and alumni of the CU Physical Therapy Program. I invite you to become more involved in our community by joining us for an event, or visiting us at the Anschutz Medical Campus. I welcome your feedback and questions. You can reach me at 303-724-9375 or by email at Margaret.Schenkman@ucdenver.edu.

Margaret Schenkman, PT, PhD, FAPTA
Professor and Program Director
Associate Dean for Physical Therapy Education
Yolanda Azimi's family arrived on the plains of Fort Morgan, Colo. when she was just nine years old. Her parents were born in Mexico and her grandfather was a migrant farm worker who organized other migrant workers to come to rural Colorado.

Azimi grew up knowing that she would be the first in her family to go to college. In high school she was introduced to physical therapy at a career fair. It clicked right away, and she knew what she wanted to do.

With a goal in mind, Azimi was accepted to CU Boulder. She was offered the Williams Family Foundation Scholarship, but still struggled financially. She remembers eating one meal a day while studying hard to beat the odds. Many kids from Fort Morgan dropped out of college and she was determined to not be one of them. She told herself, “Failure is not a choice here, I will make it.” And she did. Azimi spent three years in Boulder and finished her Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy at the Ninth Avenue campus in 1976. Looking back, Azimi said, “There’s a lot that you have to overcome. For us it was being from a rural area and being minority.”

After graduation she returned to Fort Morgan and started working at the Fort Morgan Community Hospital. At that time there was a shortage of physical therapists in Morgan County and only one at the hospital in Fort Morgan, Ruth Hume, who became her mentor. Because the hospital had a difficult time finding physical therapy help, Azimi helped establish a Physical Therapy Assistant Program at Morgan Community College.

In 1991, Azimi took a position as the Director of Rehabilitation at the East Morgan Community Hospital in Brush, just 11 miles down the road from Fort Morgan. She wanted to be involved in building the new state-of-the-art Alonzo Petteys Rehabilitation Center at the hospital. She served as the Director of Rehabilitation for 20 years, during which time she helped develop and grow comprehensive rehab programs, which included the first aquatic therapy programs in Morgan County. She says, “To me it’s not a job, it’s a calling. This is what I love to do.” She has always had a passion for lifelong learning and in 2013 Azimi completed her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at Regis University.

Azimi dedicated her career not only to helping her patients, but to expanding PT services in her rural community. She realized early on that she would need to develop a “grow your own” approach to attracting and retaining physical therapists in Morgan County. She established clinical rotations with the CU PT Program and Regis PT Program to introduce students to rural physical therapy practice. Her labor of love was being a clinical instructor and successfully recruiting several students to become physical therapists in her community.

Azimi’s career also influenced her family. Her husband, Moshen was a civil engineer, but 15 years ago was inspired to become a physical therapy assistant. They have four children. The two oldest both went to medical school and are now practicing physicians. Their third child, Mariam, completed the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at the CU PT Program this spring and has begun her career as a physical therapist. The youngest in the family started college at CU Boulder this fall.

Three years ago, Azimi made another career change and joined the Eben Ezer Lutheran Care Center, a skilled nursing facility in Brush. She is making a difference there, too. People in the community come to Azimi because of the reputation she has built over the years. After breaking her arm and wrist, Lena Alonzo, a long-time Fort Morgan resident, came to Eben Ezer to receive treatment from Azimi. Alonzo credits her recovery and ability to resume normal life to Azimi, saying, “I really feel like if it wasn’t for her, I wouldn’t have gotten my life back.”
This year the CU Physical Therapy Program celebrated its 67th anniversary by inviting alumni to the CU PT Reunion at the Anschutz Medical Campus. Reunion attendees arrived on September 19th and attended a breakfast hosted by Margaret Schenkman. She provided an update of the program, talking about the curricular changes that the program has made to be current with the changes in health care delivery. Director of Clinical Education and Associate Professor, Jenny Rodriguez, then described the new clinical education curriculum, designed to meet these changing health care needs.

Alumni then toured the Anschutz Medical Campus and found that students today have a much different experience than those that attended physical therapy school on the Ninth Avenue campus. They visited the Center for Advancing Professional Excellence, where PT students participate in patient simulations. The tour also included a visit to the anatomy labs on the top floor of the Education I building, where there is a state-of-the-art ventilation system, skylights and mountain views.

In the afternoon, alumni attended three lectures: CU Associate Professor, Jennifer Stevens-Lapsley, PT, PhD, gave the keynote presentation in her talk titled, Shaping our Future by Integrating Outcome Measures into Clinical Practice: Gait Speed as an Example. Later in the day Associate Professor, Paul Mintken, PT, DPT, OCS, FAAOMPT, gave a talk titled, Manual Therapy: Where Have We Been, and Where Are We Going. The final presentation was given by Assistant Professor, Dan Malone, PT, PhD, CCS, Physical Therapy in the ICU: Something Old is Something New. After the lectures, alumni met for dinner in downtown Denver where they had an evening to catch up and reminisce.

On Saturday, September 20th alumni, students, and community members participated in the first Fund the Future 5K Fun Run, a fundraiser for student scholarships at the Anschutz Medical Campus. Nearly 70 runners and walkers participated and raised $3,500 for student scholarships. Later that afternoon alumni and students watched the CU Buffs take on Hawaii at Folsom Field in Boulder.

The Physical Therapy Alumni Association Raised $3,500 for student scholarships through Fund the Future 5K
Congratulations to the Class of 2014!

The CU Physical Therapy Program conferred degrees to 55 new graduates at the Anschutz Medical Campus graduation ceremony on May 23, 2014. In addition, two students completed their studies and were awarded their degrees for the transition DPT Program. The Class of 2014 and their family and friends gathered to celebrate their accomplishments. Program Director, Margaret Schenkman addressed the class, saying,

“Your education positions each of you to assume emerging roles within the profession and to become agents of change within health care at large, as the profession of physical therapy continues to evolve. We look forward to your leadership contributions now and in the future as clinicians, educators, mentors, and scholars.”

The class chose ceremony speakers for the event, which included Class President, Amy Howard, DPT and CU Assistant Professor, Dan Malone, PT, PhD. Congratulations to the Class of 2014! It was a pleasure to have you at the CU Physical Therapy Program and we look forward to staying in touch and learning about your accomplishments.
Volunteer Project Led by Eric Sawyer

In September, CU Physical Therapy Program students participated in the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life fundraiser at Webster Lake in Northglenn. At this event, team members camp out and take turns walking around a track overnight. Leading up to the event, teams raise funds for cancer research and patient support. It is a great way to support a powerful cause while connecting with others at the 20-hour event. Participants spend this time to reflect on those who have lost their battle and celebrate current patients in their progress to health and wellness.

This year CU Physical Therapy students Stephanie Glick and Laura Baum from the Class of 2015 were team captains, and helped inspire 19 students and 3 faculty members to participate in the CU Physical Therapy Relay for Life team. The team raised over $4,900 – the second largest amount ever for the CU Physical Therapy Relay for Life team. The event raised over $170,000, making it the most successful ever in Colorado.

CU Physical Therapy Senior Instructor Eric Sawyer, PT, DPT has been participating in the Relay for Life since 2006. Sawyer has had many family members and friends whose lives were affected by cancer. He participates to show support for them and raise money for a great cause, the American Cancer Society. He says that the spirit is infectious, “If you come once to the relay, I guarantee you’ll come again!”

Doctor of Physical Therapy Professional Oath

I commit myself to the highest ideal of service, learning, and the pursuit of knowledge. I will strive to achieve excellence in the practice of physical therapy. I will perform physical therapy in an ethical manner and will expect the same of my colleagues. I will respect diverse values, beliefs, and cultures. I will do no harm to another. I will hold all confidences in trust. I will strive for improved quality of life for all my patients. I will strive to approach each patient with compassion, encouragement, respect, and patience. I will respect the rights, knowledge and skills of other colleagues and healthcare professionals and seek consultation whenever the welfare of the patient may be advanced. I will strive to be a lifelong learner, seeking to advance my own knowledge as well as that of the profession. I will approach each day with my future in mind and look to faculty, mentors, and colleagues to guide me towards my professional goals. With this oath, I freely accept all the obligations and the many rewards which will accompany the practice of physical therapy.

Having spoken these words, I am prepared to embark upon the professional education program that will guide me towards my goal of becoming a Doctor of Physical Therapy.

Schenkman welcomed students and their families to the CU Physical Therapy Program. Students were introduced by name with a brief background given while they walked across the stage to receive their physical therapy toolkit from Schenkman.

Alyssa Arms, DPT, President of the Physical Therapy Alumni Association, welcomed students to the profession, saying, “Physical therapy is an incredibly rewarding profession, and I am proud that you have decided to start your journey to join us. Use the opportunities within this program to not only learn the foundations of becoming a skilled general practitioner of physical therapy, but also to explore all of the options that lay before you as you continue through your career.”

Students were then led by Mary Jane Rapport, PT, DPT, PhD in taking the Doctor of Physical Therapy Professional Oath. First-year student, Derya Anderson reflected on the ceremony, saying, “It was a nice opportunity to learn about my new classmates. It also solidified that we are working in the healthcare field and bettering people’s lives through this service.”
CU Physical Therapy Program Faculty Give Back

CU Physical Therapy Program faculty are committed to working with students and to giving back to the community. Many faculty members volunteer in projects they are passionate about and invite students with similar interests to join them.

SPOKE N MOTION DANCE

CU PT Assistant Professor, Robyn Gisbert, PT, DPT has a passion for dance. Her volunteer project is with Colorado’s first integrated dance company, Spoke N Motion Dance. Founded by Teri Westerman in 2012, the group provides those with and without disabilities a place to explore the world of movement and dance.

Gisbert is the principal instructor/choreographer for the group and leads practice with the dancers twice a week at the Robert and Judi Newman Theatre Education Center. Many CU PT students are also involved in the group. Approximately 20 students have participated since the company’s inception.

Third-year CU PT student, Caitlin Flemino, has been dancing with the company for over two years and says, “It is a treat and special honor to be able to dance in a group filled with love, joy and excitement! One of the best parts has to be tearing down the stigma of disability and creating choreography that showcases everyone’s talent.”

Spoke N Motion Dance performs regularly throughout Colorado. You can learn more and attend a performance by visiting: www.spokenmotiondance.org

STOUT STREET CLINIC

In 1997 CU PT student, Fran Manti, wanted to give back to the community. She began meeting with Dr. Ed Farrell, then Medical Director of the Stout Street Clinic, a clinic run by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. Manti volunteered at the Stout Street Clinic as part of a class project and since that time CU PT faculty members Jenny Rodriguez, PT, MHS, Denise Stelzner, PT, MBA, and Betti Krapfl, PT have been volunteering with students at the clinic once a month.

The Stout Street Clinic is an outstanding place for CU PT faculty and students to provide physical therapy treatment to individuals who are homeless. Students have an opportunity to help people with great needs, while practicing clinical skills under the mentorship of licensed faculty. Every year there is a waiting list for students who want to volunteer at the clinic. Second-year student Nichole Engelhardt says, “I love working at Stout Street because it reminds me of the reason for all of the countless hours of studying and refreshes my love for physical therapy. Stout Street allows students to practice the skills we learn in class with the guidance of supportive faculty. It is an incredible group of people to work with and a great way to practice physical therapy skills.”

NIGHT OWLS

On the first Friday of every month, CU PT Assistant Professor, Lisa Dannemiller, PT, DSc can be found at the Fisher Early Learning Center at the University of Denver. She volunteers there for Night Owls, a respite care program designed to give parents of children with special needs a night out. Night Owls asks health care providers and community members to volunteer to provide this service at no charge to parents. Children with special needs and their siblings have a dedicated volunteer to provide one-on-one attention and care.

Dannemiller’s specialty is working with children on the autism spectrum with motor impairments. She enlists CU PT students to volunteer with her and creates a learning experience for students to work with children. At each session, at least 5-10 PT students join her and other volunteers for this incredible experience. Reflecting on the experience, Dannemiller says, “Our students get to communicate and play with children with and without special needs in a relaxed learning environment. They learn valuable lessons about how important family support and community participation are for families of children with special needs. I love to observe the creativity and playfulness of our students and support them if questions or concerns arise.”
The clinical education team developed an innovative Integrated Clinical Education (ICE) experience as part of the new CU Physical Therapy Program Clinical Education curriculum. Integrated experiences offer students the opportunity to apply classroom learning to real patient situations. The team was fortunate to collaborate with colleagues from Duke University, who shared expertise and experience with their ICE model and contributed to the development of our ICE experience. The ICE at our program is designed as two short-term experiences, positioned in the first and second year fall semesters. Students are assigned to clinical sites in teams of 3-4 and remain in their same teams from year one to year two. To promote depth of learning, it is important for clinical instructors (CIs) to have adequate time to teach students. The PT Program is therefore reimbursing clinical sites to allow CIs a decreased productivity expectation for the ICE week to provide dedicated time for clinical teaching.

In preparation for the implementation of ICE, training sessions were held with clinical instructors and center coordinators of clinical education from ICE sites. Two consultants from Duke University helped to deliver the training. Associate Director of Clinical Education at Duke, Kyle Covington, PT, DPT, NCS and Ashley Poole, PT an experienced CI with Duke’s integrated clinical education program, offered their own experiences in implementing and teaching in the ICE model. The training allowed CIs to gain knowledge about the objectives of the ICE experience and to provide an opportunity to refine their clinical reasoning facilitation skills. Additionally, the training focused on strategies to successfully work in the collaborative model.

The first ICE week for the first-year students occurred in September and, according to both students and CIs, was an overwhelming success. Students were placed in a wide variety of clinical settings including outpatient clinics, an inpatient neuro rehab hospital, and the University of Colorado Health System. Across the wide variety of settings, students felt the week reinforced the foundational knowledge they learned in the first semester of the program. Students also felt energized upon return from their clinical experience and excited to continue their on-campus learning. Ashley Haight, Class of 2016, reflected on her experience, saying, “ICE was a challenging and invigorating experience through which we gained new tools and perspectives to help us relate concepts we learn in the classroom to real life clinical cases. ICE helped us realize how much we have learned so far in the curriculum and also how much more knowledge we are to gain in our academic and clinical experience as DPT students.”

Clinical instructors were extremely impressed with the level of professionalism of the students, as well as the knowledge the students were able to bring to the clinical setting even at such an early stage of their learning. Additionally, some CIs expressed a renewed enthusiasm for teaching. Kyle Ridgeway, PT, DPT, a CI with the University of Colorado Hospital inpatient department offered this feedback, “This week has been one of the most invigorating and exciting weeks in recent memory. The growth and learning that I not only observed, but experienced myself personally was remarkable. I can only hope the students took away a fraction of what I did from this experience!”

The clinical education team hopes that the strong connection developed between the PT Program and the clinical instructors for ICE continues to develop and results in continued excellence in clinical education experience for our students.

A New Model in Clinical Education

Become a Clinical Instructor

The clinical education team at CU is committed to developing collaborative partnerships with clinical sites involved in all aspects of our curriculum and is developing online resources for our clinical instructor community, as well as offering discounts to CU Update courses and APTA CI Credentialing courses. The clinical education curriculum includes multiple opportunities for clinicians to engage as clinical instructors and mentors, from short and intense integrated experiences, to traditional full time clinical experiences, to the yearlong internship, clinicians are able to participate in clinical teaching in many capacities.

If you are interested in becoming a CI for a University of Colorado PT student, please contact Jenny Rodriguez at Jenny.Rodriguez@ucdenver.edu or 303-724-9344.
Searching for Answers to Improve Knee Replacement Outcomes

**OVER 700,000** total knee arthroplasties (TKAs) are performed each year in the United States to alleviate pain and disability associated with knee osteoarthritis, and this number is expected to grow to 3.48 million per year by the year 2030. TKA reliably reduces pain and improves function, but quadriceps strength and functional mobility are often impaired years after surgery. CU Physical Therapy Program Associate Professor, Jennifer Stevens-Lapsley, PT, PhD is investigating strategies to improve strength and prevent loss of functional mobility for individuals following TKA.

Stevens-Lapsley is the Director of the Muscle Performance Lab at the CU School of Medicine. The overarching theme of her research and the mission of the lab is to understand the causes of lower extremity muscle weakness that impairs function in older adults. The lab conducts several studies with a team that includes four Rehabilitation Science PhD students, one post-doctoral fellow, and two research assistants. With this team, Stevens-Lapsley uses a multifaceted approach to study skeletal muscle dysfunction in older adults to ultimately enhance the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. The idea is to place considerable emphasis on more intensive and progressive approaches to rehabilitation of older adult populations.

One of her largest studies focuses on more intensive rehabilitation after TKA and whether such an approach improves outcomes without compromising patient safety. She is currently the principal investigator of a five-year clinical trial with $2.4 million in grant funding through the National Institutes of Health. She is also investigating more progressive strategies for intervention in acute, home health, and skilled nursing settings and enjoys involving alumni in her ongoing clinical studies.

Congratulations to the Program Director

**Margaret Schenkman**, PT, PhD, FAPTA, has accepted an invitation to serve as a member of the Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation Sciences Study Section of the Center for Scientific Review of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Members are selected based on the quality of their research accomplishments, publications in journals and other scientific activities. Study sections review and make recommendations on grant applications submitted to the NIH. Schenkman’s selection reflects the high quality of her work and our physical therapy program and will be a major contribution to biomedical research in the United States.
This year the CU Physical Therapy Program has been able to award more scholarships than ever before.

**More than $75,000 was distributed to 14 current and incoming students.**

Thank you to our generous donors for making scholarship funds possible for physical therapy students! Funds are in place to continue this level of scholarships over the next few years. The CU Physical Therapy Program is actively developing a robust scholarship endowment that will support scholarships annually totaling $100,000 or more in perpetuity. The goal of the scholarships is to make physical therapy education more accessible and affordable while attracting high quality candidates. We hope you will join us in helping to provide educational opportunities for the next generation of physical therapists!

**UNIVERSITY PHYSICIANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIPS**

At the September 4, 2014 scholarship luncheon to honor University Physicians, Inc. (UPI) and School of Medicine students, Dean Richard Krugman, MD, shared some key historical information about the organization that has played a vital role in the lives of the scholarship students to whom he was speaking that afternoon.

University Physicians, Inc. is an organization dedicated to providing business operations and administrative support to the School of Medicine’s 2,200 clinical providers. Realizing the need to make medical education affordable, UPI has recently become a very important donor to scholarships. In 2009, UPI made its first set of scholarship contributions to CU medical students in recognition of the steep and rising costs of a medical education.

“That board, which includes all chairs of all clinical departments, decided that UPI should make an annual contribution to our students for scholarships,” Krugman said.

Since 2009, UPI has allocated more than 100 scholarships totaling more than $1 million. Until 2014, the scholarship supported only medical students but this year, UPI extended its support to include scholarships for the Physical Therapy Program and the Child Health Associate/Physician Assistants Program. This academic year alone, $350,000 has been given in scholarships to 45 MD, PT and CHA/PA students.

Scholarships allow students to focus on their physical therapy careers, rather than having part-time jobs for income. “Because of this scholarship, I am able to participate in more community service activities,” says physical therapy student Michele Myers. “I’m currently working with students from multiple disciplines and Spanish interpreters to organize a new free clinic on Dayton and Colfax that will be run by CU students.”

Thank you to University Physicians, Inc. for helping students achieve their goals!

**DECKER RECEIVES DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP**

Bow Decker, CU PT Class of 2016, is the recipient of the CU Physical Therapy Program’s Diversity Scholarship.

One of eight siblings, Decker’s family is Hmong and sought political asylum by emigrating from Thailand to the US. As farmers, Decker’s parents never received a formal education, but they instilled the importance of education in all of their children. She wasn’t the first in her family to graduate from college, as all of her brothers and sisters have gone to college, but she will be the first to receive a graduate degree.

Decker was inspired to pursue physical therapy because her two-year-old niece was born with Rhett syndrome. She watched as a physical therapist helped tremendously with her niece’s ability to function in life. She knew that physical therapy was a transformative career and wanted to be a part of it.

Decker says, “This scholarship means so much. It not only helps financially, but it allows me to focus on my schoolwork. But what I really take away from scholarships is the concept of giving back. I hope to one day be able to contribute or even start up a scholarship because I know how much it’s helped me, and I want to be able to help others someday in the same way.”
Alumni & Friends Reception at CSM in Indianapolis

**FEBRUARY 5, 2015, 7:00 PM**

Westin Indianapolis, Room Capitol II, 301 W Washington St., Indianapolis, Indiana

System Skills to Survive in a Changing Health Care Environment

**MARCH 2, 2015, 5:30 PM**

Join us for a talk featuring Alan Jette, PT, PhD, FAPTA, Professor and Director of Health and Disabilities Research Institute at Boston University. Reception at 5:30 pm, talk at 6:00 pm at the Anschutz Medical Campus, ED2 North, 2nd Floor Bridge, 13120 E 17th Ave, Aurora, Colorado.

PT Reunion 2015

**SEPTEMBER 18-19, 2015**

Save the date! We welcome all of our alumni to the annual reunion. The reunion will feature keynote speaker, Shirley Sahrmann, PT, PhD, FAPTA, Professor of Physical Therapy at the University of Washington School of Medicine in St. Louis. At this reunion, we celebrate classes that graduated in years ending in 0 and 5. Are you interested in helping to get in touch with classmates to organize your reunion? Contact Brooke Parsons at brooke.parsons@ucdenver.edu.

Keep in touch!
Follow us and stay connected.

**Find us on Facebook.** Connect with alumni and learn about upcoming events and happenings at the CU Physical Therapy Program. [www.facebook.com/cuphysther](http://www.facebook.com/cuphysther)

**Follow us on Twitter.** Join in the discussion as we live tweet from events like the Colorado APTA Fall Symposium and Combined Sections Meeting. [www.twitter.com/cuphysther](http://www.twitter.com/cuphysther)

**Follow us on Instagram.** CU Physical Therapy students are always on a new adventure. Check out our photos on Instagram. [www.instagram.com/cuphysther](http://www.instagram.com/cuphysther)

**Plan or attend a reunion.** Next year we celebrate class years that end in 0 and 5. Save the date for the next Alumni Reunion on September 18-19, 2015. Contact [cupt.alumni@ucdenver.edu](mailto:cupt.alumni@ucdenver.edu) for more information.

**Become a member.** CU Physical Therapy Program alumni can become members by making a donation to any scholarship fund. Members receive special benefits and discounts. [www.medschool.ucdenver.edu/pt/membership](http://www.medschool.ucdenver.edu/pt/membership)

**Send us your news and photos.** Keep us updated about your achievements and milestones. We are interested in connecting you with your classmates!

[www.medschool.ucdenver.edu/PT](http://www.medschool.ucdenver.edu/PT)

Join today!

**Physical Therapy Alumni Association**

**University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus**

The Physical Therapy Alumni Association membership program has changed! Your membership in the association is now based on donations to support scholarships. Membership is valid for one year from the date of donation.

Please join the association today and help support physical therapy students! Make your contribution online or by returning this form. [www.cuphysicaltherapy.org/donate](http://www.cuphysicaltherapy.org/donate)

**Choose donation level:**

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