



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI  
MILLER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
DEPARTMENT of  
PHYSICAL THERAPY

# PT PRIDE



**SEMESTER IN REVIEW**

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**FALL 2024**

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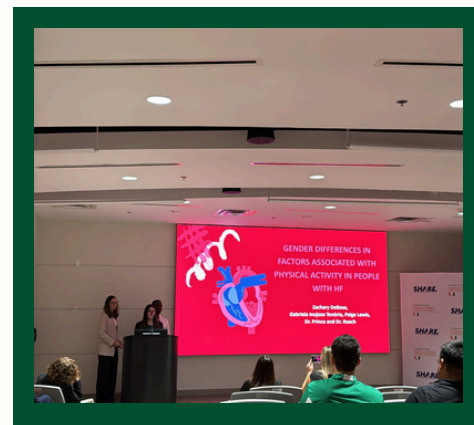


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This past fall, the **Class of 2025** showcased their innovative research projects to an audience of faculty, staff, and the incoming Class of 2027. Collaborating closely with UMDPT professors, they explored diverse and impactful areas of physical therapy research, **highlighting the program's dedication to advance the profession through evidence-based practice.**



UMDPT is proud to have an outstanding group of faculty and third-year DPT students **representing our program at CSM 2025 in Houston!** This year's conference promises to be an inspiring showcase of the hard work and dedication that went into their innovative research. We're thrilled to highlight the DPT IIIs presenting their collaborative projects alongside our esteemed professors—an exciting testament to the excellence and passion within our program!



# SHOWCASING EXCELLENCE: DPT STUDENTS AT CSM 2025

UM DPT students are stepping into the spotlight at CSM 2025, presenting their innovative research and projects. Check out their contributions and the topics they're excited to share with other physical therapy professionals in February.

## **Promoting Stronger Academic-Clinical Partnerships Through Faculty Development**

**Research Members:** Neva Kirk-Sanchez, Elsa Drevyn, Zahilly Salinas, PennShelia Griffin, Stephanie Lomotey, Kye Richardson, Andrew Weiss, Martha Bloyer

## **A Retrospective Study Examining the Impact of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation on Patients with HFpEF and HFrEF**

**Research Members:** Sabine Gempel, Jenna Kologie, Taylor Wright, Destini Decinti, Christy Musino, Thais Garcia, Yessenia Orozco, Jessica Firmeza, Lawrence Cahalin

## **Recruitment of Underrepresented Minority Students in Doctor of Physical Therapy Educational Programs**

**Research Members:** Neva Kirk-Sanchez, Elsa Drevyn, Zahilly Salinas, PennShelia Griffin, Stephanie Lomotey, Kye Richardson, Andrew Weiss, Martha Bloyer

## **The Impact of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation on Patients with Heart Failure Preserved Ejection Fraction**

**Research Members:** Sabine Gempel, Jenna Kologie, Taylor Wright, Destini Decinti, Christy Musino, Thais Garcia, Yessenia Orozco, Jessica Firmeza, Lawrence Cahalin

## **Factors Influencing Community Mobility in Stroke Survivors: A Multifaceted Approach**

**Research Members:** Balsam Alammari, Samantha Magee, Hannah Giles, Deena Cilien, Neva Kirk-Sanchez, Lauri Bishop

## **Smoking Significantly Impairs Physical Activity of Subjects with Hidradenitis Suppurativa**

**Research Members:** David Mandel, Lawrence Cahalin, Cayla Pla, Paula Mejias, Veronica Barriera, Elizabeth Machado

## **Gait Speed is Speed Significantly Correlated to Quality of Life in Subjects with Hidradenitis Suppurativa**

**Research Members:** David Mandel, Lawrence Cahalin, Cayla Pla, Veronica Barreiro, Paula Mejias, Elizabeth Machado

## In Their Words: Clinical Experience Q/A from our DPT IIs & IIIs



**David Payne, DPT III**

### **What was a typical day like, and how did you handle challenging cases?**

“During my clinical rotation in baseball's 'fall ball' season, days included morning treatments, practice prep, and post-practice recovery. Balancing rehab, treatments, and athlete readiness was challenging but rewarding. Acute injuries required quick evaluations and balancing ideal rehab with realistic timelines for performance. Working through these challenges with Julian built my confidence and decision-making skills.”

### **How did you build a good relationship with your CI and apply their feedback?**

“I built a strong relationship with my CI through open communication, setting weekly and daily goals together. Her open-mindedness made it easy to connect. I showed my willingness to learn by discussing and applying her feedback, like practicing techniques on her before using them with patients.”



**Emma Devis, DPT II**



**Omar Abadie, DPT II**

### **What advice do you have for nervous students starting their rotation?**

“I would say to be very open to the experience and to not be too hard on yourself. At the end of the day it's a learning experience and we're there to learn from experienced clinicians. Communication with your CI is very important as well as asking questions!”

## Department of Community Service: Empowering Health, One Step at a Time!

At UMDPT DOCS, we are dedicated to empowering health and wellness throughout our South Florida region. By **providing outreach, education, and hands-on care, we aim to bridge gaps in healthcare access and improve quality of life** for those we serve.

### Reflections from Volunteers



"Volunteering with DOCS has been rewarding. I've enhanced my skills as a future physical therapist and learned the impact of empowering health and restoring hope."

**Chidimma Uwaomah, DPT II**



"Volunteering with DOCS has been an eye-opening experience, allowing me to connect with the community while growing as a future healthcare professional."

**Michelle Elovic, DPT I**



"I value conversations with those with diverse experiences. Each DOCS event offers new perspectives, life lessons, and a chance to refine my physical therapy skills."

**Devin Tiemann, DPT II**



As physical therapy students, we play a key role in the **DOCS** program, **conducting screenings for underserved South Florida communities** to assess fall risk, balance, gait, mobility, and strength. Using this information, we **create personalized assessments** and refer patients to the San Juan Bosco Clinic for pro bono physical therapy. Guided by expert professors and residents, **we deliver evidence-based care**, helping individuals regain strength, mobility, and independence.

This **hands-on experience** enhances our clinical training while reinforcing the importance of community service and healthcare accessibility. Through DOCS, **we address mobility challenges, improve functional outcomes, and empower individuals to lead healthier lives, bridging gaps in care one step at a time.**

### Future Dates:

**Jan 25-** South Dade

**Feb 22-** West Kendall

**March 15-** Allapath

**April 26-** Key West

## UMDPT Students Outside of the Classroom



### Core Connections: Pilates Teacher Training

A group of **five of our current DPT students (Emma, Alex, Caroline, Georgia, and Maddie —L to R)** are not only excelling in their studies but also stretching their limits—literally! These students are diving into Pilates teacher training, turning their shared passion for movement and wellness into a collaborative journey. Balancing their coursework with intensive training sessions, they are learning how to lead, motivate, and inspire others through the art of Pilates. Proving that extracurricular activities can be just as transformative as classroom learning.

### Fighting Limits: The Art of Boxing & Self-Mastery

"First-year student **Jacob Fondacaro** values boxing for its physical and mental challenges, teaching him discipline, resilience, and mental toughness. His passion for movement mechanics and injury prevention ties the sport to his interest in physical therapy, enhancing his approach to both therapy and life."



Photo Credit: @rebel\_snapped



### Reaching New Heights

"Second-year student **Anthony Petrakis** channels his passion for rock climbing to build focus, resilience, and problem-solving skills. Whether on indoor walls or outdoor cliffs, the sport challenges him mentally and physically, enhancing his academic and personal growth."



# 6th Annual Rose Ceremony: A Celebration of Commitment & Passion

This semester, our **Class of 2027** hosted the **6th Annual Rose Ceremony**, honoring the generous donors whose contributions have shaped the journey of our DPT students. The rose, symbolizing compassion, empathy, and patient-centered care, reflects the core values of the physical therapy profession.

The ceremony featured heartfelt speeches, meaningful artwork, and shared reflections, serving as a powerful reminder of the human connection at the heart of healthcare. It was a celebration of our students' commitment to these values and the lives they are preparing to impact.

"I was happy to start the Rose Ceremony here in the department 6 years ago. I feel that it is important to reflect on the experience. During the actual course, there often isn't time to do this and it is meaningful to me and I hope meaningful to the students. The rose ceremony also provides an opportunity to invite the families making the ceremony even more impactful to both the students and the loved ones of our donors."

**-Dr. Eryn Milian, Anatomy Professor**



## Dedication

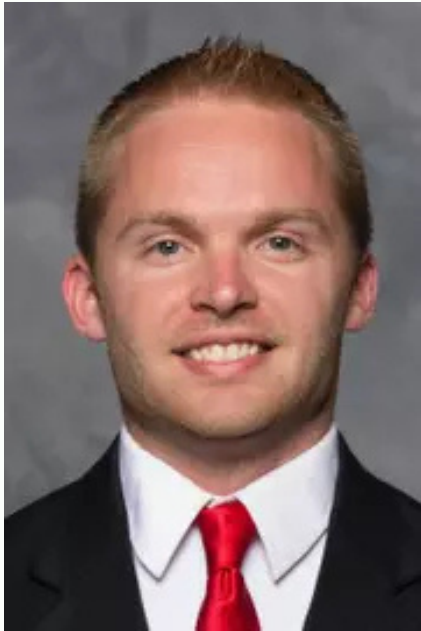
The Class of 2027 would like to dedicate this year's Rose Ceremony to **Dr. Douglas Broadfield**, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine faculty member of Anatomy and Director of the Willard Body Program. Honoring a legacy of dedication, passion, and selflessness. Your contributions shaped us in ways words can't fully express.





# Alumni Highlight:

## Adam Stewart, DPT '15, Director of Rehab and Athletic Trainer for Ohio State Football



**DR. ADAM STEWART, PT, DPT,  
ATC**

Adam Stewart, a 2015 graduate of the University of Miami's DPT program, has built a successful career in sports medicine and orthopedics. As Director of Rehab and Athletic Trainer for **Ohio State Football**, he finds helping athletes achieve their goals deeply rewarding.

Inspired by his father, Adam transitioned from athletic training to physical therapy, focusing on rehab and recovery. His time at UM, particularly as a graduate assistant under **Dr. Raya**, shaped his approach to mentorship, self-driven learning, and communication. Despite early challenges, a pivotal interview with **Dr. Robert Gailey** opened the door to UM—a chance Adam now honors through his work and mentorship.

Recently joining Ohio State's Performance Initiative Team (PIT), Adam contributes to interdisciplinary advances in sports science. Outside of work, he enjoys family time, fitness, reading, and concerts. Guided by his motto, "**There are no traffic jams on the extra mile,**" Adam exemplifies commitment to excellence.



# FEEDBACK



Any questions, concerns, or content you would like to see in future newsletters? Let us know! We welcome your ideas!

Use this link to fill out our google form:  
<https://forms.gle/UoMiivABuofk6JDX9>

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## RAFFLE!



FILL OUT THE GOOGLE FORM FOR A CHANCE TO WIN **FREE** UM GEAR!