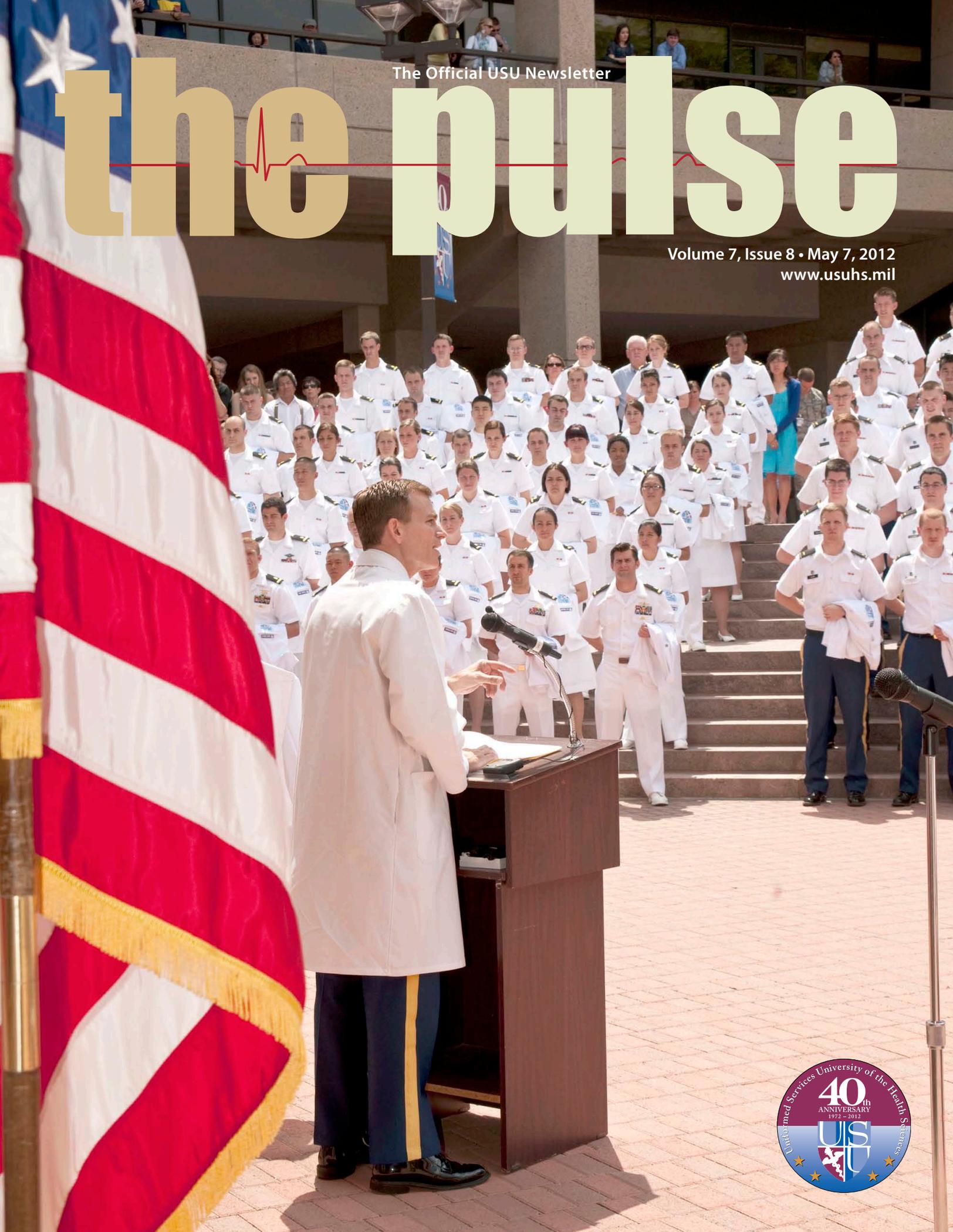


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Photo by Patrice Bolté

On the cover

Army Col. (Dr.) Paul Pasquina, M.D., chief of the Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and director of USU's Center for Rehabilitation Sciences Research, was the guest speaker for the 2012 F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine White Coat Ceremony. (See story, pages 4-5.)



GSN faculty member wins prestigious James Leonard Award

By Christine Creenan-Jones



Photo by Thomas C. Balfour

Diane Seibert, PhD

Diane Seibert, PhD, director of the Family Nurse Practitioner Program at USU, has been actively engaged for several years at local and national levels working toward improving the genetics competency of nurses, nurse practitioners, and non-genetics health-care professionals.

Her interest in the genetic disorder Tuberous Sclerosis Complex (TSC) began after a discussion with Thomas Darling, MD, PhD, a professor in the Department of Dermatology and one of the nation's leading experts in TSC. Their conversation evolved into a research partnership involving Dr. Joel Moss, Dr. Darling's mentor at the NIH, along with other members of Dr. Darling's team. This collaboration

culminated in the Annals of Internal Medicine article, "Recognition of tuberous sclerosis in adult women: delayed presentation with life-threatening consequences," and the basis for Seibert being awarded the prestigious James Leonard Award for Excellence in Clinical Research.

"Publishing our research and receiving the Leonard Award means a lot to all of us because this was truly a team effort. The honor reinforces the power of collaboration," she said, "because neither the research nor the article would exist without the involvement and intellectual contributions from the entire group."

The findings challenge conventional thinking about TSC, a disease normally diagnosed in childhood, since classic symptoms – seizures, intellectual disability and skin lesions – tend to surface early in life.

"Everything I read indicated that TSC patients were usually cognitively impaired. This description did not seem to fit this population, because Dr. Darling and I were analyzing data from a cohort of seemingly normal, functional women," Seibert said. "We started reviewing intake histories and discovered that while many of these women had minimal or no manifestations of TSC in childhood, others had classic TSC features but the diagnosis was missed until adulthood," Seibert said. "This diagnostic delay impeded

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USU Research Days 2012
 May 14-15
 Save The Date
 Visit www.hjf.org to
 submit abstracts by March 23 and register for events.

Migraine researcher wins coveted James Leonard Award

By Christine Creenan-Jones



Photo by Thomas C. Balfour

Ann Scher, PhD

Migraine is a common neurovascular disorder with painful – sometimes debilitating – symptoms. People who get migraine headaches often feel a throbbing pain on one side of their head and experience symptoms like nausea, vomiting and sensitivity to light or sound. Sometimes these headaches are preceded by temporary neurological symptoms including seeing wavy lines, stars, partial loss of vision or numbness and tingling on one side of the body.

Although a burdensome disorder for some people, serious health problems are only rarely associated with migraine. Ann Scher, PhD, associate professor of epidemiology in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Biometrics at USU, however, believes that some types of migraine are linked with manifestations of vascular disease in later life.

Her research – done in collaboration with Lenore Launer, PhD, from the National Institute on Aging and Vilmundur Gudnason, PhD, MD, from the Icelandic Heart Association – suggests that elderly people with a remote history of migraine have evidence of small stroke-like lesions in parts of their brain.

“This study focuses on the less common migraine with aura, a transient neurological disturbance – usually visual – that acts as a warning signal migraine is coming,” she said. “This research adds to the body of evidence linking migraine with aura to various manifestations of cardiovascular disease. Migraine headaches often remit in later life and stroke is uncommon in younger people. This 25-year longitudinal study (the

AGES-Reykjavik Study) was unique in that study subjects had been evaluated for migraine symptoms when they were young enough to be experiencing attacks and then images of their brain were taken in later life, at an age when stroke is much more common.”

Scher’s study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, was the basis for her winning USU’s coveted James Leonard Award for Excellence in Clinical Research this year as well. Nominated for the award by her peers, Scher’s findings are shedding light on migraine and catalyzing new research for understanding the complex disorder affecting millions of people around the world each year.

“The story of this research is still unfolding,” she said. “Through follow-on studies, we will further examine the clinical implications, if any, of these small cerebellar lesions. It is hoped that by understanding why the migraine aura is linked with these lesions, we will better understand the pathophysiology of migraine itself.”

Scher will present her findings during Research Days, May 14-15, alongside other USU award winners.

Leaders from the American Academy of Pediatrics visit USU



Marion Burton, MD, FAAP, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Director of Community Pediatrics at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine and Past President of the American Academy of Pediatrics; Charles L. Rice, MD, President of USU; Errol R. Alden, MD, FAAP, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the American Academy of Pediatrics and former chair of USU’s Department of Pediatrics; Ildy M. Katona, MD, FAAP, chair of USU’s Department of Pediatrics; and Jeffrey Longacre, MD, FAAP, Vice President of Affiliations and International Relations, Interim Vice President of External Affairs and former vice chair of USU’s Department of Pediatrics met at USU during April, the Month of the Military Child.

2012 White Coat Ceremony

By Christine Creenan-Jones



Photo by MCI Chad Hallford

The White Coat Ceremony is a time-honored tradition at USU and a right of passage for medical students everywhere. At USU, students receive white coats after completing their first year of medical school. The milestone ceremony also signifies the importance of humanism in medicine—a learning thread continuously woven throughout all four years of medical school at USU.



Photo by MCI Chad Hallford

As part of the White Coat Ceremony, each student affixes a gold pin onto the jacket. “Gold pins represent humanism in medicine, said Richard MacDonald, M.D., associate dean for student affairs and master of ceremony for the event. “Students are asked to wear these gold pins on their white coats throughout medical school and for the rest of their professional careers, because it’s equally important to keep up with the fast pace of the science of medicine and always seek to discover the full human understanding of the patient.”

“The privilege of the White Coat comes with many responsibilities,” said Larry Laughlin, M.D., dean of USU’s School of Medicine, to the Class of 2015, before they put on their jackets. “Those responsibilities are woven into the cloth of your white coat.” Laughlin described some of those responsibilities for the group, including the importance of pursuing a quest for life-long learning, respect for all patients, compassion and altruism, before telling them, “Becoming a doctor is not about you. It’s about your patients, and you must remember that everyday.”



Photo by Patrice Boité



Photo by Patrice Bolté

The university invites a special guest speaker, usually a military physician, to address USU's newest class of medical students at the White Coat Ceremony each year. Army Col. (Dr.) Paul Pasquina, chief of the Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and a USU graduate himself, offered some helpful advice during this year's ceremony. "I truly think many of you will change the world. You're here at a great school, you're entering medicine at a very exciting time (...)," he said. "But, even if you don't change the world, that's still okay. What you should be emphasizing is changing the world for every patient who comes through your door."



Photo by MCI Chad Hallford

The White Coat Ceremony is a family affair at USU. Hundreds of spouses, parents, children, siblings and other family members and friends showed support for the Class of 2015 by standing by their sides and helping students into their white coats.



Photo by MCI Chad Hallford

Near the end of the White Coat Ceremony, students recite the Hippocratic Oath, their promise to practice medicine ethically and always act in a patient's best interest.

New Assistant Professor's Group brings knowledge and experience to the forefront

by Christine Creenan-Jones

Like the students they teach, most assistant professors are busy learning the ropes during their formative years on campus. In a sophisticated place like USU, navigating through all of the rigmarole – managing labs, balancing budgets, obtaining funding and overseeing personnel – can be difficult work, especially since many of these important tasks are brand new responsibilities for USU's up-and-coming faculty members.

But, novice instructors, and even those with extensive experience, don't have to master every job requirement on their own. The Assistant Professor's Group is helping USU faculty members traverse the learning curve a little more quickly.

Thomas Flagg, PhD, and Markos Koutmos, PhD, the group's founders and assistant professors themselves, started the club because they knew firsthand the complexities of teaching at a major university and wanted to share their knowledge—gained mostly from other professors—with fellow, rising instructors.

“Most researchers and physicians receive lots of hands-on training in classrooms and labs, which is helpful for the teaching side of our jobs,” Flagg said. “But, knowing the science of medicine is only a small part of the daily grind for faculty members at USU and other universities. We also shoulder a lot of administrative responsibilities, which can be especially taxing for assistant professors, since most of us are just beginning our professional careers in academia.”

Realizing knowledge gaps like the ones they experienced could slow



Photo by Thomas C. Balfour

Assistant professors, Thomas Flagg, PhD, and Markos Koutmos, PhD, created the Assistant Professors Club as a forum to share important information about teaching at USU.

even the brightest, most ambitious minds, Flagg and Koutmos have used the Assistant Professor's Group as a medium to bring useful, time-saving information to the helm.

“At meetings, we talk about pretty much anything and everything affecting our professional lives at USU,” Flagg said. “We also have more structured sessions. For example, several experienced faculty members have shared useful advice at past sessions, the director of the Biomedical Instrumentation Center did a presentation and Civilian Human Resources even hosted a professional development seminar for us.”

Topics at group meetings may run the gamut, but each of them are designed to stimulate interactions and collaborations between faculty members—something both Flagg and Koutmos feel is beneficial for assistant professors and other professionals at USU.

“Why reinvent the wheel when there is so much knowledge right here on campus?” said Flagg. “The Assistant Professor's Group is all about information sharing and making these tough, beginning years just a little bit easier.”

USU 40th Anniversary Trivia Contest Winner



Congratulations to John “Tim” O’Neill, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics, for being the first person to correctly answer last issue’s trivia question:

Who can identify at least four building spaces named after important figures in USU's history?

O’Neill responded with the following answers: Packard Hall, Sanford Auditorium, James A. Zimble Learning Resource Center and the Faye G. Abdellah Center for Military and Federal Healthcare Research.

The F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine and Everett Alvarez Jr. Board of Regents Room were acceptable responses as well.

While meetings—normally held on the second Friday of every month—are designed with new assistant professors in mind, all members of USU are invited to join the group. For more information about the Assistant Professor's Group, contact the pair at Thomas.Flagg@usuhs.edu or Markos.Koutmos@usuhs.edu.

Giving back, GSN student reaches out to people in need

By Christine Creenan-Jones

Community service – a strong part of the military’s ethos – is alive and well at USU, because of people like Army Captain Le’Keisha Rodriguez, a student in the Family Nurse Practitioner program with a strong will and big heart.

After long days on campus, the Mississippi native spends countless hours each year volunteering for local charities, including the National Kidney Foundation (NKF), an organization with special meaning to Rodriguez.

“My grandmother was on dialysis for many years,” she said. “Her struggle inspired me to give back, and also helped me realize that prevention and early detection is the key to wellness.”

Rodriguez’s passion to help is only part of her appeal. She also has extensive health care experience, which allows her to take a more hands-on role at the NKF, where she draws and



Photo by Thomas C. Balfour

Army Captain Le’Keisha Rodriguez

screens blood as well as provides tips for healthy living.

“Unfortunately, diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease are

common health problems. Yet, many people don’t know they have them. These conditions can have some pretty serious consequences if left untreated,” said Rodriguez. “Being involved with this foundation is rewarding, because it’s a great way to inform people about what’s happening inside their bodies, so they can take the necessary steps for correction.”

The seasoned nurse is learning even more about health and wellness at USU. On course to graduate in May, Rodriguez is excited to continue helping people, both as a military officer and a volunteer.

“At work, I get to care for America’s best. I’m proud to serve my country this way,” she said. “I also get a lot of satisfaction knowing I’m helping out in other ways too, especially with causes important to my family.”

Wins prestigious James Leonard Award

Continued from page 2

access to appropriate screening, emerging therapies and opportunities to make informed childbearing decisions.”

The overall goal of the article is to bring greater awareness to the changing face of genetic disorders like TSC.

“Many clinicians were taught that TSC manifests in children, presenting as seizures, cognitive impairment and characteristic skin lesions,” Seibert said. “If a cognitively intact, seizure-free adult makes an appointment to discuss odd skin lesions, many clinicians may not consider a TSC diagnosis, because they are not aware that in many genetic conditions, including TSC, manifestations can present along a spectrum.”

As one of USU’s Leonard Award winners, Seibert will have more opportunities to expand upon her award-recipients research during USU’s Research Days, May 14-15. She will present a lecture in honor of the award namesake, Dr. James Leonard, the founding chair of USU’s Department of Medicine.

I WANT YOU
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
USU REACCREDITATION SURVEY

An important survey was sent to USU Faculty, Staff, and Students via email. Please follow the personalized link in your email to complete it. Your anonymous answers are needed for the reaccréditation of the University. If you missed the email the first time around, you will be sent a reminder.

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