

The Official USU Newsletter

# the pulse

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**Sharon Willis**

Deputy Vice President for External Affairs and Managing Editor

**Gwendolyn Smalls**

Chief, Media Affairs

**Tech. Sgt. Oshawn Jefferson**

Deputy Chief, Media Affairs

**Christine Creenan-Jones**

Editor and Layout Artist

**MC2 Brittany Cannady**

Writer

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Photo by Thomas Balfour

**On the cover**

*Drs. Patricia Deuster and Marni Silverman are collaborating on The Green Road Project to benefit wounded warriors. Read more about The Green Road Project on page 3.*

# President Rice covers broad topics at Town Hall Meeting

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

Uniformed Services University president Dr. Charles Rice hosted a town hall meeting to discuss various issues affecting USU personnel, Sept. 12. His talk covered diverse topics, from sequestration and leadership changes to cafeteria renovations and the search for a new registrar system.

Rice also used the meeting as a platform to formally introduce the new dean of USU's School of Medicine, Dr. Arthur Kellermann.

Kellermann said he was excited to join USU's mission and believes USU will continue catalyzing positive change.

"Our teaching of practitioners of medicine, nursing, public health and biomedical science are the change agents for healthcare in the Department of Defense, the Public Health Service, and for our country to move forward," he said.

Rice also talked about USU's possible collaboration with the Medical Education and Training Campus in San Antonio. The Texas campus provides healthcare training to enlisted



Photo by Christine Creenan-Jones

*Dr. Arthur Kellermann, dean of the School of Medicine at the Uniformed Services University, was a guest speaker at the Town Hall Meeting, Sept. 12.*

medical personnel, and USU is exploring the possibility of providing academic credit for METC programs.

In other, lighter campus news, Rice announced a new "Name the Cafeteria Contest" during the town hall meeting. The winning entry receives a \$10 gift card that can be used in the cafeteria or coffee shop. Refer to the last page of the Pulse for contest rules.

Before ending the town hall meeting, Rice mentioned upcoming USU events, including the Graduate School of Nursing's 20th anniversary celebration, Oct. 29, during which the school will be named for the late Senator Daniel K. Inouye.



## Save the Date

October 29, 2013 at 7 a.m.

Graduate School of Nursing 20th Anniversary Celebration and the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing Naming Ceremony

# USU researchers explore healing through nature

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

The Consortium for Health and Military Performance, a Defense Center of Excellence, at the Uniformed Services University is collaborating with The Institute for Integrative Health and other partner organizations to transform a parcel of wooded land on the grounds of the Naval Support Activity Bethesda into a tranquil sanctuary for wounded warriors through a program called The Green Road Project.

The new project is the brainchild of Dr. Fred Foote, an adjunct assistant professor in USU's Department of Preventative Medicine and Biometrics and a TIIH Scholar. The spacious respite will include walking paths, arbors and benches, places for meditation, reflection and commemoration, and a communal structure for group activities.

While the beauty of the new gardens will add to the natural appeal of NSAB's campus, the retreat has a larger, more profound purpose. The serene gardens are also being created to promote healing through natural, non-invasive interventions, via the intrinsic restorative power of nature.

"We hope the Green Road Project adds to the evidence base of how nature may invoke healing and how the physical environment can have a profound effect on well-being. However, we are also thrilled our wounded warriors and their families will soon have the opportunity to be in a beautiful, outdoor healing environment," said Dr. Patricia Deuster, director of CHAMP.

Enhancement of the existing natural woodland into a healing garden will occur in the coming months, and will be followed by a two-year-long research study to investigate its beneficial impact on wounded warriors and their families.

Researchers at CHAMP believe the scenic reserve will improve some of the more pervasive, hard-

to-treat symptoms of traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder by reducing stress and increasing overall health, well-being and resilience in a holistic manner. The consortium will test its theory through an innovative study that utilizes a battery of metrics to assess the healing effects of the green road experience through spiritual, psychological, physiological and molecular measures.

Research volunteers will be asked to keep journals, create audio recordings and take part in structured interviews and questionnaires before, during and after they use the Green Road. These findings will be further supported by objective biological data. Each volunteer will provide saliva and sweat samples so cortisol and other stress hormones can be measured, and heart rate and activity levels will be monitored in real-time.

Researchers at CHAMP will work with collaborating institutions to analyze the data and determine if the research subjects report acute changes in mental, emotional, social and physical functioning, and if these changes correlate with biological changes. Further studies will assess more long-term changes in stress reduction and PTSD symptoms and improved overall health and well-being with prolonged use of the Green Road over time.

"Although many people believe exposure to and use of green spaces can offer positive physical and mental health benefits, there isn't a lot of hard scientific evidence to



*Drs. Patricia Deuster and Marni Silverman are collaborating on research called The Green Road Project, which will explore the therapeutics effects of nature.*

Photo by Thomas Balfour

prove the association and/or causal effect. We believe findings from The Green Road Project will bring new evidence to the forefront, and hopefully lead to policy changes that incorporate integrative health modalities into mainstream medicine, so our wounded warriors get the best treatment possible for optimal recovery," said Dr. Marni Silverman, a senior scientist at CHAMP.

Although The Green Road Project is still in its infancy, it's already being lauded by prominent healing organizations. The TFK Foundation recently awarded The Green Road Project a coveted National Open Spaces Sacred Places Award this year, which is given to programs that recognize and study the transformational power of nature.

Visit <http://www.usuhs.edu/mem/champ.html> for more information about CHAMP research.

# USU surgeon commissions at 64 years old

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor



Photo by Denise Susini, U.S. Army 1st Medical Recruiting Battalion

*Army Col. (Dr.) Frederick Lough, a professor in the Department of Surgery at the Uniformed Services University, commissioned into active duty on Sept. 11, during a ceremony held at USU.*

Army Col. (Dr.) Frederick Lough, a professor in the Department of Surgery at the Uniformed Services University, took part in a commissioning ceremony that was both reverent and nostalgic, since he'd served before, and because his commission happened on the 12th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on America. Lough's ceremony was unique, too, since he was 64-years-old when he was sworn into active-duty military service again.

"I was given the skills by the country to be a physician and to employ those skills for those that are serving in harm's way, to ease the burden of their wounds, and save lives. That is just a great op-

portunity and a great gift. I am thrilled to be able to do this on a daily basis and to be back in the Army," he said.

Lough's return came on the heels of a highly successful career in cardiothoracic surgery. After graduating from West Point and earning his medical degree from George Washington University, he completed two residencies at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, and served as a military physician until 1987.

Lough joined the U.S. Army Medical Corps Reserves 20 years later and deployed to Afghanistan twice. On his second deployment, Lough was the deputy commander of a

field hospital near the Pakistani border, where the fighting was intense and battle injuries were severe.

"Colonel Lough's multiple deployments and his successful leadership of the George Washington Cardiac Surgery program bring a wealth of experience and skill to the department," said Navy Capt. (Dr.) Eric Elster, chairman of the Department of Surgery at USU.

Throughout his career, Lough has performed or participated in more than 10,000 open heart procedures, and soon he will be teaching future uniformed physicians the same life-saving surgical skills at USU as a fellow military officer.

# Sleep disorders common in servicemembers, treatment available

By Dana Crudo, writer for health.mil

Servicemembers returning home from combat are increasingly reporting problems with sleep, prompting the Defense Department to take action to deal with their complaints.

According to Dr. William Brim, deputy director of the Center for Deployment Psychology at the Uniformed Services University, the most common complaints shared by servicemembers returning from deployment are about the quantity and quality of their sleep.

In the 2011 Department of Defense Health Related Behaviors Survey of Activity Duty Military Personnel, less than half of active duty personnel reported getting the recommended seven to eight hours of sleep per night. The Army, Navy and Marine Corps reported getting the least amount of sleep.

“Sleep is considered one of our basic psychological needs,” Brim said at the 2013 Warrior Resilience Conference. “But what tends to happen within the military is that we will sacrifice sleep to get a mission done.”

This sacrifice has serious consequences.

“People don’t realize how sleep impacts so many areas of their lives,” said Dr. Liz Pollock, senior family fitness scientist at the Human Performance Resource Center at USU.

Sleep is physically and psychologically restorative. Poor sleep affects memory, attention, alertness, productivity, motivation and the ability to resolve conflicts and manage emotions. It is also associated with increased risk for accidents, relationship problems, weight gain and mental health con-



Courtesy photo

*Researchers at the Center for Deployment Psychology at the Uniformed Services University are training military and civilian medical personnel how to recognize and treat common sleep disorders among servicemembers.*

ditions, including anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

“The sooner people recover from a sleep disturbance, the less likely they will be affected, Brim said.

Military leaders recognize the importance of sleep and have launched several initiatives, including public service announcements, making sure that work schedules allow enough time for sleep and enforcing mandated sleep plans that state when a servicemember plans to rest and sleep. Sleep is also one of three key components that the Army is focusing on to keep soldiers healthy. The other two are physical activity and nutri-

tion. The Army calls this new approach the Performance Triad.

In addition, unit leaders can use a special tool developed by the Air Force that predicts the levels of fatigue and impairment servicemembers would have with a given work schedule. This helps to reduce the risk of fatigue.

Furthermore, the CDP is training military and civilian medical personnel to recognize common sleep disorders among servicemembers and how to treat them.

The number of servicemembers receiving treatment for insomnia, obstructive sleep apnea, circadian rhythm sleep disorders and nightmares is rising, according to Brim. Health care professionals rely on clinical interviews, questionnaires, sleep diaries and tests that measure sleepiness to diagnose sleep disorders. Other medical conditions must first be ruled out first, however.

Servicemembers are encouraged to talk to medical personnel if they are experiencing sleep problems, so they can get the appropriate help.

They’re also encouraged to practice healthy sleep habits.

“Sleep is a biological necessity, good sleep is a habit,” Brim said.

Proper sleep habits make a difference and contribute to overall wellness. Brim suggests avoiding nicotine, caffeine, alcohol and naps longer than 30 minutes. Getting enough exercise and having a healthy diet also make a big difference.

Visit [www.deploymentpsych.org/](http://www.deploymentpsych.org/) for more tips on healthy sleeping habits.

# USU announces newest members of AOA

By MC2 Brittney Cannady, writer

The newest members of Alpha Omega Alpha from the Uniformed Services University's Class of 2014 were announced, Sept. 16.

Fifteen new members were accepted into the Maryland Gamma Chapter of AOA, the national honor society founded in 1902. Students representing the head of their class were selected to apply for membership through a process that examines their academic accomplishments, research, publications and contributions to USU and outside communities.

"This fall, each of the applications submitted from the top 25 percent of the class of 2014 who were invited to apply, were incredibly strong and reflected the values of AOA incredibly well," said Air Force 2nd Lt. Alexander Knobloch, a medical student and president of the AOA society at USU.

Faculty councilor, Army Col. (Dr.) Patrick O'Malley, professor in the Department of Medicine at USU, also shared his thoughts on what it takes to be a member of the prestigious honor society.

"AOA is a marker of quality and prestige for both students and faculty that shows the inductees have demonstrated leadership in education, teaching and the community," he said.

Each year AOA holds biannual elections. Half are selected in the spring of their third year and half are selected during the fall of their fourth year.

"I'm incredibly humbled by the academic accomplishments of these fall AOA inductees, as well as their dedication to community service and leadership," said Knobloch. "I look forward to their future contributions to the Maryland

Gamma Chapter of AOA, the USU community, and the patient populations that will soon be fortunate enough to know their care."

## Class of 2014 AOA members

Matthew Byrne  
Ian Grasso  
Ally Ha,  
Neil Halonen  
Charlotte Kaplan  
Kai Hata  
Harris Kashtan  
Stephen Kasteler  
Alison Lane  
Elizabeth Marx  
Edward Park  
Jared Roberts  
Kelly (Rollman) Chohonis  
Jason Zack  
Alyssa (Zuehl) Dickey



Courtesy photo

## HPRC hosts wellness symposium

The Human Performance Resource Center at the Uniformed Services University sponsored a Human Performance Optimization and Wellness seminar at the Marine Corps University in Quantico, Va., Sept. 25-26.

The event was designed to encourage wellness through human performance optimization.

University personnel who attended the event focused on fuel (nutrition), burn (physical activity) and recovery (sleep). Each session was interactive and customized with mid-career Marine Corps officers in mind.

# USU researcher seeks injury reduction at national parks

By MC2 Brittney Cannady

Most people who visit national parks have positive experiences, but the rare fatal injuries that do occur are particularly tragic, said Dr. Deborah Girasek, director of Social and Behavioral Sciences in the Department of Preventive Medicine at the Uniformed Services University, during a seminar she hosted in Lecture Hall B, Sept. 18. Fatal accidents at national parks tend to affect young, healthy people, and are often witnessed by friends or family members.

At the seminar, Girasek expounded on this safety issue by discussing the needs assessment she recently completed in support of Yosemite National Park's Preventive Search and Rescue Program.

Her research explores ways to reduce unintentional injuries at Yosemite National Park, a popular natural attraction that sees more than four million visitors a year.

In an attempt to curb visitor deaths and injuries, Girasek launched her study in late June on the Mist Trail, a well-traveled hiking path at Yosemite. For 33 days, her team observed visitors and recorded how many times people left that trail and approached the Merced River. Every year, a small



*Dr. Deborah Girasek, director of Social and Behavioral Sciences in the Department of Preventive Medicine at the Uniformed Services University, completed a needs assessment in support of Yosemite National Park's Preventive Search and Rescue Program.*

number of visitors who make that choice wind up drowning.

"Water isn't really seen as dangerous, so it can be very deceptive," Girasek explained. She also expressed great admiration for those who answer the call to save visitors in trouble. "Another benefit of this work could be to reduce the need for hazardous swift water rescue attempts," Girasek said.

Her research included questionnaires completed by people who entered one of two "risk zones." They were asked where they had received information about the Mist Trail before setting out, and whether they believed leaving that

her analyses are complete. Girasek's hope is that understanding risk behavior patterns and visitors' reasons for leaving the trail will point to interventions that could be tested in the future.

"It has been a very rewarding collaboration," said Girasek, who is excited that her findings will be used to inform the park's future safety plans. Since her work was funded by the National Park Service's headquarters in Washington, the insights gained at Yosemite could be applied to other local national park service units with drowning hazards, such as Virginia's Great Falls Park.

Photo courtesy of the National Park Service

## Trivia Answer #2: Graduate School of Nursing 20th Anniversary

Congratulations to Linda Culp, a graphic artist at the Uniformed Services University, who was the first to answer last issue's trivia question: The Uniformed Services University will name its Graduate School of Nursing after this late senator from Hawaii, who was a World War II veteran and a long-time supporter of USU.

Her response, Daniel K. Inouye, is correct.



HELLO  
my name is

## YOU PICK A NAME FOR THE CAFETERIA.

The best idea wins a free lunch (\$10 value). All entries must be submitted no later than Oct. 18 via e-mail to

[Christine.Creenan-Jones@usuhs.edu](mailto:Christine.Creenan-Jones@usuhs.edu).

A panel of judges will choose their five favorites. The judges' favorites will become the final contenders in a university-wide vote at the end of the month. The name with the most votes wins and becomes our cafeteria's new handle.

*Get creative, but don't submit namesake entries. We are unable to consider submissions named after public or private figures.*