

Fall 2026 Newsletter

College of Nursing and Allied Health

October 2026 Newsletter

Greetings from Dean Tara Underwood

As we are now busy with the new Academic Year, I want to take this opportunity to thank our amazing faculty and staff for their support at the various events targeting our existing and new students that were held in August. Your commitment to the mission of growing enrollment and representing Middle Georgia State University's healthcare programs has been impactful. We currently have 2,112 students who have declared majors in the School of Health Sciences which is soon to become the College of Nursing and Allied Health. The renaming of our large unit, which provides program options on four of our five university campuses throughout Central Georgia, will continue to be home to the Department of Nursing, the Department of Rehabilitation Science & Fitness, and the Department of Respiratory Therapy and Health Science. Many of you have expressed your excitement about this change and I sincerely appreciate your support.

During the Summer, our faculty and staff continued to remain actively engaged in a variety of activities that will be shared in this quarterly issue of our newsletter. I hope you enjoy the many stories and endeavors featured in this publication.



Scrubs Camp

The Scrubs Camp this year hosted 24 students from the central Georgia and metro Atlanta region. In addition to interactive activities on the MGA Macon campus, the campers toured various areas at Piedmont Hospital and Atrium Navicent Hospital. The photo below includes an image of our Anatomage table which contains images of several human and animal cadavers that are used for educational purposes.



Conferences & Awards

AACN Conference

Denise Adams and Kim Tucker presented their research poster at the **American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) Conference**, representing Middle Georgia State University with excellence. Their scholarship reflects our faculty's commitment to advancing nursing education and strengthening the profession.



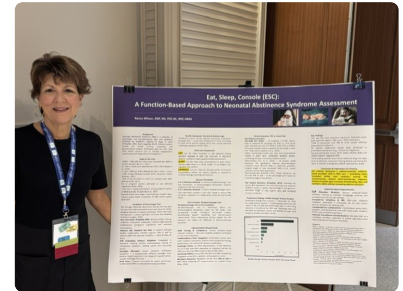
APTA Conference

Stacey O'Neal and Whitney Holmes attended the **PT/PTA Faculty Development Conference** in Portland, Oregon, gaining valuable strategies for active learning, adult learner engagement, personality-informed communication, and accreditation. The conference also provided opportunities to connect with physical therapy educators from across the nation.



AWHONN Conference

Nancy Wilson presented a poster at the **Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) Conference** in Jekyll Island on implementing the Eat, Sleep, Console (ESC) scoring system for neonatal abstinence syndrome. Her work highlights our nursing faculty's commitment to innovative practice and improving maternal and neonatal care.



AARC Conference

Jasmine Brown and Professor Nancy Guyse presented on **simulation in respiratory care education** at the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) Summer Forum Preconference in Bonita Springs, Florida. Their work showcases the innovative, hands-on learning experiences being developed within our respiratory therapy program.

AARC House of Delegates

Jasmine Brown represented Georgia as the state's newest **AARC Delegate** at the AARC House of Delegates, while **Teri Miller** served as **AARC Vice President of Internal Affairs**. Their national leadership demonstrates the expertise and dedication our faculty bring to the respiratory care profession.



GOTA Conference

Sharona Rubenstien, OTA alumni, and OTA Faculty **Jessi Sisa**, **Jessica Pipkin**, and **Betsy McDaniel** presented on the use of dance as an OT intervention technique in assisted living facilities at the Georgia Occupational Therapy Association (GOTA) in Athens, GA this October

Additionally, Occupational Therapy Masters students and alumni presented research on the following topics:

Normative, Concurrent, and Known Groups Validity of the Chicago-Quick Hand Function Test (C-QHFT)

Astassia Fields, Crystal Arnold, Kristen Dowdy, Eve Harrell, & Courtney Rozar

Advisors: Mary P Shotwell, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA; Amanda Davis, OTR/L



Concurrent Validity of the Screening Assessment of Sensory Integration (SASI) and the Sensory Profile 2

Francessca Chrabuszc, Sarah Kuismi, Skylynn Nguyen, & Noah Walker

Advisors: Mary P. Shotwell, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Amanda Davis, OTD, OTR/L

The Role of Occupational Therapy in UTIs in the Adult Population

Katlyn Buchanan, OTR, Brandy Clements, OTR, Mary Cummings, OTR, & Kevin West, OTR

Advisors: Mary P. Shotwell, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Amanda Davis, OTD, OTR/L, Amrendra Kumar PhD, OTR/L

Health Fairs at MGA



Throughout the 2025–2026 academic year, Middle Georgia State University nursing students actively participated in numerous health fairs and community outreach events across the University's campuses and surrounding communities. These service-learning experiences provided students with opportunities to apply classroom knowledge while promoting health, wellness, and disease prevention through community engagement.

Nursing students, under the supervision of faculty, provided health education, wellness counseling, blood pressure screenings, and other preventive health services at campus events and community-sponsored health fairs. Students engaged with individuals of all ages, offering education on healthy lifestyles, chronic disease prevention, nutrition, medication safety, and available healthcare resources. These activities strengthened students' communication, assessment, and patient education skills while fostering confidence in working with various populations.



Study Abroad

Honduras

During the Honduras mission experience, participants assist in operating community medical clinics by conducting patient assessments, obtaining vital signs, triaging patients, providing health education, organizing and dispensing medications under the supervision of licensed healthcare professionals, and supporting healthcare teams in delivering patient-centered care. In addition to clinical services, volunteers distribute food, hygiene supplies, and other essential resources to families while participating in community outreach and children's programs. During the days there, they saw 950 Medical and Dental Patients



The Honduras mission trip offers students a unique opportunity to apply nursing knowledge in a resource-limited environment while developing critical thinking, adaptability, cultural humility, and interprofessional collaboration skills. Participants gain firsthand experience addressing global health disparities and social determinants of health while strengthening their commitment to service and compassionate care.

Ireland

The Middle Georgia State University Ireland Nursing Study Abroad Program provides undergraduate and graduate nursing students with a unique opportunity to gain a global perspective on healthcare while earning academic credit. Hosted in partnership with South East Technological University (SETU) in Waterford, Ireland, the two-week immersive experience combines classroom instruction, healthcare site visits, cultural excursions, and collaborative learning with Irish faculty and students. The program is designed to enhance students' understanding of leadership, healthcare systems, nursing research, and evidence-based practice while developing cultural competence and global awareness.



Back To School Bash 🥳



Nursing faculty in Macon, Warner Robins, and Dublin had participating students compete in a PPE (personal protective equipment) donning race and a BEFAST stroke race to kick off the beginning of the semester.



New Physical Therapist Assistant Program !

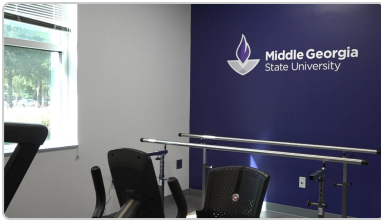
Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Middle Georgia State University is excited to welcome the inaugural cohort of its new Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program to the Dublin Campus in Fall 2026. The program prepares students to become compassionate, competent, and ethical physical therapist assistants who work under the direction and supervision of physical therapists to help patients improve movement, manage pain, and regain function.



Through classroom instruction, hands-on laboratory experiences, and clinical education, students will develop the knowledge and practical skills needed to serve patients across a variety of healthcare settings. The program places a special emphasis on meeting the rehabilitation needs of rural and underserved communities throughout Middle Georgia.

We are proud to welcome our first PTA students and look forward to watching them grow into skilled rehabilitation professionals who will make a meaningful difference in the lives of their patients and communities.



Middle Georgia State launches Physical Therapist Assistants program as need expected to grow

Middle Georgia State launches a physical therapist assistant program to address the high demand for healthcare providers in rural areas

[13wmaz.com](https://www.13wmaz.com)



Middle GA PTA on Instagram: "Wheelchair skills with a side of competition 🏁"

13 likes, 0 comments - middlega.pta on October 12, 2026:

"Wheelchair skills with a side of competition 🏁".

[instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com/middlega.pta)



Macon Tracks Running Club

Middle Georgia State University nursing students recently volunteered at the Macon Labor Day Road Race, helping support an event that welcomed more than 2,000 participants. Throughout the day, the students demonstrated professionalism, teamwork, and a strong commitment to service, working alongside race organizers and fellow volunteers to ensure the event ran smoothly. Their preparedness, reliability, and willingness to assist wherever needed earned high praise from event organizers, who noted that the students consistently exceeded expectations. The effort was coordinated by Bianca L. McBurse and Dr. Josephine Kamera, with support from Dr. Patrice Pierce,

and showcased the dedication and excellence of MGA nursing students both on campus and in the community.



New Staff Member 🎉

The Department of Nursing in the College of Nursing and Allied Health at Middle Georgia State University welcomes **Devon Raleigh** as its new Simulation Technician. Devon holds bachelor's and master's degrees in information technology from MGA and has served the University in academic support and student success roles. With experience in technical troubleshooting, instructional technology, and audiovisual support, he will assist with simulation equipment and laboratory preparation and maintenance, collaborating with nursing faculty to enhance hands-on learning across campuses. His technical expertise and commitment to student success will support the Department's mission to prepare future nursing professionals.



Convocation 💜

Congratulations to the following individuals for their years of service and commitment to the university: 🎓 🎓 🎓

15 Years

Josephine Kamera
Dana Wyatt

10 Years

Jasmine Brown
Kendra Russell
Christopher Smith

5 Years

Adrian Baker
Patrice Pierce
Jo Ann Saxon
Nancy Wilson

Academic Affairs Round Table Topics

Convocation provided an opportunity for faculty members to engage in roundtable conversations, sharing experiences, insights, and ideas while building connections across disciplines.

We're thankful to the following faculty for leading these conversations:

- Universal Design for Everyone - Betsy McDaniel
- "Stop Talking, Start Engaging": The 3-Pen Method for Exam Review -Chris Scoggins
- The Value of Interprofessional Education - Teri Miller
- Mindfulness Before Exams - Patrice Pierce
- Gallery Walks as an Active Learning Strategy - Shelly Hopko

Block Party in Cochran 

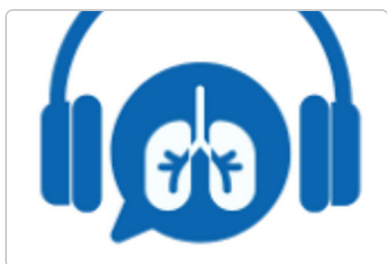


The Nursing and Rehabilitation Science Departments were happy to host a back-to-school block party with popsicles and games for students on their first week of classes. We're looking forward to an awesome year with all of our Nursing, OTA, and Rehabilitation Science Majors.



As we head into the next part of the semester, we're excited to keep learning, growing, and celebrating the accomplishments of our department. Thanks for reading, and remember to keep an eye out for upcoming events, opportunities, and highlights from our College of Nursing and Allied Health family.

Featured



Episode 107 - Terri Miller, HOSA, and Students @ Summer Forum

RT Sidebar · Episode

open.spotify.com

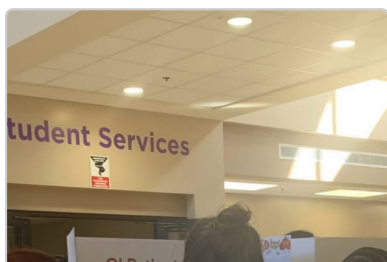


MGA Occupational Therapy Assistant Program on Instagram: "Behind the scenes at our Rehab Science + OTA Club hosted Wiffle Ball Tournament 🏏👥"

20 likes, 1 comments - mgaotaprogram on October 12, 2026:

"Behind the scenes at our Rehab Science + OTA Club hosted Wiffle Ball Tournament 🏏👥".

instagram.com



Middle Georgia State University on Instagram: "What a creative way to learn! #mganursing #middleganursingstudents"

49 likes, 1 comments - mganursing on October 9, 2026: "What a creative way to learn! #mganursing #middleganursingstudents".

instagram.com



Stay in Touch

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