Learn & Lead

Advance Your Career at SHRP
MDNJ is New Jersey’s university of the health sciences, the largest institution of its kind in the nation. The School of Health Related Professions (SHRP) is one of the university’s eight schools — and the largest — and offers post high school through post-doctoral programs on four campuses and on the Web.

The school has graduated more than 8,500 students, has 36 accredited programs, and grants degrees with 31 colleges and universities in NJ. It has a very strong online presence. With a network of 600 clinical affiliates, SHRP provides a seamless education for allied health professionals to advance from an associate degree through the PhD, including the advanced practice programs.

More than 1,400 students from 43 states and Canada study at SHRP. One-third are underrepresented minorities. SHRP is the predominant, or the only, education program in New Jersey for many of the allied health professions. Please take a few minutes to learn more about our school.

JULIE O’SULLIVAN MAILLET
SHRP INTERIM DEAN

ON THE COVER:
STEVEN MARIONNEAUX,
MASTER OF HEALTH SCIENCES-CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES TRACK, SHRP, 2009; MANAGER OF CLINICAL HEMATOLOGY LABORATORIES AT MEMORIAL SLOAN-KETTERING CANCER CENTER
What degrees and certificates are offered?
At the Master’s and doctoral level, SHRP offers professional degrees in biomedical informatics, clinical trial sciences, physician assistant, radiologist assistant, physical therapy and rehabilitation counseling, advanced practice degrees in clinical nutrition, informatics and psychiatric rehabilitation, and inter-professional degrees in health sciences and health care management. Most of the advanced practice programs, and all inter-professional programs, are fully Web-based. Doctoral programs prepare scholars and future faculty in the applied sciences of allied health. SHRP also offers undergraduate certificates and associate and bachelor degree level programs. At the undergraduate level, SHRP degrees include medical imaging sciences, clinical laboratory sciences, psychiatric rehabilitation, allied dental, health information management, allied health technologies, dietetics and health sciences.

Can you characterize SHRP as a pioneer?
Yes, we are leaders in: high quality, entry level education; advanced practice education; distance education; creating new programs in allied health such as biomedical informatics, psychiatric rehabilitation, clinical trial sciences, doctorate in clinical nutrition; and inter-professional education. We also developed the first UMDNJ multi-school collaborative programs in biopharma and health professions education.

What’s special about your advanced practice and post professional programs?
Many have short-term certificates that allow students to get their feet wet and then, if accepted, students can apply all credits to graduate degree programs. Many of the programs are inter-professional. Most are asynchronous (not requiring participants to be online at the same time), with limited synchronous and on-site requirements. Many of the advanced practice and post professional degrees are designed as accelerated programs, allowing students to apply credits earned in another college program toward the SHRP advanced programs.

What are your plans for the future of SHRP?
We plan to continue to have entry level programs to meet workforce needs with our students surpassing the percentage of the national averages on credentialing exams. For example, our PA program is ranked as one of the best in the country. Over the next five years, we plan to use technology to promote inter-professional, team-based education and more simulated experiences as part of learning. We are working to open an occupational therapy assisting program, which will be the only one in New Jersey, and a clinical doctorate in clinical laboratory sciences in 2012, which will be the first in the country. A number of our associate degree programs, such as respiratory care, will move to a baccalaureate level. We also are planning an inter-professional lab for clinical health research.

What does SHRP do in research?
Research has always been a component of our academic mission, but its emphasis has increased as we have developed more graduate programs. In spring 2011, our annual research day attracted a display of 47 posters from students and faculty. The keynote speaker addressed “Personalized Medicine and the Role of Allied Health Professions.”

The scope of our research is as broad as our disciplines, spanning from basic science to clinical research to educational research. Examples include: biochemical markers of stress in pre-diabetes; functional MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and cortical stimulation to learn about human motor skills; virtual reality and its use for post stroke individuals; ergonomic practices associated with microscope use; dose-finding trial for massage therapy for knee osteoarthritis; teeth whitening techniques; nutrition and oral health; impact of worksite wellness on employee health risk factors; cognitive behavioral therapy for post traumatic stress; peer employment support study; biofeedback to augment learning techniques.

We have a 35-year history of achievements and look forward to a bright future of further accomplishments. I invite you to learn more about UMDNJ’s School of Health Related Professions and what it can offer you. Go to: http://shrp.umdnj.edu.
To Karen Huhn, physical therapy is a vocation. She had a “true calling” to the profession as a junior in high school, volunteered at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation to make sure, and then never wavered from her goal. A practicing PT for 20 years, Huhn wanted more, and after six years of work she has it — a PhD in Health Sciences in the Rehabilitation and Movement Sciences track.

Her post-professional journey started with a Master’s degree from UMDNJ, where the stellar reputation of the rehabilitation and movement sciences faculty was a major attraction. “An outstanding faculty coupled with a tailored curriculum,” explains Judith Deutsch, PT, PhD, track coordinator, “prepares physical therapists to be clinician-scientists who can integrate knowledge from practice into research.”

The program offers a range of research opportunities by matching students with faculty expertise. “The possibilities are wide-ranging from basic to applied neuroscience and motor learning to educational research,” Deutsch points out, “as well as outcomes, ethical reasoning, musculoskeletal, neurological, pediatric and cardiopulmonary rehabilitation research.”

Huhn’s experience in this program bore this out. Her focus expanded beyond treatment to include teaching and educational research. Her mission: how to help others become better PTs.

This is more than an intellectual exercise for Huhn; she is a full time member of the rehabilitation and movement sciences faculty. She notes that there’s so much more information for students to learn these days, that they can do more and have greater responsibility. Her goal is to teach more in a shorter time and to avoid memorization without understanding. It’s a difficult but critical challenge. Student PTs learn from their patient experiences, but the trick is to ensure patient safety while the student is sharpening skills. Huhn’s answer to this puzzle was her doctoral project, a Web-based patient simulation program that allows students to examine virtual patients while the program tracks their clinical reasoning and provides feedback. Students gain valuable insight and the virtual patients are none the wiser.

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**PhD in Health Sciences - Rehabilitation and Movement Sciences Track**

- 60 credits
- Online and classroom-based
- For PTs with post-professional training and other health practitioners
- For more information: http://shrp.umdnj.edu/dept/PT/
hat do you get when you marry a love of medicine and a fascination with technology? You might be on track for a career in biomedical informatics. With the profusion of data in the medical/research sphere, and the constantly expanding capacity of computers, those with advanced technical skills and a strong science background can play pivotal roles in shaping medicine’s future.

Native New Jerseyan Othel Rolle took all the right steps to land his current job as a Group Manager of Business Intelligence and Collaboration for Avanade Inc. in Manhattan, where he designs strategic business solutions for the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries. With a BS in biology and chemistry from Bethune-Cookman University, two Master’s degrees, one in nutritional science from Tuskegee University and one in interactive telecommunications from NYU, and a strong interest in laboratory automation and clinical research, he worked for Novartis, Merck, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, and Bristol-Myers Squibb — as well as running his own business.

What he liked best about the PhD in Biomedical Informatics at UMDNJ was its “melding of health sciences and technology and its being part of a community of medical professionals, including physicians, researchers, and nurses, who are all really knowledgeable.” The course-orientation, he says, is far different than what’s offered in a straight computer engineering-technical program, such as at NJIT. “All of the computer work is related to healthcare and clinical science.” Rolle worked full-time while taking two years of courses and then researching and writing his dissertation entitled “An Ontology Driven Framework for the Analysis and Reporting of Oncology Combination Therapy Prescription Data.” He earned his PhD in 2010.

According to Syed Haque, PhD, professor and chair of SHRP’s Health Informatics Department, the program is among the pioneers in this field: it was the fourth to be founded in the U.S. and the first east of the Mississippi. “Computers are just a tool. They do things fast,” he comments. “Science is where discoveries are made.” His vision for his program is to train specialists to provide “on-time, online information” for science, integrating the newest technology into research and clinical care.

“We apply computers to human problems,” explains Haque, “including drug design, hospital information management, diagnosis and treatment of disease — accessing expertise from around the world.” The department offers a post-baccalaureate certificate, a Master’s degree and a PhD with specialization in one of four core areas: bioinformatics (pharmaceutical and genomic); clinical and nanomedicine informatics (medical imaging); hospital/healthcare management informatics (clinical and healthcare outcomes research and management); and consumer and public health informatics, including research and development in disease surveillance and mapping.

Haque contends that graduates are in great demand, often starting employment before they have their degree in hand.

**Biomedical Informatics**

- Post-baccalaureate certificate in health informatics; MS and PhD in biomedical informatics
- Certificate and MS can be completed entirely online
- For entry to MS program, BA or BS in any health or biological sciences field, computer science, engineering or equivalent field. For entry to PhD, MS in same fields.
- 36 credits for MS; 61 credits for PhD
- Biopharma Initiative is integrally connected to the Department of Health Informatics and offers several certificates
Interdisciplinary Studies

PhD in Health Sciences
- 60 credits
- Online
- For healthcare professionals or individuals working in the healthcare field with Master’s degrees
- 4 Tracks: Movement Sciences, Nutritional Sciences, Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Tailored Track

Master of Health Sciences/MS in Health Care Management
- 30 credits
- Online
- For healthcare professionals with bachelor’s degree
- 5 Tracks for MS in Health Sciences: Health Professions Education, Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Integrative Health and Wellness, CMR, Tailored Track
- 3 Tracks for MS in Health Care Management: Management and Leadership, CMRI, Health Care Informatics

BS in Health Sciences
- 120 - 130 credits
- Online
- For associate degree/professionally prepared, credentialed healthcare professionals
- 4 Tracks: Imaging Science, Health Services Management and Education, Coordinated Dietetics, Allied Dental

For more information: http://shrp.umdnj.edu/dept/IDS/

FACULTY MEMBERS:
STANDING: MEG KILDUFF, PHD
SEATED LEFT TO RIGHT: AL HEUER, PHD; CHERYL BELLAMY, MS; AND BOB DENMARK, PHD
wo members of a dynamic community of online learners — one from Illinois, the other from Michigan — followed the same path to SHRP. Both started at Wyeth pharmaceuticals and made the transition when that company was acquired by Pfizer. Both heeded the advice of a “career pathways” counselor at Wyeth, who himself had completed the SHRP program, to enroll. They each had earned credits at the Certified Medical Representative Institute, which they learned could be applied toward a graduate degree from SHRP. But each had her own ultimate objective. And a degree from the Interdisciplinary Studies program provided the means.

Patricia Gregolunas is a registered nurse with a bachelor’s degree and 29 years in the pharmaceutical industry. The mother of three turned what could have been a career setback into an opportunity. She was downsized from her management position at Wyeth and thought that a Master’s degree would make her more marketable in the future. Although she transitioned to Pfizer as a therapeutic specialty representative, her enrollment in the Master’s program enabled her to compete successfully for a job that “preferred a Master’s degree.” She received that Master’s in Health Sciences in May.

The Batavia, Illinois, resident now holds a position that is new to her and to Pfizer — nurse educator for the state of Illinois. “Completing the program and getting my Master’s gave me the additional knowledge I need to successfully perform in this new role,” Gregolunas reports.

Meanwhile in Detroit, Barbara Romig was completing her second online degree from the SHRP program. She graduated from college with a degree in microbiology, which she translated into a 25-year career as a field sales representative in the pharmaceutical industry. She completed her Master’s in Health Sciences in January 2010 and is on schedule to receive a PhD with a concentration in allied health and clinical education in a couple of years.

“This program has been so different from my day job,” Romig notes. “It has expanded what I do in an extraordinary way.” In fact, her research — a literature review of job satisfaction among allied health faculty — was published in the Journal of Allied Health. Her topic has particular relevance. She is already collaborating with an SHRP faculty member to teach a course in research design here and is mentoring students in the Master’s program. She adds, “I couldn’t have done it without the supportive faculty at SHRP. The experience was tremendous. Can you imagine? One professor even made statistics come alive online.”

In fact, all Department of Interdisciplinary Studies programs are entirely online. They rely on a collaboration among the school’s various departments to take practicing healthcare professionals — from undergraduate to doctoral levels — beyond clinically based disciplines to focus on management, leadership, education and research. Since most of the students are employed full time, they can work at their own pace on courses that are always relevant. “Every course, every exercise is specific to healthcare,” explains Ann Tucker, DEd, associate professor and department chair. And that includes four degrees in 16 different tracks, ranging from health services management and nutritional sciences to allied dental, clinical laboratory sciences, and integrated health and wellness.
Teresa Johnson had a BS and MA in dietetics already under her belt, but after a 16-year career hiatus to raise her family, she set her sights on a doctorate. She had begun teaching at Troy University in Troy, Alabama — with 30,000 students, that state's second largest university — but knew that a doctorate would be the key to promotion and tenure.

After exploring online options, she found the doctorate in clinical nutrition at SHRP, the only one like it in the country. But would this one-of-a-kind program be recognized everywhere? The dean of her school reviewed the curriculum, was impressed and gave approval. Johnson started the program in 2005.

“The very first course and I was blown away,” she remembers. “It was rigorous with a capital R. I teach people who are going to be clinicians and I work as one myself. This was just the kind of education I needed.” Plus, she notes that the online experience was actually better than the traditional classroom. “We heard not just from one teacher, but from experts in the field,” she adds. “There’s nothing like getting instruction from advanced practitioners with boots on the ground.”

Johnson is an assistant professor at Troy and teaches nutrition to nearly 300 students each semester from a variety of programs from nursing to sports training. With her DCN, she is now on track for promotion to associate professor. She spent most of her RD career working with children with developmental disabilities, and her research project at SHRP explored the effectiveness of a pediatric obesity program on children’s weight. In fact, she still works two or three times a month at pediatric clinics.

While a student, she published several manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals, building her scholarship portfolio as she progressed in the program. “Our graduates have the critical thinking and scientific skills needed for clinical dietetics practice, management, research and leadership,” explains Riva Touger-Decker, PhD, RD, department chair. “The Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition program, the only advanced practice doctorate in the U.S. for Registered Dietitians, provides RDs with the knowledge and skills to become advanced practitioners through coursework, a clinical residency and outcomes research.”

The DCN is a Web-based program designed to be completed on a part-time basis while working. Johnson adds: “It’s a good, strong doctorate. Other states are looking at similar programs and should look to New Jersey. They have it nailed down.”

Lauren Kolesa was a registered dietitian at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center with responsibility for the outpatient pediatric clinics, where she worked with a high risk population of overweight, underweight and malnourished children. But as a mother coping with the demands of two small children herself, she moved from the hospital environment to start a private nutrition counseling practice in Morris County. Her patients came in with lots of questions and a variety of conditions, and in order to be a “confident practitioner at the top of my game,” Kolesa enrolled in graduate level courses in the Department of Nutritional Sciences. In 2007, she made the decision to work toward her Master's degree in clinical nutrition. She is committed to the clinical aspect of dietetics but saw that with a graduate degree there were academic and research possibilities as well.
Kolesa left her private practice in 2010 and is now a clinical instructor in the employee weight management and wellness program at UMDNJ. What she loves about her position, and what her new degree is preparing her for, is the clinical research component. She is gathering data from the 135 participants in the program that will help measure the impact on their lives. “I see myself as an educator,” Kolesa explains. “I need to find ways to inspire people to make significant lifestyle changes.” She hopes her research will provide much of the guidance.

The MS in clinical nutrition is geared for credentialed registered dietitians (RD) who want to expand their knowledge and skills, according to Laura Byham-Gray, PhD, RD, program director. “It’s not an entry-level program for the dietetics profession,” she explains, “but rather it represents post-professional education that enhances their knowledge and hones their practice skills, positioning them for higher level career opportunities in clinical dietetics.”

Dana Ailor, an RD at two Florida skilled nursing facilities, agrees.

Ailor achieved three academic degrees from a distance. One was offered through the SHRP Coordinated Program in the Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences. After becoming an RD, she continued on to earn the Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition (MS). She found the online format was just what she needed as she awaited the arrival of her first child, and in fact she used her maternity leave to concentrate on completing her thesis. “I actually felt more challenged by this program than in any classroom setting,” she says. She believes that this graduate level program has enabled her to better serve her patients.

For more information: http://shrp.umdnj.edu/dept/nutr/index.html
twenty-three years ago, an unexpected encounter with a homeless Vietnam War veteran led 18-year-old Aaron Levitt to his current profession. Levitt is director of research and project evaluation at the Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS) in Manhattan, which provides assistance for those who are, or were previously, homeless, and have serious and persistent mental illness, HIV, AIDS and/or substance abuse issues.

With a BA in political science, Levitt knew he had to further his education. “The agency I work for has a national reputation and I was painfully aware I didn’t have the training or credentials expected for somebody in my position,” he says.

He looked for a part-time program that would complement his work. “I felt that it didn’t make much sense to quit my great job to complete a degree that was going to qualify me for my job,” Levitt says.

He decided on psychiatric rehabilitation. “It’s a good fit. Not only does it look at mental illness in depth, but it is person-centered, rather than illness focused. I want to help people have a home, function in the workplace, and have an independent social life and be self-sustaining,” he states.

Currently, Levitt is a part-time PhD student in SHRP’s Department of Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Professional Counseling in Scotch Plains. “The courses have improved my training and presentation skills, made vital contributions to my core research and evaluation work, and been critical in helping me with my dissertation,” he says.

SHRP offers several options in the psychiatric rehabilitation field, including: associate and bachelor’s degrees to train individuals to provide direct care psychiatric rehabilitation services in community mental health programs; an MS in psychiatric rehabilitation that prepares administrators and supervisors; a rehabilitation counseling Master’s; and the PhD for future researchers and faculty.

“This is the only department of its kind in the nation,” says Kenneth Gill, PhD, founding chair and professor in the department. “Our faculty are leaders in psychiatric rehabilitation — researchers, authors of the first true introductory text in the field, shapers of mental health policy and founders of the certification credential in psychiatric rehabilitation.”

“Students can enter at any post-secondary level, earn a degree, move into their careers, and continue their education later in their careers,” explains Gill. “Our rehabilitation counseling program is the only one in the state and one of the top programs in the nation.”

Levitt would eventually like to balance his nonprofit service work with more teaching and basic research. “Being able to combine direct service to clients with research, teaching and program development is what I like so much about my field,” he says. “Done well, it can help people with serious mental illnesses transform their lives.”

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**Psychiatric Rehabilitation & Counseling Professions**

**Psychiatric Rehabilitation**

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychiatric Rehabilitation (PsyR)
- Research-based degree for persons in psychiatric rehabilitation field
- 76 credits, including research thesis; full or part-time
- Some courses online, core courses at Scotch Plains campus

PhD in the Health Sciences Specialization in Psychiatric Rehabilitation
- 60 credits of which 18 or more are in psychiatric rehabilitation
- Online, full-time

Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling: Community Counseling Track
- 51 credits
- Full or part-time; some courses only in summer semester
- Scotch Plains and Stratford campuses

Master of Science Psychiatric Rehabilitation Leadership Track
- 36 credits; online, full or part-time

For more information:
http://shrp.umdnj.edu/dept/psy/index.html
Bringing to market new drugs and devices has become a complicated process requiring the skills of specialized and talented clinical research professionals. The Clinical Trial Sciences program at SHRP began as a collaboration between the University and the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries in New Jersey. Now students from California to the Carolinas are enrolled in an online Master’s or post-baccalaureate certificate program in clinical trial sciences, preparing to understand trials, research design, ethics, regulatory processes and statistical methodology.

The Master’s program offers three specialization tracks: Clinical Trials Management and Recruitment Sciences, Clinical Trials Informatics, and Regulatory Affairs. Certificates are available in each of the specialty areas, but for many they are the stepping stones to a Master’s degree, according to program director Barbara Gladson, PhD.

Pennsylvania resident Brendan O’Neill is a good example. One of the first certificate students, he actually helped design the Master’s program that he just completed. His certificate concentration was in patient recruitment but he sees the broader requirements of the Master’s degree as expanding his knowledge into areas where he had limited experience. O’Neill is a group leader for the Global Trial Optimization group at Merck, where he has been for 10 years. The group looks at protocol feasibility, site selection and patient recruitment and retention in clinical trials. The global nature of his assignment takes him around the world. “Online learning is perfect for someone like me who’s always traveling somewhere on the job,” O’Neill says. “Plus I really enjoyed the dialogue with faculty and other students.”

“Trials and regulations are so complex,” program director Gladson explains. “You need someone who understands more than just monitoring the trial.” The program gives its graduates that depth and breadth. “We require electives in the areas beyond their specialization,” Gladson notes. “The diversity of the program makes our graduates very marketable.” In fact, four recent students who entered the program without jobs are now gainfully employed, in part boosted by their participation in the coursework offered within the Biopharma program.

O’Neill credits the industry expertise of the faculty for the program’s relevance. “For them, it’s not just theory,” he observes, “but practice. And this adds an important dimension to what we learn.”
MDNJ has one of only 11 programs nationwide to train radiologist assistants. If you’ve never heard of this career, you’re not alone. Although it’s relatively new, the job outlook is excellent (a shortage is projected through 2030) and the current average hiring salary in this area is $100,000 plus. The aging of the baby boomers, and the proliferation of advanced radiological equipment and procedures, are fueling this profession’s growth.

Gladys Montane, MA, RT, is the director of SHRP’s Department of Medical Imaging Sciences, which started accepting Master’s students in 2004. “In the past, radiologic technologists were leaving this field, because it offered no avenues for advancement. With so many aging boomers, we couldn’t afford to lose any of our professionals.”

The SHRP program currently has eight students and five more are scheduled to begin in the fall. Two part-time, online bachelor’s programs, one in medical imaging sciences and one in diagnostic imaging technologies — offered in conjunction with Thomas Edison State College — prepare those without a bachelor’s degree to apply to the Master’s level program. “These programs cater to working professionals,” Montane comments.

Keith Alvarado, MS, RRA, who earned his Master’s from SHRP in 2009, says that UMDNJ was one of only two radiologist assistant (RA) programs in the country when he began in 2004 — the other was in California. Since he was working in Manhattan, location was a primary consideration. “Also, the structure of the program allowed me to continue working full-time,” he says.

It took Alvarado three and a half years to complete his graduation requirements. While “in school,” he continued his job as a radiologic technologist for Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center’s interventional radiology department. He now works there as a radiologist assistant. His student years were “hectic at times but definitely not impossible,” he remarks.

According to Montane, a Master’s level RA is prepared to take on many of the duties of a physician-radiologist — minus reading films. “Students entering the program are already seasoned professionals in their field,” she states, “ready to broaden their scope of practice.”

Each student works with one radiology-mentoring group for the duration of their studies — an aspect that Alvarado really liked. “This allows for a stronger relationship and comfort level than rotating through multiple clinical sites,” he comments.

Most RAs work in a hospital-based setting, the rest in a group practice of radiologists — as part of the team. Nine states, including New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island, currently license RAs. Professionals in this state — Montane among them — are currently working toward licensure for RAs in NJ.
Dental hygienist Melissa Damatta set her sights on earning a degree that would prepare her to be a clinical instructor. A May 2011 graduate of SHRP’s Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences (BSHS) program, she worked full-time as a dental hygienist while taking six years to finish her BS degree one or two courses at a time. “This is just the kind of student that the program was designed for,” says Cindy Schroeder Drucks, an associate professor in the Department of Allied Dental Education and student advisor for this program. Like students in the BSHS-Allied Dental Concentration, Drucks wanted to expand her career options beyond dental assisting or dental hygiene, while remaining in this field. She completed the dental hygiene program at SHRP, and then went on to earn first a BS degree, followed by a Master’s degree in health education.

Drucks says her students are enthusiastic about the program’s wide variety of courses, including offerings in educational methodology, research and management as well as its small size, affording personalized attention. Most students are part-time, says Drucks, taking one or two courses each semester, while continuing employment. They can take as little as two years and up to eight years to complete the degree, provided they are enrolled in at least one course per semester.

The program is a collaboration with Thomas Edison State College and is completely online, except for a required one semester, one-day-per-week internship — shadowing a mentor on the clinic floor on the Scotch Plains and Newark campuses — arranged based on each student’s schedule. Students’ ages range from their early 20s, those continuing on after earning certification as a dental assistant or licensure as a dental hygienist, to their 50s. Credits earned from UMDNJ’s dental assisting and dental hygiene programs can be applied toward the bachelor’s degree.

Drucks’ responsibilities as an academic advisor involve contacting students at the time of application, meeting each one when accepted, and then tracking their coursework until graduation with as-needed meetings. The need for allied dental educators — at community colleges, vocational schools, colleges, academic health centers and dental schools — is strong because of the increasing demand for trained dental assistants, dental hygienists and dental lab technicians. Damatta has already been hired as clinical adjunct faculty at UMDNJ.

Drucks says that those in the BS program are headed for a variety of careers — primarily in education, insurance and in pharmaceutical companies, where they do marketing and sales of dental products as well as filling management roles. “There are corporate positions for which the degree is required for consideration,” she says.

Out-of-state students can complete the program with special provisions to do an internship near home. All applicants must be graduates of an accredited dental assisting, dental hygiene or dental laboratory technician program and obtain a license in the state where they will be completing the program.
here was a time when you could get a job as a medical coding trainee and receive on-the-job training at a hospital or medical facility and learn as you went along. The key to becoming proficient included a good memory and a flair for numbers. No more. What has changed is the increasing use of electronic health records (EHR), which broadens and alters job responsibilities. For example, technicians must be familiar with EHR computer software, maintaining EHR security, and analyzing electronic data to improve healthcare information.

A good memory and an affinity for numbers are still important because now, as then, a medical coding professional assigns numeric and alphabetical codes to facilitate data collection on diagnoses, procedures and treatments for providers in multiple healthcare settings. The data collected is essential in tracking healthcare for facility planning, public policy decisions and reimbursement to providers and patients.

SHRP offers a medical coding certificate through its Department of Biomedical Informatics. Students have the option of continuing on for a BS in Health Information Management (HIM), as most of the coursework in the certificate program applies to its bachelor’s program.

Bonnie Jaye Ivler, a May 2011 graduate, exercised that option. She received a BS in Health Information Management and was recognized for her outstanding academic performance. She credits Barbara Manger, MPA, associate professor and program director for the Coding Certificate Program.

“She is an unbelievable teacher,” says Ivler. “She is a great taskmaster and does not ‘baby’ her students. She can be hard on us at times because coding is difficult, but she prepares you well for the real world.”

The Newark-based program is offered on a full- or part-time basis with most of the courses offered in the evening. Students should be able to complete the program in four semesters. In order to be awarded a certificate, they must complete a 112-hour, hands-on coding laboratory to reinforce the mastery of coding. Graduates will then be able to assume positions at various healthcare providers such as hospitals, physician offices and insurance companies.
n and out of the laboratory, opportunities within the field of clinical laboratory sciences are expanding. For medical laboratory scientists (MLS) on the move, graduate education with an emphasis on leadership is key.

Nadine A. Fydryszewski, PhD, MLS, associate professor and coordinator for the clinical laboratory science graduate program, explains: “Our graduate students have already developed laboratory psychomotor skills. At the advanced degree level, our educational focus is on advanced practice in laboratory science, management and leadership.”

UMDNJ’s Master’s in Health Sciences in the Clinical Laboratory Sciences Track (MSHS-CLS) is an online program that provides ample opportunity for student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction, as Steven Marionneaux can attest.

Marionneaux, a 2009 MSHS-CLS graduate, is the manager of the clinical hematology laboratories at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. “This program was something I had meant to do for years,” he explains. “Even though I was already in management, I wanted to expand my knowledge.” He shares this knowledge as a speaker at conferences and workshops around the country and also believed that an advanced degree would add to his credibility. And so he embarked on the online program at SHRP, feeling somewhat uneasy at first about what might be expected of him.

Marionneaux adjusted easily. “What makes this program so great,” he says, “is you can fit it around your schedule.” He apparently did this with great success. Working full time, he took one course at a time over five years. His 4.0 average is testament to the time and effort he invested. Now starting a PhD program at SHRP, he is also assistant adjunct professor at UMDNJ and adjunct lecturer at Hunter College in New York, and instructs residents and fellows in hematology at New York Presbyterian Hospital as well.

Marionneaux sums it up: “I’m smarter because of the program.”

Program coordinator Fydryszewski is looking ahead. The clinical laboratory science community has proposed a new program, the Practice Doctorate in Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS) to provide an educational and practice career ladder for lab professionals. SHRP is currently developing and seeking approvals for a DCLS program, which they believe will be the first in the country.
UMDNJ-School of Health Related Professions

Fast Facts

Year founded 1976
Campus locations Newark, Scotch Plains, Piscataway, Stratford, the Web
Number of programs 36
Number of online programs 12 are 100% online
Degrees granted PhD, DCN, DPT, MS, BS, AS, AAS, graduate and undergraduate certificate programs
Academic affiliates 31
Average number of students each year 1,400
Number of alumni 8,726

Centers and Institutes
- Center for Advanced and Continuing Education
- Center for Health Informatics
- Center for the Study and Promotion of Recovery from Severe Mental Illness/Integrated Employment Institute
- Dental Hygiene Clinic at Scotch Plains
- Institute for Complementary and Alternative Medicine
- Institute for Nutrition Interventions
- Newark Therapy Services
- UMDNJ's BioPharma Education Initiative
- Wellness for Life Clinic for Metabolic Syndrome and Mental Illness at Scotch Plains

For further information, please contact:
Enrollment Services
shrpadm@umdnj.edu
Telephone: 973-972-5454

Or visit Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Stanley S. Bergen Building - Room 149
65 Bergen Street
Newark, NJ 07101-1709