

THE REID REPORT

JEFFERSON COLLEGE of HEALTH SCIENCES WELCOMES

DOUGLAS SOUTHARD PH.D., M.P.H., P.A.-C.

Jefferson College of Health Sciences welcomes the arrival of a new academic leader. Dr. Douglas Southard joins us as Dean for Academic and Student Services, where he will oversee faculty and student activities related to teaching and student life. “It’s going to be a big job, particularly as the College grows larger and adds graduate level programs. You have to realize, though, that growth is what higher education is all about and I look forward to that challenge.”

Southard is no stranger to the College. After spending nine years on the faculty at Virginia Tech, he joined Jefferson in 1996 to develop the first physician assistant program in Virginia. Three years later the program was fully accredited and had graduated its first class of students. To date, the program has produced over 140 graduates, many of whom are now practicing in family or internal medicine, cardiology, emergency medicine, and orthopedics throughout Southwest Virginia.

As Dean, Southard will supervise all academic programs including the new Master’s of Science in Nursing. He’s had a lot of experience working with healthcare professionals from a variety of backgrounds. Southard was trained as a physician assistant at Johns Hopkins, where he also obtained a master’s degree in public health. Because of his interest in how an individual’s thinking and behavior affect health, he later obtained his doctorate in clinical psychology from Virginia Tech.

He’s worked in a wide variety of inpatient and outpatient settings, including Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, Duke University Medical Center, and Johns Hopkins Hospital. “For most of my professional life,



Photo by Ian Brasham

I’ve worked best when I’m a member of an integrated healthcare team helping patients manage complex medical problems such as heart disease and chronic pain. In a similar way, I believe we’re developing a close-knit team of healthcare professionals here at the College to promote the growth of our academic programs.”

Southard is also an entrepreneur who is not afraid to take risks and make things happen. Five years ago, he started a company, now at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, that specializes in the development of Internet-enabled software to help patients manage heart disease. The company is

currently testing a new computer game that uses patent pending technology to help children become more physically active. “Computer technology will become increasingly important as we explore new ways to learn — whether it is an anatomy lesson for a beginning respiratory care student or discussing a healthy diet with a patient with advanced diabetes. As educators in higher education, we must prepare our students to utilize technology, as it will be critical to their clinical success.”

Southard’s dual role as leader of academic functions and student life keeps him close to teaching and learning on campus. He often can be found in the hallways and classrooms talking to students and faculty. “You have to be where it’s happening if you want to stay in touch with the student experience. We’re hoping that alumni will be interested in talking with our current students as well. Students need role models and the sage advice only alumni can provide.” •

New Employees

A warm welcome to all of our new employees. **Sharon Hatfield, R.R.T., M.B.A.**, respiratory therapy program director; **Chase Poulsen, R.R.T., M.A.**, director of clinical education and assistant professor of respiratory therapy; **Kathleen Williams, R.N., Ph.D.**, associate professor of nursing; **Haifa Al-Zubadi, M.Ed.**, assistant professor of mathematics; **Bonny Dillon, Ph.D., BCC.**, assistant professor of humanities/social sciences; **Stan Willenbring, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of science; **Mark Raby, M.A.**, assistant professor of distance learning; **Teresa Farley, R.N., B.S.N.**, teaching assistant and academic advisor for nursing and **Patricia Airey, M.A., P.A.C.**, assistant professor and clinical coordinator in the physician assistant program. We have also added many new adjunct faculty to our teaching family and some very capable new staff members, including **Sarah Ross**, admissions counselor; **William Schaaf**, admissions counselor; and **Michelle Wirt**, program secretary. As the College family grows so do our diversity and experience. Welcome All! •