Meet some of the stellar student-athletes and recent alumni in the College of Science and Health. Read more on page 4.
Science and mathematics often operate on certainties. There are 25 prime numbers between 1 and 100. The Earth revolves around the sun. Cells are the basic units of life. That said, there are plenty of mutable, unknown and evolving conditions within the disciplines, which is partly what makes these fields so exciting. New processes, tools, techniques and inquiry advance our scientific knowledge regularly, and updated teaching approaches follow suit. Dean Gerry Koocher reflects on some of the changes he’s witnessed and discusses how those transformations have affected the education of today’s students.

How have degrees in the sciences changed since you were an undergraduate?

Many scientific and technological advances have dramatically altered our knowledge base and the ways we teach in the years since you graduated from college. Look at the cellphone in your pocket. It has far better technology and more computing power than the room-size computers I was taught to program using punch cards and PL-1 language.

In addition to more advanced scientific content, the skills students must master have also shifted. Forget about learning to calibrate an analytical balance or operate a keypunch machine. Start thinking about DNA sequencers, virtual reality devices, programmable medical devices, 3-D printers and vibration-free laser tables. Many experiments on topics ranging from the creation of molecules to the formation of galaxies can now take place as computer simulations.

Social media and perpetual internet access have driven many changes in students’ preferences and approaches to learning. Students want the ability to rent a digital textbook or view podcasts of classes 24/7/65. Faculty members are busy designing online and hybrid classes while strategizing how to avoid internet-driven distractions in class and maintain strong academic standards.

Our current students have a greater depth of scientific knowledge, access to far more advanced tools and more ways to study and explore than I ever dreamed of as an undergraduate. They will leave DePaul exceptionally well prepared to lead a new generation of scientific accomplishment and generate new products and discoveries that will surprise and delight us all.

Do you have a question for Dean Koocher? Send your question to krohagem@depaul.edu, and you may see an answer in an upcoming issue.
By virtue of their gender and passions, CSH female student-athletes at DePaul are bucking these trends. “While I haven’t personally been insulted for being a women’s basketball player or a female mathematician, I’ve witnessed it in the world,” Podkowa says. “People will say negative things about the WNBA, for example.” Those who know Podkowa primarily as a basketball superstar are sometimes a bit shocked to discover she majored in actuarial science; they might be equally surprised to learn that Podkowa, who graduated with a 3.8 GPA, was a three-time BIG EAST All-Academic Team honoree, an eight-time member of the Dean’s List, and a nine-time BIG EAST Scholar-Athlete. By virtue of her skill, intelligence, and generosity, Podkowa says, “When you come to DePaul, you become a Musketeer. You’re not just a student or an athlete, you’re a student-athlete.”

Evidence of Podkowa’s stature as an athlete and an academic is reflected in her response to criticism. “People will say negative things about the WNBA, for example. It felt impossible,” admits Podkowa. Coach Doug Bruno (LAS ’73, MA ’88) expected his players to excel not only on the court, but also in the classroom, even if that meant his athletes went directly from the court to the showers. Podkowa says, “I was always looking for ways to get better in the classroom. Coach Bruno expected us to balance both. I think he expected us to excel in both.”

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in the athletics academic advising room, and when she got an A in a particularly tough course, she couldn’t wait to share the news with Bruno and Jill Hollembeak (EdD ’15), assistant director of athletics academic advising.

Travel schedules for Division I student-athletes are notoriously intense, which can make it difficult to keep up with coursework, lectures and labs. “Last fall, I missed every single biology test,” Johnson notes. “The key is to give your professors a heads-up well ahead of time.” It doesn’t hurt to deliver an outstanding academic performance either; Johnson holds a 3.77 GPA. “My roommates and I love the library,” she says. “We’re there all the time.” Since two of her roommates are also soccer players and CSH students, they motivate each other to succeed.

Johnson was rated the No. 22 high school player in her home state of Texas, but she wanted to go someplace new for college. While DePaul’s location and soccer team were the initial draw, the psychology department’s strong reputation added to the university’s appeal. Johnson plans to pursue a career as a sports psychologist, and she recently served as a research assistant for Associate Professor Joseph Mikels’ study on exercise and older adults. When Johnson was injured at the beginning of last season, she channeled sports psychology principles to help stay mentally tough. Johnson benefited from other psychology fundamentals as well, especially the relationship between anxiety and performance.

Skorseth’s career goal also relates to sports. Thanks to DePaul’s Pathways Honors Program (see the spring 2016 issue of Scientia at bit.ly/ScientiaCSH), the health sciences major and computational physics and biology minor has already been accepted into the Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science (RFUMS) in North Chicago. While she could have enrolled after her junior year, Skorseth wanted to stay at DePaul to finish out her fourth year of athletic eligibility. For the past two years, Skorseth has been pursuing an independent study with RFUMS Professor Patrick T. Knott on asymmetric running patterns and standing postures. Her paper on the subject is being readied for journal submission. “I really like how everyone in the athletics department understands that we also need to focus on our future careers,” says Skorseth, who holds a 4.0 GPA, has won numerous scholarships and was named the most outstanding performer in DePaul cross-country and track in 2015. “On the flip side, the professors are incredibly supportive of our athletic involvement.”

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In fact, these student-athletes say that academics and athletics often complement each other in fruitful ways. “You develop focus and goal-setting very early on when you’re an athlete,” Lentì affirms. “I think that really helped when I was taking tests.” Indeed, she recently scored in the 95th percentile on the Medical College Admission Test. “In basketball, studying for a game is like studying for a test,” Podkowa says. “When you learn a new play, you might not understand it at first, so you ask questions and study it, just like you do when learning something new in the classroom.”

They are all quick to emphasize that support from family, friends, coaches, teammates and faculty members contributed hugely to their success. “One of the hardest things about college is figuring out where you fit in, but I had an instant family in the athletics department,” Johnson says. Lentì adds that she became friends with CSH athletes across sports because they all spent so much time in the athletics center and science buildings. “Being an athlete is difficult. Being a science major is difficult,” she says. “We definitely bond over those identities, and that makes for a tight-knit community.”

As Podkowa heads off to Ferrol, Spain, to play on the women’s basketball team Star Center-Uni Ferrol, and Lentì works on her certified nursing assistant certificate before attending medical school, both recent graduates feel confident that DePaul’s academic and athletic communities prepared them to meet these next challenges. “I would love to have the opportunity to play for the WNBA,” Podkowa says. “But if that doesn’t happen, I can start taking tests to become an actuary. In terms of looking for a job, I already have connections through DePaul alumni.”

Lentì’s career goals started to take shape during her freshman year, when she was playing on both the basketball and softball teams. “I took a bunch of liberal arts classes because they fit best into my schedule,” she remembers. “In my religion class, we read a book about a doctor serving the poor around the world, and it really spoke to me.” At the time, Lentì was also in a microbiology course, which further solidified her sense that “science plus service was calling my name.”

Now, she’s working in Professor Southern’s lab, applying to medical schools that offer service-focused programs and coaching a 16-and-under traveling softball team. “I couldn’t have asked for anything else from my DePaul experience, thanks to the combination of amazing people in the science and athletics departments,” she affirms.
THE SPORTING LIFE

“There are many runners on the faculty,” notes Jocelyn Smith Carter, director of clinical training and associate professor, who has completed several marathons and other endurance events. Others who pound the pavement include Erin Berkowitz (MED ‘14), director of advising, who was training for her 11th marathon in six years when this issue went to press, and Carolyn Martineau, senior instructor, who has run 13 marathons, including five world majors at Boston Marathon-qualifying pace (3:40 or below). “I teach an exercise physiology course in the biology department, including a unit on how human anatomy and physiology are adapted for endurance running,” Martineau says. She’s also an amateur poet who had one of her poems selected for a recent exhibit at the Chicago History Museum.

Those who favor shorter sprints include Kyle Petersen, associate professor, and Nicole Hack (LAS ‘04), chemistry department assistant, both longtime soccer players. Petersen plays in a men’s league on Sundays, while Hack frequently hosts women-only pickup sessions. “My involvement in Chicago’s soccer community focuses on giving women more playing opportunities and a louder voice in the male-dominated soccer culture,” she says. Hack co-founded CF97 Sirens, a group of women who support the Chicago Fire Soccer Club, runs a women’s soccer Facebook group and previously worked for an adult soccer league. Meanwhile, Kim Amer, associate professor, racks up points at Midtown Tennis Club. She has played tennis twice weekly for the past two decades.

Kathryn Grant, professor, who is learning to sail on her friend’s catamaran, may want to pick up a few tips from Karen Larimer, assistant professor, who crews on a sailboat racing team out of Belmont Harbor every Saturday. Meanwhile, Sundays find Sarah Richardson, lecturer, canoeing, hiking or walking. Back in 2000, she made a New Year’s resolution to get out into nature more often, and she’s stuck to it ever since.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Perhaps it’s time to open an art gallery in McGowan South. The space could feature the acrylic paintings of Marjorie Kozlowski, interim assistant director for the Rosalind Franklin site and assistant clinical professor; the drawings and paintings of Olya Glantsman (CSH MA ’05, PhD ’13), instructor; photographs from Business Administrator Thelma Majalca’s travel website, fernveh.com; the wood-carved rocking horses of Jan Costenbader, senior instructional technology consultant and adjunct faculty; and felting works from Naomi Leighton, environmental science and studies department assistant, who has knitted, sewn, crocheted and embroidered but particularly loves the texture of felt.

Speaking of knitting, Craig Klugman, professor, picked up knitting needles a year ago and hasn’t looked back; he’s even knitted an anatomical heart, which was especially difficult due to its tiny stitches. “I love that knitting quiets and focuses the mind,” he says. “I was initially inspired to try it after colleagues who knit at academic meetings told me it helped them pay better attention to the speakers, and I’ve found that’s true.” Fellow knitter Mary Bridget...
Kustusch, assistant professor, agrees. “I don’t know what I would do during meetings and conferences if I didn’t knit,” she says.

Margaret Workman, instructor and laboratory manager, makes quilts, including a spectacular chemistry-inspired quilt that used a fabric called “Brainiac.” That particular quilt was raffled off during a fundraiser for the American Chemical Society and the Chicago chapter of Iota Sigma Pi, a national honor society for women in chemistry.

**MUSIC MAVENS**

All they need is a band name. Between Andrew Carroll, assistant professor, on bass; Michael Roberts (MED ’02, MBA ’09), assistant dean for academic services, and Eric Norstrom, assistant professor, on guitar; Kustusch on vocals and Heneghan on the tin whistle, CSH is ready to rock.

You may have caught Carroll’s band, No Alternative, covering the hits at a wedding, street festival or charity event. Roberts claims he’s not a musician, but he’s jammed on the guitar for 15 years now, and he leads an Explore Chicago course on the city’s blues music scene for DePaul freshmen. For Norstrom, who has played guitar for 20 years, music is a way to both relax and brainstorm: “It’s a nice occasional break from science, and it helps clear my mind to work on problems from new angles.” Kustusch sang in a gospel choir as an undergraduate and sings, as well as cantors, at St. Benedict Parish.

When he turned 50, Heneghan couldn’t afford a Ferrari, so he settled for a less expensive midlife crisis. In Heneghan’s native Ireland, the tin whistle is also called the penny whistle because it’s so cheap. “I started taking lessons that summer, and it was a great decision,” he says. “I’m really rather fanatical about it, but not particularly good, mind you,” he says. Nonetheless, after weekly lessons and daily practice for the past several years, Heneghan can play many of the traditional tunes and has even started writing his own songs, including “Fruit Fly on the Guinness Tap” and “The Cuckoo’s Spit.”

**ODDS AND ENDS**

Sandra Virtue, associate professor, co-director of the neuroscience program and director of online learning, volunteers with Sit Stay Read, a nonprofit that pairs low-income students with reading buddies of the human and furry varieties. “The unique aspect of this program is that the volunteers bring their dogs into the classroom, and the students read stories to the dogs,” explains Virtue, who has served on the organization’s executive board and literacy advisory board. “It creates a nontoxic environment for struggling readers and makes it so fun.”

Joseph LeRoy, biology department assistant, has put his science training to good use making his own beers. “I use my background in biology and chemistry to understand more complex methods and theories,” LeRoy says. “It’s rewarding because after about six hours of tedious and hypersensitive work, you wait two months to find out whether you’ve screwed up or not. It doesn’t always come out perfect, but when you get it right, it’s pretty exciting.”

Bridget Tenner, associate professor, dabbles in wheat-related projects as well, baking different kinds of bread throughout the year. “We are a bread-loving household,” she says. “My mother taught me to bake when I was a child, and I’ve come back to it with gusto in the past few years.”

John V. Dean, professor and chair of the Department of Biological Sciences, has a dozen bonsai trees in his backyard. It’s a hobby he’s cultivated—pun intended—since he was 15 years old.

We couldn’t share the hobbies of CSH faculty and staff without mentioning Dean Gerry Koocher’s birds: Joey, an orange-winged Amazon parrot; Goethe, an African grey parrot; and Sylvia, a blue-and-gold macaw. “Our first parrot was practice for having a child, and that daughter is now 35,” Koocher quips. “Her first word was ‘birdie.’” Joey, the oldest parrot, is 70 years old—yes, that’s human years—while Goethe is 28 and Sylvia is a teenager with a 3-foot wing span. “They love to mimic humans as a way to attract attention,” Koocher says. “One of their favorite phrases is, ‘Is it good?’ which they say when they want a bit of human food.”

John V. Dean

Dean Gerry Koocher with Joey and Goethe

Sandra Virtue and friends

Margaret Workman

Andrew Carroll playing tin whistle

Michael Roberts

Liam Heneghan

Craig Kupersmith

Mary Bridget Heneghan

Andrew Carroll (second from left) with No Alternative

Photo credit: Padraic Heneghan

Photo credit: Craig Kupersmith
Lead Concerns

| SCIENTIA

LEVELING WITH constipation and difficulty sleeping. Chronic attention span, irritability, loss of appetite, Young children exposed to lead may 6 are most at risk for lead poisoning. Children under age 6 are most at risk? What are the possible health outcomes from lead exposure?

Lead is dangerous because it is a neurotoxin that causes irreversible damage to the developing brains and nervous systems of young children. Children under age 6 are most at risk for lead poisoning. Young children exposed to lead may display cognitive, behavioral and physical problems, including hyperactivity, reduced attention span, irritability, loss of appetite, constipation and difficulty sleeping. Chronic lead exposure in adults may result in reduced kidney function, tremors, increased blood pressure and risk of hypertension, decreased cognition and hearing, and increased cardiovascular mortality. It may retard fetal growth in pregnant women. One important point to remember is that there is no “safe” level of lead, and it is now thought that exposure to even low levels of lead is deleterious to human health. Lead poisoning is preventable, and it is not contagious.

What are the most common ways individuals are exposed to lead?

Sources of lead include lead paint, household dust, soil, waterworks, old painted toys and furniture, home remedies, foods and liquids stored in lead crystal or lead-glazed pottery, and hobbies that use lead solder. Exposure pathways include ingestion, inhalation of lead dust, absorption through the skin and mother-to-fetus blood transfer. Lead is still commonly found in homes built before 1978, when lead-based paint and leaded gasoline were both widely used. Both are now banned in the United States. Parents of children under age 6 should be particularly aware of potential lead exposure pathways and monitor changes in their children’s behavior.

Why is lead so difficult to eliminate from our lives? Can we protect ourselves against lead exposure? How?

Lead is ubiquitous in the environment. As a heavy metal, it does not degrade. Its health impacts have been known since ancient times. That said, we can protect ourselves against exposure by doing the following:

- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating.
- Exercise caution in controlling lead-based paint dust if renovating a home and always use a dust mask.
- Wash children’s toys frequently.
- Remove shoes at the door and hose the front steps.
- Minimize dust using a HEPA vacuum and always wear a dust mask.

The path to radical transformation is paved with simple truths.

Keep Your Engine Fueled.

Four Awesome Monika-isms

Keep Your Engine Fueled. Many of us are taught to take care of others, and then we wonder why we burn out. Take care of yourself first so that you can be of further service to others.

Know That You Have Everything You Need. You were enough yesterday, which is more than enough for today. Tomorrow you are certain to be nothing short of amazing. Know that, and don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.

Keep It Simple. The path to radical transformation is paved with simple truths.

Know What Game You Are Playing. Your life should not be about climbing the corporate ladder; it should be about becoming your truest self. You will win at the game of life once you are truly successful at being yourself one on one or aligning an organization’s strategies with its stated goals. “Helping people reach their full potential in life—that’s what motivates me,” she says.

As a doctoral student in DePaul’s community psychology program, Black found the tools to articulate her vision: “I’m always trying to understand the research and the data, but I also want to know, ‘What do those numbers mean for the people actually living that experience?’” She uses this ecological framework to help her clients recognize the overlapping influence of personal, environmental and social factors on their dreams, abilities and achievements.

Listening is also key. Black strives to listen beyond the words to hear the emotional tenor or elipses in her clients’ stories. As they share their experiences with Black, they often come to a moment of clarity. “One widow realized she’d been told that ‘money isn’t for women’ her entire life, and now that’s an emotional obstacle preventing her from managing her family’s money,” Black says. “Another woman said she prefers credit unions to traditional financial institutions because the latter have never taken her seriously as an individual of high net worth.”

Black stresses that women of any means have the capability to be the CEO or CFO of their own lives, in part, by aligning their values with their finances. “That doesn’t have to be something you put on hold until you make money,” Black notes. As a case in point, she serves on the advisory board for The Theatre School at DePaul and also teaches in both the psychology department and the justice and conflict studies department. Unsurprisingly, she encourages her students to match their strengths to their passions. “We can’t keep telling our students, ‘not yet,’” she says. “I don’t think they should wait to start making an impact in areas that matter to them.”

Meet an alumna whose idea of success is helping others reach their full potential

Monika Black (CSH PhD ’12) is the type of person who hears “yes” when others hear “no.” Where most people see obstacles, she sees opportunities and options. This fearless tenacity and optimism, not to mention a touch-as-hours-nails work ethic, laid the foundation for Black’s entrepreneurial career path and gave her the gumption to achieve three advanced degrees.

Black is the co-founder of TandemSpring, a consulting firm that helps organizations and their employees leverage their strengths, as well as chief strategy officer at DyMynd, which empowers women to become financially savvy. Both companies use strengths-based assessments to guide clients in meeting their personal and professional goals.

Black is a maximizer—it’s her primary strength, and it shows in everything she does. As an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, she was discouraged from majoring in pre-med because she was a standout track star in the high jump. “They told me it was going to be really difficult for me to manage everything,” she remembers. Black didn’t even blink. Not only did she excel in her classes—including her favorite course, organic chemistry—but also she was track-and-field captain and winner of the Big Ten Medal of Honor for extra-curricular excellence. Black remembers fans complaining that she didn’t run a victory lap after winning her event at the Prefontaine Classic at the University of Oregon because, true to form, she was sitting on the track taping a paper.

“I love to work, and I love to work hard,” Black says. She regularly puts in 10- to 12-hour days, but it’s clear that this effort brings her joy, whether she’s leading a workshop, coaching a client
Beck-Winchatz is vice president-elect of the Faculty Council. Paetsch Academic Advising Award. Associate Professor Erin Berkowitz, director of advising, won the Gerald Award. During his career, with the 2016 CSH Excellence in Research (above), a paleobiologist who has published nearly 100 papers Professors. The college honored Professor Kenshu Shimada and Professor McMahon (CSH MA ’92, PhD ’96) McMahon, associate dean for research and faculty development and Vincent de Paul distinguished professor, received the 2016 Distinguished Italian American Psychologist Award from the Italian American Psychological Society. Assistant Professor Joseph Ferrari, a psychology professor, was elected president of the Society for Community Research and Action, Division 27 of the American Psychological Association. Fellow psychologist Professor Joseph Ferrand, also a Vincent de Paul distinguished professor, received the 2016 Distinguished Italian American Psychologist Award from the Italian American Psychological Society. Assistant Professor Joseph Tariman, also a Vincent de Paul distinguished professor, was inducted as a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing in October.

Internal awards and honors are streaming in. Professor Susan McMahon (CSH MA ’92, PhD ’96) and Professor Kathryn Grant were inducted into the Society of Vincent de Paul Professors. The college honored Professor Kenshu Shimada (above), a paleobiologist who has published nearly 100 papers during his career, with the 2016 CSH Excellence in Research Award. Erin Berkowitz, director of advising, won the Gerald Paetsch Academic Advising Award. Associate Professor Bernhard Beck-Winchatz is vice president-elect of the Faculty Council.

Faculty members are also racking up external awards and honors. Professor McMahon, associate dean for research and faculty development and Vincent de Paul distinguished professor, was elected president of the Society for Community Research and Action, Division 27 of the American Psychological Association. Fellow psychologist Professor Joseph Ferrand, also a Vincent de Paul distinguished professor, received the 2016 Distinguished Italian American Psychologist Award from the Italian American Psychological Society. Assistant Professor Joseph Tariman was inducted as a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing in October.

The college now offers an interdisciplinary BS in neuroscience degree that draws from the natural, behavioral and computational science fields. Those who major in this field will study the function of the nervous system on a cellular and molecular level, examine how the nervous system produces behavior and cognition, and discover the role of computer science and mathematics in new neuroscience-related technologies and therapies.

Four faculty were recently promoted to associate professor with tenure: Christopher Drupieski in mathematical sciences, Young-Me Lee in nursing, and Windsor Aguirre and Jingjing Kipp in biological sciences.

SUMMER SCIENCE

This past summer, 12 CSH students received funding to perform research, assist scientists and gain hands-on experience at sites throughout Chicago. The students were supported by the Dean’s Undergraduate Research Fellowship.

“Now Presenting Neuroscience”

The college now offers an interdisciplinary BS in neuroscience degree that draws from the natural, behavioral and computational science fields. Those who major in this field will study the function of the nervous system on a cellular and molecular level, examine how the nervous system produces behavior and cognition, and discover the role of computer science and mathematics in new neuroscience-related technologies and therapies.

“Moving On Up”

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