Harold Jones, Ph.D., likens a dean to a chemical catalyst: the agent that causes, speeds, or supports significant reactions and changes in a system.

The metaphor suits Jones well, as his new dean for the School of Health Related Professions began his career as a biochemist. Although Jones served as dean of the School of Allied Health Sciences at East Carolina University for almost a decade, his career has taken tours through basic science, health policy, and administration—a road that has proven to be perfectly tailored to SHRP’s unique mix of programs.

But for Jones, his new post has less to do with compatibility and more to do with recognizing opportunity. "Regardless of the school you’re talking about, any dean’s ultimate mission is to facilitate the work of the people within that school," he says, "creating an environment that will allow them to use their visions, talents, and abilities to the fullest potential.”

A LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Jones’s career to date has taken the Arkansas native from North Carolina to Alabama to the nation’s capital—and back around again. After receiving his undergraduate degree from Rhodes College in Memphis, Jones went to Duke University to earn his Ph.D. in biochemistry. He then landed an academic position in the School of Medicine at the University of South Alabama in 1979—"one week before Hurricane Frederick hit Mobile,” he laughs.

He soon found that teaching and research would be only part of his job at South Alabama. "Dr. Joe McCord, who is one of the premier researchers in oxygen free radicals, was named chair of the department,” says Jones. He and McCord were friends from Duke, and Jones ended up taking on some administrative duties for McCord. In doing so, he found that not only was he good at administration, but he also enjoyed it. "Eventually there was an opening for an associate dean’s position in the College of Allied Health Professions,” he says, “and the dean of that school wanted someone with a strong background in basic science and research.”

It was a perfect fit for Jones, who served in that position for three years. He then took a one-year sabbatical with the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C., serving as head of the instrumentation and instrument development program for all of biology and the behavioral sciences. "I had the opportunity to work across a lot of disciplines and learn a lot of things that way,” he says. After completing the sabbatical, Jones was asked to join the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), to direct their newly developed science policy and analysis...
branch of the Office of Policy and External Affairs. He was charged with providing research data and analysis for the agency on everything from the correlation between religiosity and decreased drug use to NIDA’s policy on providing marijuana for AIDS patients.

Jones says he took several important tools from these federal positions. “When I was in Washington, I was constantly working among what Congress wanted, what the executive-branch agencies wanted, and what the scientific community wanted. I was able to serve as a translator, assessing how different groups in NIDA could address the needs of different communities.”

While this work was challenging and interesting, after a couple of years Jones felt that he had to make a choice. “It was a matter of either becoming a permanent federal bureaucrat or coming back into academics,” he says. “And right about that time, I got the opportunity to go to East Carolina.”

A Call to Serve

Under his leadership, the School of Allied Health Sciences at ECU saw a 70-percent increase in its enrollment. Several new programs were launched, including the first state-supported physician assistant program and a doctoral program in communications sciences disorders—the only allied health doctoral program in North Carolina. The school also developed successful distance learning programs, and, shortly before he left ECU, Jones helped secure funding through a state bond issue for a new, $48-million shared facility between allied health and nursing.

These accomplishments, all completed in less than a decade, are no small achievement. But Jones says he was no more than the facilitator. “A lot of those things happened simply because we were able to publicize the school and make people understand what we were doing—the value of the types of health care professionals that are trained in an allied health school. Basically resources flowed in response to that.”

Despite his successes at ECU, Jones says, “I’m not a maintainer by nature. I’m a builder, and I like the idea of looking for new opportunities...”
and moving things forward." And he saw that at UAB several new challenges and opportunities were awaiting him.

**Looking SHaRP**

According to Jones, if you ask people to list the top two or three schools of health related professions in the United States, most everyone will include SHRP in that list. "That's one reason I was eager to come here, but that's only part of it," he says. "SHRP has a very interesting program mix. The Departments of Critical and Diagnostic Care and Rehabilitation Sciences alone make SHRP an outstanding school among allied health colleges in the United States. But you've also got a world-class nutrition program and a top-10 health services administration program to boot. You just can't beat that combination."

Considering Jones's background, the combination couldn't be more appropriate. "I've worked in allied health for about 12 years of my career. I was also a biochemist, which involves the underpinnings of a lot of things in nutrition research. And my background in health policy and data analysis from my time in Washington aligns me with the health administration discipline. So SHRP is particularly intriguing for me—because it brings together interests that I have in a number of different areas."

And then there was the draw of UAB itself. "UAB has an atmosphere where faculties and programs are encouraged to cooperate with each other, across schools and across the university. In our disciplines, so many initiatives can be realized better in conjunction with other specialties." Jones is also excited by the challenges that will accompany his new post. "UAB is about 30 to 40 percent larger than ECU," he says, "but there are other differences, as well. UAB receives much less funding from the state, so the school operates in a more entrepreneurial fashion. Also, UAB is a much more research-intensive school. ECU's motto is literally 'to serve.' At SHRP, there is a balance among research, preparing highly qualified professionals, and providing clinical services. It's a more comprehensive university model."

**Opportunity Knocks**

"All across the country people are now talking about the importance of interdisciplinary health education, research, and service," says Jones. "UAB figured that out many years ago." He says one thing he sees as paramount as dean is to foster that sense of cooperation, not only within UAB, but also within SHRP itself.

"One of my goals here is to invigorate the sense of community within this school. That can be difficult to maintain within schools of health related professions—we are 'allied' to our professions, so to speak, and I think that, in many allied health schools, allegiance creates walls between the disciplines. They aren't walls of antagonism, but rather a lack of understanding of what the other folks are doing.

"It's important to remember that real value can be gained by what we can contribute collectively," says Jones. "By sharing the ideas, insights, and resources that all of our programs have, we can achieve more than we could individually."

Jones views his new tenure at SHRP as a key opportunity to foster future cooperation. "Building a sense of community really requires some hands-on involvement from the dean—not in directing programs, but in facilitating a transfer of information between the programs," he says. "My job is to know the school so well that I can see opportunities as they arise and communicate to external groups and constituencies what we do and what we're capable of doing."

**Steering to New Heights**

Jones says that SHRP's people and programs are already so successful that the sky's the limit in terms of where the school goes from here. "I have become keenly aware of the talent that lies within this school," he says. "We must respect the tradition of excellence that already exists—the contributions of the previous faculty, the students, the alumni, and the deans that preceded me—and we should recognize that they have created something we can take to another level.

"Ultimately, you want to create a situation in which everybody is working on the same page to bring value to what we do. That's the challenge," says Jones. "We are all working together to serve the people of this state and region. As my father would say, if we're feeding at the public trough, we'd better pay them back for the meal."
Jeannine Clunk, M.S., R.D., admits that she applied to UAB on a whim. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Florida State University, and her advisor urged her to apply to UAB for a master’s degree in nutrition sciences. "The plan at that time was to get a master’s and then go on to medical school,” she says. “Once I got here I realized that UAB would be a perfect fit for both.”

But as she completed her master’s coursework, Clunk quickly found that her interests were taking her in another direction. "I had taken the MCAT and done all the prep work for medical school,” she says, “and I was in the middle of a master’s-level traineeship at the Pittman General Clinical Research Center [GCRC]. For the first time in my life, I saw that nutrition and nutrition research can really be challenging.” She favored the prolonged contact with patients that she could have through clinical research—something that working in a hospital could not provide.

Clunk is now pursuing her Ph.D. through a fellowship with the GCRC, where she has been able to work on a variety of research projects. Her doctoral research focuses on the effects of immunosuppression on metabolism. "One interesting question is why, when we put people on steroids to prevent transplant rejection, low-income women tend to gain a lot of weight, while other people don’t gain any weight at all.” Clunk hopes her research will help explain this phenomenon.

When she’s not busy with work, Clunk volunteers at the Birmingham AIDS Outreach Center, serving as a counselor for support groups for people who are HIV-positive. As an undergraduate, she volunteered for the Centers for Disease Control’s AIDS hotline, and she says that it’s been heartening to see the progress made in HIV/AIDS treatment since she’s been involved. "It was a landmark day at the hotline when the CDC called and instructed us to no longer refer to AIDS as a terminal condition, but rather a manageable, chronic illness,” she says.

Clunk plans to pursue a career in clinical research, but she wants to remain in a university setting so that she can teach. "When you teach, you have to stay on the cutting edge,” she says. "Your students aren’t going to let you get away with teaching them material that’s 10 years old.” She says clinical research will allow her to combine the challenge of scientific inquiry with the pleasure of working with people. "I just love the patients.”

Of the millions of things babies learn in the first years of life, perhaps nothing is more important than the ability to communicate with the people around them. For researchers who study human language, few things are more mysterious than this process of acquiring language. Katsura Aoyama, Ph.D., is a postdoctoral fellow who is studying with UAB speech and hearing sciences researcher James Flege, Ph.D., to learn more about how the brain learns and uses languages.

"I’m very excited about this opportunity at UAB,” says Aoyama, who earned her master’s degree and doctorate from the University of Hawaii. "It’s rare in our field to have a position in which we can do research full-time.” Aoyama, Flege, and other researchers in SHRP’s Biocommunication Research Laboratory are conducting extensive studies on how people learn to speak a foreign language.

A native of Osaka, Japan, Aoyama has studied language acquisition in
Gerald L. Glandon, Ph.D., the new chair of the Department of Health Services Administration, says the keys to success as a health-care administrator are flexibility and adaptability.

"An aging population and advances in medical technologies have fueled health-care cost increases," says Glandon. "Controlling these costs will require well-prepared men and women who have the skills to effectively manage complex health care organizations. Consequently, the need for skilled leaders and analysts in health care is stronger than ever." Glandon adds that SHRP’s programs in HSA are perfectly positioned to fill that need.


"One of the reasons I left cold, snowy Chicago for warm, sunny Birmingham is the opportunity here to blend the expertise within this department and throughout UAB," he says. Glandon is involved in an ongoing process of gathering information to determine the best ways to prepare HSA students for the challenges of the future. He says this process is fed by faculty input, ties to the Schools of Medicine, Public Health, and Business, participation by active practitioners from the UAB Health System, and close and constant feedback from alums who are now in practice.

Glandon’s own research interests include the economics of aging, health-care technology assessment, and international health. He is currently working with a team in Chicago, through a grant from the Hartford Foundation, to study the role that technology can play in facilitating team-based care for older people who are chronically ill. "Many people are realizing the need to better coordinate and streamline the care that elderly people need across provider groups—from physicians to dieticians to pharmacists.” He notes that technology-driven approaches to health-care delivery will become more and more important for executives and information specialists to understand.

Glandon is also active in the development and delivery of management education for countries that are struggling to improve their health-care systems. Like many members of SHRP’s faculty, he has spent considerable time in countries such as Albania, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia, offering strategic analysis to government leaders and individual hospitals. "I’ve loved my experiences overseas," he says. "I spent 17 days working and traveling alone in Albania in 1994. Despite some difficult living conditions, I had a great time experiencing the culture—I even went to a rock concert in Tirana. The environment there is quite interesting, very different from what I had experienced in the U.S., and the people are very open."

But for now, Glandon is focusing on life in Birmingham; in addition to his work in the department, he is spending time with his wife and three children as they all settle in to a new city. "My move to the Department of Health Services Administration at UAB required my entire family to be flexible and adaptable—change is a part of our life as well."
Every day in this country, surgical teams make miracles happen. Most Americans are fortunate enough to be able to see these miracles—setting broken bones and correcting injuries or illness in the body—as commonplace. Alumni from the Surgical Physician Assistant (SPA) program are helping bring some of these services to a part of the world where such care is a rarity.

Ambato, Ecuador, is about an hour’s drive from the country’s capital city of Quito. Although it’s a populous city, Ambato is rife with poverty, and few people can afford quality medical care. “There’s a public hospital in the city, but it’s not a hospital like you or I would think of one,” says alumna Charlene Niemann, PA-C, who is also a clinical coordinator in the SPA program. She and her husband, UAB orthopedic surgeon Kurt Niemann, M.D., traveled with 50 other medical personnel to Ambato in February as part of the 10th annual mission to provide free surgical services to residents there.

The program was founded by two brothers from Ambato, both plastic surgeons in the United States. One of the brothers, UAB director of plastic surgery Luis Vasconez, M.D., asked the Niemanns to participate. “Everyone pays their own way,” says Charlene Niemann, “but it’s absolutely worth it.”

Alumna Dee Jeter, PA-C, an SPA at UAB Hospital, has been traveling to Ambato with UAB plastic surgeon Jobe Fix, M.D., for five years. “The local Rotary International chapter helps to sponsor us; they involve the local medical community to screen people for possible surgery. Bilingual medical students from Quito help us communicate with patients and families.” This year Jeter was joined by her husband, Ben, another SPA alum. “It was great to see the experience through his eyes. We develop strong bonds with the members of our team and the people we work with in Ambato,” she says. “We work hard, with a focus and a purpose. And we also laugh a lot along the way.”

Niemann says the last day of the trip this year was the most profound for her. “The airline had lost some of our crew’s luggage, including mine, and during our last operation of the trip, I learned that my bags had been brought to the hospital.” She was told that one family had been waiting in the halls of the hospital all week long, hoping that the surgical plates her bags were carrying would arrive. The father of three children had a broken femur that had never been set, leaving him unable to work for more than a year. His wife was only able to earn one dollar a day.

“When I told the family we would stay to do this surgery, there were such cries of joy in the room,” Niemann says. “The man got down on his good knee and began to pray and weep. I wanted to say, ‘No, please let me kneel down and thank you for allowing us to help you.’ That’s really what you do this for,” she adds. “At the end of the week you’re exhausted, but you’re so thankful to be able to give back a little bit.”
SUPPORTING SHR P
Making Memories into Opportunities

One of SHR P's main goals in the Campaign for UAB is to bolster scholarship support. About 70 percent of SHR P's students must rely on some form of financial aid—and as state support dwindles, the sources for such funding grow harder to come by.

Several of SHR P's supporters are stepping forward to help fill this gap in funding—often through planned gifts, in which donors make arrangements for money to go to UAB through their estates or other deferred arrangements. The scholarships they establish with their contributions will attract students of exceptional merit and retain SHR P's promising scholars, who will usher in the next generation of health-care professionals.

Fostering Families

Atlanta resident Sue Shaddeau has a special bond to SHR P through her late sister, Shirley Shaddeau, a longtime faculty member in the Division of Physical Therapy. "Shirley had to struggle to pay for school," says Shaddeau. "She worked two jobs, and that was tough to manage on top of school." When Shirley died suddenly in 1995, Sue received benefits from UAB, and she wanted to do something with the money that she thought would please her sister. "I thought Shirley would like to help students get through school without having to struggle quite as hard as she did," she says.

Shaddeau's gift of $25,000 established the Shirley A. Shaddeau Memorial Scholarship Endowment for students who plan to study physical therapy. Shaddeau and others have continued to contribute to the fund since its establishment; Shaddeau says she is pleased to be able to remember her sister in a way that will benefit students years into the future. "Shirley was very special," she says, "and it means a lot to me to do something that I think she would be proud of."

Legacies of Service

Birmingham native Carol Medders has been a part of the SHR P faculty since 1975; she retired from her position in academic affairs in 1998 but still serves as a consultant to the school, helping plan for the semester conversion that takes effect this fall. "They are involved in coursework for 30 to 40 hours a week, so they don't have much opportunity for employment," she adds. "Our students need scholarships so that their loan debts aren't as significant."

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Medders has made a bequest of at least $50,000 to establish an endowed presidential scholarship fund, which will support students from the state of Alabama when they enroll in the professional phase of SHR P programs. "Students are the future of a school," Medders says. "It feels good to leave a legacy that will meet some of their needs in the future."

Medders spent the bulk of her time with SHR P in student affairs, serving in admissions and student enrollment services for almost 20 years. She was also an advisor to the student government association for 11 years. "Having worked in student services and with students who needed financial aid, I've always had that issue close to my heart."

Over almost three decades at UAB, Medders has seen many changes in SHR P's curriculum and programs, but the students have always been top-notch. "It takes a certain gift to work in health care," she says. "Beyond the intellectual requirements, the students who enter our programs have to be caring, compassionate, and eager to contribute to the improvement of health care."

Opportunities to Give

Donors who make certain planned gifts, such as gift annuities or charitable trusts, may be able to minimize their current income tax burden or perhaps increase the amount of money that will eventually go to their heirs. The process of planning a gift often involves several estate-planning or financial professionals—giving the donor the added benefit of professional advice when considering a large gift. If you would like information about planning a gift to SHR P, please contact Cathleen Erwin, director of development, at (205) 934-4159 or erwinc@uab.edu.
• SHRP is ranked number one among schools of allied health in NIH funding for 2000. UAB has an almost two-to-one edge over Boston University—the school ranked second—in the number of allied health research grants awarded. “I want to congratulate everyone who played a role in this outstanding achievement,” says Harold Jones, Ph.D., SHRP’s new dean.

• SHRP is expanding its bachelor of science in allied health program to freshmen and sophomores who are interested in pursuing a graduate-level health professions degree, such as health administration, health informatics, or physical or occupational therapy. In the past the B.S.A.H. program was reserved for graduates of certificate or associate degree programs in allied health who were working in the health care industry. The expanded major will help prepare college freshmen and sophomores for study in a graduate program. More information is available at [www.uab.edu/healthcareers].

• Joe Gerald, Ph.D., director of the Surgical Physician Assistant Program, was awarded the Ellen Gregg Ingalls/UAB Alumni Award. This award, given to one UAB faculty member each year, recognizes outstanding contributions by UAB faculty to students. Nominees are selected by students, and the award is made possible by the Ingalls Foundation and the UAB Alumni Society.

• Roland L. Weinsier, Ph.D., professor and director of the Clinical Nutrition Research Center, has received the most prestigious annual award of the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, the Jonathan E. Rhoads Lectureship. The society—the country’s largest nutrition organization—advances the science and practice of parenteral and enteral nutrition, which provides nutrition to persons who cannot eat any or enough food because of illness. The lectureship was bestowed on Weinsier in recognition of his more than two decades of outstanding nutrition research.

• Associate Professor Ann M. Steves, M.S., CNMT, director of the nuclear medicine technology program in the Department of Critical and Diagnostic Care, was awarded the UAB President’s Excellence in Teaching Award. Steves is a member of SHRP’s academic affairs committee and an associate editor of the Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology. Her series on caring for the older patient, published in the journal, won her a fellowship from the Society of Nuclear Medicine’s Technologist Section and the Special Contribution Award in 1997.

• In Memoriam: Howerde E. Sauberlich, Ph.D., professor of nutrition sciences, passed away May 14. A longtime SHRP faculty member, Sauberlich’s research in the metabolic role of folic acid has been significant in understanding the role of folate in the prevention of birth defects and heart disease. His book, Laboratory Tests for the Assessment of Nutritional Status, has served as a major reference for analytical methods and interpretations of nutritional status assessments for almost 30 years. This spring he was awarded the 2001 Conrad A. Elvehjem Award for Public Service in Nutrition. Nabisco, Inc., gives the award in recognition of specific and distinguished service to the public through the science of nutrition.