The GVSU PAS program continues to prepare graduates for entry to the Physician Assistant Profession. As I write this article, I have just received word, that our most recent graduates, the class of 2013, have all completed the PANCE exam. I am pleased to announce that 100% of the students were successful in passing this all important examination! Now, I know that we do a great job in preparing students for this exam, but for applicants looking to enter a PA program, PANCE pass rates rank very high as a reason to attend a particular program. So, congratulations Class of 2013!

The state of the program is strong. I am continually impressed by the level of applicants this program accepts as well as the high level of education the faculty deliver. When I am asked (and it happens often), about what makes our program so great and different from others, the answer is simple, the faculty. The program has been fortunate to have some great faculty in the past and we are grateful for their contributions to the program. However, the current faculty are unequivocally, the best in the business. The program now includes 12 full time faculty and 1 part time faculty that are dedicated to the success of the students. The wide diversity of backgrounds is as impressive as the number; 3 PhD’s, 1 DO, 1 Registered Dietician, and 7 PA’s. Faculty areas of expertise include physiology, immunology, surgery, women’s health, psychiatry, internal medicine (both inpatient and outpatient), emergency medicine and 3 PA’s who have family medicine background. The wide diversity in faculty creates a great learning environment for GVSU PAS students.

The program continues to use clinical experts such as specialists and graduates in certain areas of the program. These “adjuncts” are a tremendous asset to the didactic portion of our program.

Lastly, we must never forget to recognize our outstanding clinical preceptors. These people are the exclamation point at the end of a long learning process. The work that preceptors do is essential to the clinical development of GVSU students. The program is grateful for the hard work and dedication these individuals put in for the betterment of our program.

If you would like to get involved and “give back” to the GVSU PAS program as either a guest lecturer or especially as a preceptor, please contact us!
Oasis of Hope

With the start of 2014, millions of uninsured Americans will be able to receive health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA has been enacted in an effort to revamp the US health care system with the ultimate goal to improve the nation’s health as well as avoiding crippling medical bills by extending coverage to all Americans. However, many who are eligible have little to no experience with buying health insurance or enrolling in Medicaid and need help.

To assist individuals in their navigation through the sign up procedure, assistance positions ('Navigators and Certified Application Counselors’) have been established. Many Navigators and Certified Application Counselors are part of volunteer organizations that reach out to residents, such as Enroll West Michigan which helps residents in Grand Rapids and the surrounding communities. Oasis of Hope, a free clinic in Grand Rapids, is part of Enroll West Michigan and has set up four computers to help individuals with signing up for Health Insurance or Medicaid.

To provide much needed volunteer hours, Oasis of Hope has teamed up with the Physician Assistant (PA) studies program from Grand Valley State University. A group of four PA students (Sarah Golub, Christine Milliken, Hannah Benda, and Molly Flack) have become certified Application Counselors as part of their Master’s Thesis service project. Every Saturday morning, the students volunteer their time to help individuals sign up for health care insurance. To their surprise, the students found very few people actually come in to sign up.

The students quickly recognized that it is imperative for the residents in the community to be aware of not only their eligibility to receive health care insurance but also of the help that is available to guide them through the process. As a result, the group designed banners to be placed in the windows of Oasis of Hope as well as fliers to distribute in the community, encouraging residents to utilize their help. They also met with other volunteers of Enroll West Michigan that are associated with Mercy Health as well as other clinics and are planning to participate in public awareness events such as neighborhood canvassing with informational flyers. It is through the dedication and commitment demonstrated by these PA students, that all residents in Grand Rapids have an opportunity to enroll in much needed health care.

The Oasis of Hope Enrollment location is open for walk-ins on Mondays from 9am-5pm, Wednesdays from 1pm-5pm, and Saturdays from 8am-12pm.

Oasis of Hope is located at 522 Leonard Street N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504-4258.

Distant Learning Update

The program continues to develop the Traverse City distant site with recent purchases of equipment and lecture transmission programs. The program has submitted accreditation documentation for review by the ARC-PA this fall. Stay tuned!
K. Long, S. Allen, M. Hagerman: Evaluation of the Integration of Interprofessional Education in the Curriculum of Physician Assistant Programs

L. Buckingham, B. Townshend, S. Yarger, R. Zeluff: Interventional cardiologists’ motivation in cardiac catheterization via the femoral vs. radial approach

N. DeHaan, E. Konal, J. Larsen, S. Yarlagadda: Utilization of the Procalcitonin (PCT) Test in Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment: Analysis of the Use of the PCT test by Physician Assistants

M. Webb, J. Phillipich: HPV vaccine awareness and acceptance: mass media influence on the perceptions of college-aged freshmen students

D. Diekevers, K. Firn, N. Shellenbarger: Analysis of Spectrum Health Operating Room Safety Checklist Compliance

F. Aratsu, E. Buonpastore, J. Cook, C. Schaller, M. Walters: Sleep patterns in graduate school

A. Bain, N. Bair, A. Lindner, R. Freiberg, A. Koenigsknecht: Does satisfaction of test performance with Adderall intake lead to repeat usage among health care oriented undergraduate students in comparison to graduate students?

The class of 2014 is moving along in preparation for graduation and our future careers. We’ve completed our didactic phase and behind us are the days of panic attacks prior to TBB exams. We’ve celebrated together at our white coat ceremony and prepared for clinical rotations at “Clinical Boot Camp”. Now we’re actually out there; hands on working with patients and it’s a great feeling. All the hard work we’ve put into this endeavor is coming to fruition. We are making the diagnosis and thinking critically about how to treat patients. We’re learning endless clinical pearls from our preceptors and developing our patient rapport. It’s hard to believe how far we’ve come since we started this journey in August of 2012, but it’s also incredibly rewarding to know what we’ve accomplished.

We still have a lot of learning to do, but we are making strides much farther and faster than any of us expected. In the midst of it all, we are learning now how much GVSU grads pay it forward by teaching current students as preceptors. So thank you for taking us into your clinics, hospitals, and ORs to teach us the ropes. In this phase of our training, we need the wisdom and guidance of the many grads that have gone before us. We look forward to seeing you out there in the clinical world and we hope to make you proud.

by Ronna Zeluff
Class of 2014 Vice President
Greetings from the class of 2015! I cannot believe it has been just a little over 6 months since the start of PA school. I remember sitting in orientation last August when Professor Booth said that adjusting to PA school is like trying to learn to take a sip from a fire hose. Feeling excited, terrified, and slightly nauseous all at the same time, I couldn’t even imagine how to approach that situation. Then after spending what felt like the entire first semester getting knocked over by the force of the stream, between the study of Human Anatomy and Medical Physiology, by the last three days of the semester I felt like I was finally getting it figured out. When the second semester started, I realized the sips I thought I was managing from the fire hose, were actually from something more akin to a large bore garden hose.

However, as overwhelming as it is at times, my classmates and I find ourselves at least scratching the surface of the mystery of human medicine. In addition, the relationship we have formed as a student body still amazes me. The support and encouragement from one another is incredible. When you spend 30-40+ hours a week with the same group, all with the same goal, you celebrate in times of success and help pick each other up in the times of struggle. With excitement, and some disbelief, we approach the midway point of our didactic phase and are anxious to continue our journey to becoming PAs.

by Kirsten Oosterbaan
RPC President, Class of 2015

The GVSU faculty is active in strengthening our profession. GVSU PAS Department Chair, Andrew Booth, excels in service to the PA profession. Mr. Booth began his service to the profession as the president of the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA) in 2002. After graduation from PA school, he became a member of the American Academy of Physician Assistant (AAPA) Board of Directors. He also became active in the Michigan Academy of Physician Assistants (MAPA) and over the years has taken on various roles including Student Liaison, MAPA president, Region 4 Representative, and served in the House of Delegates for 8 years, including 5 years as Chief Delegate. In 2008, he was nominated from the floor of the House of Delegates to serve on the AAPA nominating work group where he continues to work to advance our profession.

Molly Paulson started volunteering for MAPA in 2007, shortly after Wallace Boeve, previous GVSU PAS Department Chair and then current MAPA president, challenged the PAs attending the fall conference to volunteer 30-60 minutes a year. In 2008, Molly became an alternate for the House of Delegates, where she currently remains active.

Susan Raaymakers joined the PAS department in January 2012. She became a welcome addition to the Michigan delegation in May of the same year. She was elected as a delegate in 2013, and continues to support MAPA and our profession in the House of Delegates.

Ginger Biesbrock, adjunct faculty, also actively participates in supporting our profession. She is currently the Region 4 MAPA Representative. Like the rest of the GVSU faculty, she believes the most effective way to support, expand, and protect our profession is through volunteering.

The entire faculty encourages physician assistants to become involved with MAPA, AAPA, or other professional organizations and support our profession. Volunteer opportunities can be as simple as making phone calls or sending emails for an hour or two once or twice a year. Benefits include staying in touch with classmates, opportunities for leadership training, networking with other PAs, job opportunities, and career advancement. But the most important reason to volunteer is to strengthen and expand opportunities for other physician assistants. If you are interested in getting involved, please look on MAPA’s website at www.michiganpa.org for more information.
The GVSU PAS Program is proud to announce the addition of 2 new faculty members, Amanda Ross PA-C and Nicholas Kopacki PA-C, and 1 new staff member, Catherine Tomek. These new members of the GVSU team have been hired specifically for the proposed expansion to Traverse City, which will occur in affiliation with Northern Michigan Community College. The program is currently in the process of gaining accreditation through ARC-PA for the distant site in Traverse City.

Amanda and Nicholas will assist with program expansion, course instruction, student advising and clinical coordination in Northern MI. Currently, Amanda and Nicholas are being mentored by senior faculty at the Grand Rapids campus prior to transitioning to Traverse City.

Amanda Ross is a graduate from Central Michigan University and comes to GVSU with clinical experience in family practice and long term care. She has worked in primary care for over 5 years with the Crystal Lake Clinic. Her medical passion lies in preventive care and rural healthcare. She enjoys snowshoeing and spending time with her family.

Nicholas Kopacki is originally from Traverse City, MI and is looking forward to returning home. He is an alumnus of GVSU’s PAS program and has been working in emergency medicine at St. Mary’s Hospital for over 5 years. He has also worked for West MI Heart and Grand Rapids Addiction Medicine. He and his wife Chalice have been married for four years and they enjoy spending time with their families and traveling.

We are very excited about the addition of our new faculty and staff with the hopes of expanding the program to Traverse City. For more information on our proposed expansion to Traverse City please feel free to contact our office or stop by.

Both Amy and Gary are passionate about primary care, especially for those who have difficulty with access to healthcare. They enjoy providing care for patients who have few options, both in the Sparta community and abroad. Fluent in Spanish and generous with their medical skills, they have travelled to other countries on mission trips to benefit underserved populations. The pair is happy to take students all the time, and the students like being able to work with 2 preceptors, because it optimizes the interesting cases that they can see as well as the opportunities to be the primary provider for a patient. Our PA students have commented that this is a “great rotation” because Amy and Gary let them be an active part of the patient care. “We work with the students pretty hard, but we make it try to make it both fun and challenging,” comments Gary. “We make it practical by letting students do as much of the patient care process as they can,” says Amy. “I involve the students by having them explain the plan of care they have developed to the patient. I stand by and provide direction if needed, but the student has the primary responsibility.”

Gary inspires students to learn by encouraging them to think of the patient as their own patient, and will ask, “How are you going to treat your patient?” Indeed, a recent graduate has commented that Gary is a great educator and “challenged my critical thinking skills.” According to a 2013 graduate, “If you show a willingness to learn, Amy and Gary will help you become a great clinician.”
Challenging the Next Generation

Todd VanHeest, MD of Spectrum Health Medical Group Zeeland Physicians is a veteran preceptor for the GVSU Physician Assistant Studies program. Having instructed our students in Women’s Health for 14 years, Dr. VanHeest enjoys the camaraderie of being involved in educating the new generation of health care providers in the clinical setting. “It keeps me sharper and more in tune by allowing me to stay active and keep in touch with new guidelines and recommendations for practice.” Students benefit from his clinical expertise both in the office and the hospital settings. “There are just some things that you can’t teach in a classroom,” he notes. Clinical Coordinator Mandy German, PA-C agrees. “We value the opportunities that Dr. VanHeest provides for our students to apply their knowledge in actual cases.”

Students appreciate the scope of Dr. VanHeest’s knowledge and his commitment to helping people improve their lives, about which he is passionate. “I try to make it to as many of my deliveries as I can,” he says; in fact, he has provided care for the births of all 5 of the children born to each of 3 patients over the years. One of our graduates comments, “I definitely benefited from observing Dr. VanHeest since he was always very informative and thorough with his patients.” A student from our Class of 2012 reported that, “I saw every patient with my preceptor and learned so much about the treatment of women’s health problems.”

Dr. VanHeest inspires students to learn by challenging them to do better, to learn more, to solve problems. He puts them in environments where people are looking for solutions and want answers. Assigned readings help students find and apply those solutions. “Just keep up with the readings and you will do great,” advises a 2013 graduate. “Also, if you don’t know an answer to a question, find it, because the question will come up again.” “Bring snacks,” advises another student, “because he rarely ever stops to eat lunch or dinner.”

In addition to practicing, teaching, and raising a family, Dr. VanHeest is active in the medical community, modeling professionalism by serving on the board of the Michigan State Medical Society, on the Lakeshore Regional Coordinating Council and on the Maternal Clinical Quality Committee at Zeeland Community Hospital. “People invested in me as I went through school, and I want to do the same for the next generation. This is a way of giving back.”

Bowtie Wednesday

A new dress code has been established for all faculty and staff!
UPDATED GVSU PAS GUIDING DOCUMENTS

GVSU MASTER'S OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT
The mission of the program is to educate individuals to become competent Physician Assistants, who possess the skills necessary for interprofessional medical practice.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS MISSION STATEMENT
To prepare exceptional professionals who will impact the health and well-being of the larger community.

G1 Professionalism: Instill within the PAS learners the professional values and ethical behaviors expected of physician assistants
- G1-C1 Students will exhibit honesty and integrity in all interactions
- G1-C2 Demonstrate respect, caring and compassion
- G1-C3 Provide PAS learners with the tools and experience to participate in lifelong learning
- G1-C4 Cultural Sensitivity: Promote awareness of cultural differences and their impact in healthcare

G2 Medical Skills and Competence: Prepare entry-level practitioners with the skills necessary to function in an evolving healthcare environment
- G2-C1 Recognize signs and symptoms that define a disease process
- G2-C2 Discuss the laboratory and radiographic testing that support a working diagnosis based upon the presenting signs and symptoms of a disease process
- G2-C3 Identify treatment options for a disease entity
- G2-C4 Define the potential complications of treatment (both medical and surgical)
- G2-C5 Understand the natural history of a disease process that goes untreated
- G2-C6 Explain pathophysiological processes leading to common acute and chronic diseases
- G2-C7 Understand the role of preventive medicine in healthcare including screening recommendations

G3 Interprofessional Education: Prepare graduates to work effectively in interprofessional healthcare teams
- G3-C1 Develop an understanding of the unique and complementary abilities of the members of the healthcare team
- G3-C2 Understand the ways in which the members of the healthcare team interact with each other to optimize patient care
- G3-C9 Develop and implement patient management plans
- G3-C10 Perform medical and surgical procedural and technical skills essential to Physician Assistant practice
- G3-C11 Perform appropriate history and physical examinations

G4 Evidence-Based Learning: Instill the importance of medical research as it relates to clinical practice
- G4-C1 Demonstrate an understanding of the meaning, purpose, and nature of scientific inquiry by relating its significance to evidence based medicine through evaluation of the medical literature
- G4-C2 Locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies as it relates to pathology, diagnosis, therapeutics, and prevention
- G4-C3 Demonstrate the ability to synthesize, integrate and apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods and their appropriate application in clinical studies
- G4-C4 Discuss the principles of beneficence, justice and respect for persons as it relates to the conduct of research involving human subjects and clinical practice