

PAS Alumni Newsletter

Grand Valley State University

Fall 2014

From the Director

By Andrew Booth, GVSU PAS Program Director

It is with great excitement that I inform you all, our esteemed alumni, of the latest happenings in your PAS department! In my last written remarks, I informed you all that we would be getting a visit from our friends at the Accreditation Review Commission on Physician Assistant Education (ARC-PA) in May of 2014. Accreditation is key to any program, as students need to graduate from an accredited

The ARC-PA has recognized the exemplary work of this program, and most specifically the work of the faculty and staff, at educating competent, compassionate, and caring PA's. We are leading the way in interprofessionalism, medical knowledge, and patient care. We are truly blessed to have such dedicated faculty and preceptors who continually give of their time and talent to educate the next generation of PA's!

I am happy to report that the GVSU PAS Program, as well as the distant site in Traverse City, have been awarded 7 years of accreditation!!

institution in order to sit for the National PA certification exam (PANCE). The ARC-PA has been making quite a few changes over the course of the last few years, so we were not exactly sure what to expect. Additionally, this was an exceptionally important visit because they (ARC-PA) would be evaluating and deciding the accreditation status of our expansion to Traverse City, a project we have been working on for well over 2 years.

The Traverse City distant site will start its first cohort of students in Fall of 2015. We will be admitting 12 students to this site during this fall. Nicholus Kopacki, PA-C and Amanda Ross, PA-C, our two faculty at that site, and Cathy Tomek, our administrative assistant are eager to get students and help support the medical needs of North West Michigan.

PAS Admissions Update



The admissions process for the PAS class of 2017 is well underway. The admissions deadline was September 15, 2014. The program received over 400 well-qualified applicants for 48 positions split between the Grand Rapids and Traverse City campuses. Interviews are scheduled to occur October 31 and November 14. Admission decisions will be made by the end of the year. The PAS faculty is excited with the high caliber of applicants! The GVSU PAS program is always looking for alumni and preceptors to assist in the PAS admissions process by helping with the interview process.

Contact Molly Paulson
(paulsonm@gvsu.edu) for
additional details!



Class of 2014 Update

By Margaret Webb, PA-S3



It has been a whirlwind journey our class has taken since entering the GVSU Physician Assistant Program in August of 2012. The light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter, and lucky for us, it isn't a train full of exams, research proposals and practicum exams. We have come so far from spending hours and hours in class every day and stepped into the clinical world. We have been able to experience so many different hospital systems and clinical situations which have shaped us into the clinicians we will become. In some ways this year has been more difficult than any other part of PA school. Each month we walk into a new clinical situation and it feels like the first day of

kindergarten all over again. We make friends with the nurses who teach us the basics of medicine, and study every waking hour to know the answers to questions asked by our preceptors and prepare ourselves for the next day's patients. And then, just as a comfortable routine develops, we're off to the next rotation to start over.

Despite the continually changing environment, one thing has remained the same. Preceptors and clinical staff are happy to teach and involve us in the patient care process. They recognize that we are the future of medicine and accept the challenge to teach us the essentials of their practice. Learning how to practice medicine in the real world has been incredibly overwhelming and informative. Beyond the medicine, it has been so important to learn the communication and support systems responsible for providing full patient care. This year has taught us considerable humility and will forever be in the back of our minds as we embark on our own careers.

It has come to the point in our educational career where the job search is truly upon us. Whether looking to work in the hospital, outpatient setting, or half-way across the world, there are many opportunities for new physician assistants in our growing field. Transitioning from the educational environment into the workplace will be another big step, but many facilities are open to training new graduates in the ever-changing world of medicine. It will be essential for us to find mentors who are willing to be a part of our budding medical career.

As we look towards graduation and starting new careers, we cannot forget the time spent at Grand Valley State University with the faculty and classmates who shaped our graduate education. Our paths may part soon, but we all have common ties to where our medical career truly took flight. Good luck to all of my classmates and thank you to the entire faculty and staff for your hard work in helping us become the physician assistants we are today!

GVSU Pre-PA Club

The GVSU pre-PA club is growing and currently has approximately 200 active members! Remaining meeting dates for the fall semester are November 5, November 19, and December 3. During club meetings, members discuss strategies and exchange ideas for PA program admission! The club also offers phlebotomy courses, CPR/AED, and First Aid certifications. There are many ways to become involved. If you know someone who is considering PA school, this is an excellent resource to provide them with. There are also ways that practicing physician assistants or clinicians can become involved as well! The club is open to having speakers come to the meetings and students are always looking for shadowing opportunities.

Contact Elena Ongaro (ongaroe@mail.gvsu.edu) or Professor Molly Paulson (paulsonm@gvsu.edu) for additional information.

GVSU's Physician Assistant Expansion Campus Gets Support from Surrounding Communities

By Nicholas Kopacki and Amanda Ross

For the past few years Grand Valley State Universities Physician Assistant program has been in the process of expanding our program to Traverse City. We are happy to announce that our program has received 7 years accreditation for both the Grand Rapids campus as well as the Expansion site! With the expansion to Traverse City come new site developments as well as strengthening the relationships we have with our current preceptors in the community.

“The support from preceptors in Traverse City and the surrounding communities has been amazing,”

says Nicholas Kopacki, GVSU PAS Faculty. “A big challenge of any PA program is the development of clinical sites for students. We are fortunate to have the support of many truly excellent clinicians in Northern Michigan”.

Pat Smith PA-C, is a graduate from GVSU's PA program who recently relocated to Traverse City to practice Emergency Medicine at Munson Medical Center. Pat has been a preceptor for GVSU's PA program for over 2 years prior to relocating and is excited to have the opportunity to continue precepting PA students here in Traverse City. He believes having GVSU's PA program up in Traverse City will help address the shortage of providers in Northern Michigan. “We need help up here! Healthcare is often an urban benefit, having large swaths of the rural areas of the country in need of primary care

providers. Northern Michigan is unfortunately no stranger to this shortage. Locals are still traveling far and wide to seek their care. Having the ability to train PAs locally, will in turn, keep them local. Having a satellite program makes it that much easier for students to take those rural rotations, and as most of us know, the rotations we take often lead to that coveted first job.” Pat has been impressed at the amount of interest and support for the expansion of the PA program. “The amount of interest for Grand Valley's PA program just within Munson Medical Center is huge,” Says Pat Smith. Pat extends his love for serving his community by spending his spare time as a Ski Patroller at many different northern Michigan ski resorts.

Support for GVSU's PA program expands beyond the Traverse City Community. Dr Sharapov is a General and Vascular surgeon who practices with Petoskey Surgeons PC. in Petoskey. He has recently taken on the role of a GVSU PA preceptor and enjoys having PA students rotate through his practice. “Working alongside a young professional in the beginning of his or her long career is very exhilarating. It reminds me of the reasons why I decided to do what I do. Daily grind and demands of work at times prevent me from pausing and reflecting on the deeper side of life. Students ask the most interesting and darndest questions - they make you pause and force you to reflect and question the things that I came to

take to for granted.” Students have commented on Dr Sharapov's dedication as a preceptor. “...he was always willing to answer questions if asked. He spent about 1-2 hours each week with me in the cafeteria and answered any questions about surgery I may have,” says a current PA student. His passion for educating students extends beyond precepting GVSU PA students.

“I feel passionate about sharing the wealth of knowledge I've been entrusted with through the many years of training in medical school, residency and fellowship, and private practice.”

“I created and maintain a vascular surgery resource for my colleagues and a hernia resource for my patients,” states Dr. Sharapov.

“The Masters of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program at GVSU is dedicated to providing a well-rounded clinical education for its students. As a faculty we can't emphasize enough the important role preceptors play in educating our PA students. This is where students learn the various aspects of practicing medicine you cannot learn from a book or lecture,” describes Amanda Ross, PA-C GVSU Traverse City Faculty. With the support of our northern Michigan preceptors we look forward to the expansion of the GVSU PA program to Traverse City!

MAPA Quiz Bowl Champions!

Class of 2015 Update

By Simona Goi, MAPA Representative

“We are almost in clinical rotations!” This has become the battle-cry of our class during the past few weeks. We can hardly believe that we are in our last semester of didactic instruction, and we are all both excited and terrified of being finally “out in the world” putting everything we have learned to the test. The past few months have been full of activities both inside and outside the classroom. We have delved into every organ system in the body, set up and carried out a variety of research projects, practiced drawing blood on one another, and wrapped each other’s limbs in casts and splints. In the meantime we have also managed to socialize and volunteer: on August 21 we attended a Whitecaps game, on September 05 we hosted a field day to get to know the incoming Class of 2016, and on September 7 we held a very successful Golf Scramble to raise funds for one of our classmates who is battling cancer.

Thank you to all students, faculty, staff, families and friends who participated! More recently our RPC president led us in organizing the annual Heels-to-Heal 5k to benefit Oasis of Hope. In the next few weeks we have much planned: over half of our class will be attending the MAPA Fall Conference in Traverse City on October 9-12. We look forward to battling other PA schools for the much coveted Quiz Bowl trophy! And we are participating in the MAPA donations challenge to benefit Angel House, a shelter for pregnant and parenting teenagers and their children. We are also fanning out across the greater Grand Rapids area during PA week, October 6-12, to volunteer and raise awareness of PA work and contributions to our community. It has been an intense, challenging and rewarding year of absorbing all kind of medical knowledge. Now we can’t wait to sharpen our clinical skills during our rotations. The journey continues.



Congratulations to the Grand Valley State University Physician Assistant Studies Class of 2015 on their quiz bowl victory at MAPA!



Professor Booth cheering on the PAS students!



Megan Hauck, Katy Chelsea, and Michelle Strange



Class of 2015 PAS Quiz Bowl Teams

Class of 2016 Update

By Samara Spotts, Class of 2016 Member

As I write this, I realize the class of 2016 is already halfway through our first semester of PA school! We have learned so much already, but have a vast amount of knowledge yet to gain.

Our class embarked on this journey together as 52 strangers and have become classmates, roommates, study buddies, friends and will be future practitioners.

learning how to obtain and perform a complete history and physical. We are acquiring information about statistical tests and how to interpret their value in regards to medical literature. And we are learning about each other and ourselves as clinicians.

We are thankful for our professors for their willingness to share their experiences and stories, both positive and negative, in order to make us better practitioners. We appreciate being challenged and needing to learn our Review of Systems in the first 6 weeks. We have come to understand this program



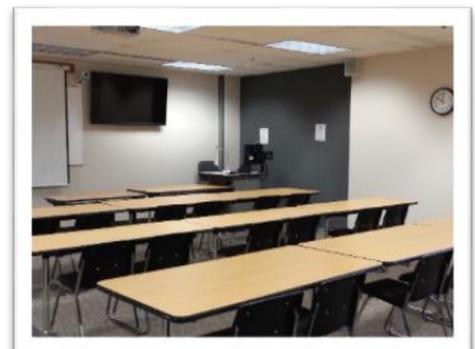
PAS class of 2016

The time and effort spent during our undergraduate years and leading up to admission is behind us. All the hours of memorizing, studying and learning have only been amplified, but now we feel our learning is of greater importance, as every piece of information will one day be useful to treat and diagnosis our future patients.

Our classes are challenging us and expanding our understanding of where different bodily structures are, how they operate and the basic building blocks of medicine. We are

isn't about earning a grade, but is about the amount of learning we are accomplishing. All of us have come from different backgrounds but have one common goal: to be the best, most competent Physician Assistants we can be! We are striving forward one day at a time, together as a team. We may have only scratched the surface of our Physician Assistant schooling journey, but the class of 2016 is determined and looking forward to what the future holds!

Traverse City Expansion



Grand Valley State University Physician's Assistant Program

Grand Valley's Physician's Assistant program is one of the most rigorous in the country. To continue to attract and retain the best and brightest students, and graduate them with the best preparation for clinical practice, private funds are increasingly needed. You can help by giving today to the Physician's Assistant Development Fund. Your gift of any size counts and builds this fund to help our students continue our tradition of excellence.

Please consider giving in one of the following ways:

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Grand Valley State University
L.V. Eberhard Center, 9th Floor
301 Fulton St. West
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We want to hear from you!

Please update the GVSU PAS Program with your contact information so we can stay in touch with you!

Contact GVSU Alumni Relations Office (616-331-3590) or <http://www.gvsu.edu/alumni> or contact Nancy Moseler (moselern@gvsu.edu)