



GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY®

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

GVSU Physician Assistant Studies Alumni Newsletter



Grand Rapids

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Traverse City

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WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR



Andrew Booth, DHEd, PA-C

Another winter in Michigan is winding down and the signs of spring are soon upon us. We have been very fortunate this year, as the winter has been warmer than usual and the piles of snow have not been quite as high as in the past. It certainly has been great for our clinical year students and students that drive a distant to get to school!

The program continues to work on our accreditation. In case you missed the announcement, the program was awarded 10 years of accreditation in 2014 then placed on probation until September 2018. The program was, to say the least, stunned at this turn of events. The reason for the status change was based on a self-assessment report that was submitted. So, the reason for the probation is purely on the report that was submitted regarding our self-assessment and nothing to do with the faculty, curriculum, facilities, distant site, or students' outcomes. In fact, those components of the program have never been better. We have a full compliment of faculty that are delivering a top notch curriculum that is resulting in outstanding student pass rates on the boards (99%) and employment.

*Look for ways to become involved in the GVSU
PAS program coming in the future!*

The feedback from alumni, preceptors and employers has been overwhelmingly positive and reassures me that this temporary "tag" will only serve to improve our internal process much more. The program has already made some very specific

adjustments to rectify the status change, including the development of an Assistant Dept. Chair for Assessment, procedures to ensure accurate and appropriate reports, and specific support from our college and the university in the reporting process. So, we are well on our way for removal of this status. It is important to note that our program is still accredited and continue to have students and the profession as our focus.

The Traverse City distant site continues to grow and thrive. While we have had some "kinks" to work out, the delivery of the program has not seen any major problems since we began 2 years ago. Our first cohort of students is set to graduate in December and have been a tremendous group of people that have been a joy and honor to work with as our inaugural class.

We continue to look to increase the number of preceptors for our clinical year. As you are probably sensing, the number of medical learners in our communities has risen drastically. With three new medical schools and countless online NP schools, the competition for clinical placements has never been higher. We are counting on you all, our trusted and valued alumni, to be our voice and our allies in this arena. Whether you are a new preceptor and take a PA student for the first time, or you have taken them in the past and maybe increase by 1 student, your support goes a very long way. If you cannot take students, talking with colleagues and administrators about taking GVSU PA students would also be extremely helpful. Your support and dedication to the GVSU PAS program goes beyond any "monetary" contribution.

Again, we thank you for your support, whatever way that is. We thank you for representing our program so well and look forward to continued progress of our profession and our program.

Reminder that MAPA will be hosting their annual Fall CME conference in Grand Rapids this upcoming October. Since it is in our "backyard" we are hoping to see many of you!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Booth".

Andrew Booth, Chair and Program Director

ALUMNI/PRECEPTOR EVENT

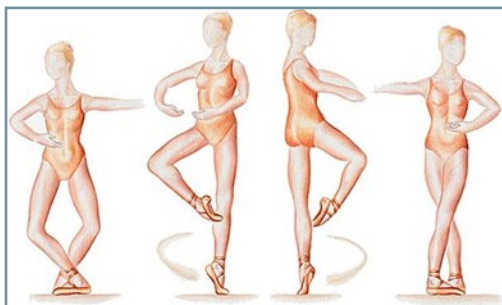
In appreciation of their Alumni and Preceptors, GVSU's PA program held its 2nd annual Alumni / Preceptor CME Appreciation Event on March 23rd at Founders Brewing Company. It was a packed house with huge support from many of the alumni and preceptors within the community. This event featured a lecture given by GVSU faculty Nicholas Kopacki, PA-C covering "Updates on Sepsis". In addition attendees received a complimentary Founders beer, food, as well as one category 1 CME credit. These last 2 events have had such strong support and positive feedback that we are already looking forward to hosting the 3rd annual event in less than a year. GVSU's Faculty are extremely thankful to all of our Alumni and Preceptors for the time and dedication you have to our students, the university, and to the PA profession. We would love to hear from you if you have any suggestions on future CME topics. For suggestions please email Mandy German at germanm@gvsu.edu.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT



Mackenzie Blust, a student in the Class of 2018, presented her research titled "A Comparative Analysis of the Center of Mass and Center of Pressure Relationship in a Pirouette Performed by an Amateur and Professional Dancer" at the Midwest American Society of Biomechanics Conference on Friday, February 24th at the Eberhard Center in GVSU. Mackenzie completed the research in conjunction with Gordon Alderink, Associate Professor in the GVSU Physical Therapy program, to fulfill requirements for her senior honors' project at GVSU. Mackenzie does not have a background in dance; however, became interested in investigating dance biomechanics when she was introduced to the Biomechanics Lab at GVSU by Professor Alderink. Mackenzie expanded on research that had been completed previously, examining differences between amateur and professional dancers. Mackenzie's research evaluated how the center of mass and center of pressure are controlled as a measure of balance throughout a pirouette turn. The study supported the research hypothesis and found training and experience gained through professional dance training did generate greater stability during pirouette turns. Mackenzie hopes to submit her research to a research journal upon completion of PA school. We extend congratulations on a great achievement to Mackenzie!



FACULTY CHOICE: 2016 PRECEPTOR OF THE YEAR

Every year, the faculty of our program vote on our Preceptor of the Year award, and the name that came to the top this year was Dr. Alane Laws-Barker, who practices Women's Health at Sparrow Midwest OB/Gyn in Lansing. "We work hard here," says Dr. Laws-Barker about herself and the dedicated staff. She has been precepting with the GVSU PAS program for four years, and as a faculty, we love working with her. The students feel the same way, commenting that Dr. Laws-Barker is an excellent teacher and keeps the students involved. Students have related that she makes her patients feel comfortable and that they learn a lot from just listening to Dr. Laws-Barker's conversations with her patients. And, as the faculty and students know, medicine is not just about the science, it's about the art of practicing.



Dr. Alane Laws-Barker and Charlene Dubois

STUDENT CHOICE: 2016 PRECEPTOR OF THE YEAR



The Class of 2016 chose Ryan Miller, PA-C as their Preceptor of the Year and honored him at their PAS Program graduation. Ryan, a GVSU PA alum, has precepted students in both Family Medicine and Behavioral Health. Known for his in-depth knowledge and commitment to student learning, Ryan is giving back to the program by providing great opportunities for students to learn and grow on their rotations. The students give him high praise, rating him as an "Excellent" preceptor.

Congratulations, Ryan! The program and future students thank you for your contributions to their success.



Katherine Behrenwald

Meeting a Community Need

Alumni are making a difference in the communities that they serve on a daily basis. Our alumni spotlight this edition is on Katherine Behrenwald (class of 2014). Not only does Kate serve as a preceptor to clinical year students, but she has also found a need in her community and a way to reach that need as a medical provider. Kate was hired at Montcalm Care Network Health 360 clinic in Stanton, Michigan shortly after graduation. Through connections she had made as a student herself in clinical rotations, she was contacted about starting a project in her own community similar to the Red Project in Grand Rapids which helps educate individuals to reduce risk of drug overdose. Realizing that 9 out of 16 deaths occurred in her county secondary to prescription drug overdose, Kate took action and began a program to get Naloxone, a medication used to temporarily reverse the effect of opioids in a drug overdose, into the hands of the community. She successfully wrote a grant to develop a program educating the community on how to prevent overdose from occurring and provide free Naloxone kits in case of an opioid overdose for prompt reversal saving lives. A second successful grant was written to provide law enforcement officials in the area with training and access to the kits themselves. Within the first week after training law enforcement, a successful reversal was accomplished. So far, approximately 80 kits have been provided to law enforcement officials and 90 kits have been distributed to community members. Kate originally received some community push back, as some community members believed that providing the reversal medication would enable patients. However, she used this as a platform to educate the community that harm reduction leads to decreased morbidity and mortality, as well as increasing the number of patients seeking treatment for addiction. Kate encourages co-prescribing Naloxone with any opioid prescription to reduce the risk of accidental as well as intentional overdose. Further information can be found at prescribetoprevent.org.



The website provides information on how and what to prescribe as well as reimbursement guidance. She also recommends reading “Getting Off Right: A Safety Manual for injection drug users” provided by the harm reduction coalition at harmreduction.org. Kate is happy to share the curriculum that she compiled for the Mid State Health Network on risk reduction and naloxone administration to anyone interested. If anyone would like further information, please contact the PA program. Prevention starts with education and the willingness of the medical community to see when there is a problem and take action.



PA CLASS OF 2017 NEWS

Over the past few months, the Class of 2017 has made the transition from didactic to clinical year, which has felt like quite an accomplishment. As a class, we chose to commemorate this achievement at a "Black Tie" event rather than a traditional white coat ceremony. Our RPC members voted on hosting the event in Traverse City, as another effort to join the two cohorts, Grand Rapids and Traverse City. The event was a huge success and an opportunity to celebrate with classmates, friends, loved ones, and our professors who have all been there for us along our journey towards becoming health care professionals.

As we begin our first two months of clinical rotations, we are finally able to apply the skills and knowledge we have learned during the didactic year. Numerous students have expressed their excitement about their experiences thus far. Classmates have communicated how they have felt countless moments of

clarity, where details of disease processes they studied seem to align with what they are seeing in clinical practice. Intertwined with these clarifying moments are feelings of uncertainty also, which can be quite frustrating. Especially in settings like internal medicine, where multiple co-morbidities overlap and knowing details of disease processes are crucial. However, we have found motivation in performing independent research in order to be proficient in topics we need to understand intuitively, especially with the anticipation of taking the PANCE at the end of this year.

As we continue to advance through clinical year and make long-lasting relationships within the communities we serve, we will continue to perform community service projects and interact with RPC, including a March Madness fundraiser! This March, we also had the opportunity to interact with other GVSU health profession students at an Interprofessional

Education event. These events are eye-opening and help us understand our future role as a Physician Assistant, as well as appreciate the strengths of our colleagues.

I am confident the Class of 2017 would say we have established unique and long-lasting relationships between both cohorts. My classmates and I will continue to support one another in challenges we may face throughout our careers and to root for one another in our achievements! In a few short months, we will be celebrating an even greater feat and be able to provide quality and compassionate health care, as a proud graduate of Grand Valley State University's Physician Assistant studies program.

Julie Stewart, PA-S Class of 2017



PA CLASS OF 2018 NEWS

At orientation, Dr. Booth informed the Class of 2018 that “learning in PA school is like trying to take a sip from a fire hose, because the information is coming at you that fast”. I remember looking around the room at our eager faces and wondering if we would still be smiling by the end of the semester. Dr. Booth was not wrong in his assessment of the life of a student in a physician assistant program. With a bursting pressure of 8,000 kPa, the fire hose flooded us with anatomy, physiology, clinical applications, statistics, and foundations of clinical medicine in a way we never could have imagined. The entire class managed to stay afloat, although we may not have been fully alert and oriented towards the end of the semester. One might question our mental health as we returned for yet another round with the fire hose in January. We are now knee-deep in the second semester and are flooded with EKG strips, X-ray images, and spirometry readings. Despite the demands of our program, the Class of 2018 has found many ways to handle the rising water and give back to the community.



The Traverse City cohort has been busy with many community-oriented events. They have volunteered at a children’s museum, set up a dance floor for a daddy-daughter dance, and cleaned their local theater. They have also attended many events together such as wine tasting, snow shoeing, and bowling. They are even making time to get together every other week for dinner and drinks to unwind.

The Grand Rapids group has been getting involved in a variety of activities. Members of the group participated in STEM, a program designed to further middle school children’s interest in science by learning about cell biology, deciphering X-rays, and using a stethoscope. Members of the physician assistant, physical therapy, and public health programs have created an inter-professional Bible study group to help take an intentional break from school. Our RPC president, James Tuljus, will be hosting a Heels to Heal 5k run in September to benefit the nonprofit free clinic, Oasis of Hope.

It is the goal of our student society to become heavily involved in the upcoming MAPA conference to be held in Grand Rapids this fall. We are currently creating events that will provide a sense of how Grand Valley is educating current PA students and the vision this program has for the future. We are all excited for this wonderful opportunity.

Congratulations goes to Karalyn Cain of Traverse City for winning the AAPA leadership summit competition. Her essay on “advocacy in the PA profession” has given her the opportunity to attend the AAPA Leadership and Advocacy Summit in Arlington, VA. We know she will represent our program well.

We have started our off-site rotations to gain inter-professional knowledge on the hospital community. A new and unique experience comes to us via Answer Health on Demand. They are a telemedicine service that provides urgent care services online and over smart phone apps. The staff is very enthusiastic to have student observers, and we are excited to be able to experience this up-and-coming niche of medicine.

As I think of everything the Class of 2018 has accomplished both inside and outside of the classroom, I feel very proud to call them my peers, my future colleagues, and now my friends. This class has a lot to offer future patients, the medical profession, and the community. As the fire hose continues to fill up our pool of knowledge, we look forward to further developing our critical thinking skills and making ourselves excellent representatives of Grand Valley’s MPAS program!

Beth Sweney, PA-S Class of 2018



DIVERSITY SPOTLIGHT

Maria “Pilar” Roldan-Bustinza

In highlighting just one of the many amazing unique and interesting individuals in the GVSU PAS program, we decided to focus on a person who embodies one of the GVSU mission foci, “include, engage, and support a diverse group of students, faculty and staff”. With the distinction of having a strong Peruvian background, Maria Roldan-Bustinza, known as Pilar to friends and family, exemplifies this GVSU mission focus in her passion for improving healthcare for the many Hispanic people in our community.

Can you talk about your role as diversity officer of the GVSU physician assistant student organization, the Richard Paul Clodfelder Student Society (RPC)?

My role as the RPC diversity officer gave me the chance to bring a variety of speakers and create opportunities for the GVSU PA program to enrich our knowledge and understanding of different cultural and minority patient populations.

What is your definition of diversity? How do you encourage people to honor the uniqueness of each individual?

Diversity to me means that each person is unique not only based on race or ethnicity but also because each person has its own set of beliefs, preferences, and cultural background. I encourage others to accept and respect these differences even if they don’t agree with them. As future medical providers, we will encounter patients of different gender and age that will have different ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation, socio economic status, and religious beliefs. I encourage my classmates and other PA students to always take in consideration the uniqueness of each patient (but without stereotyping) and tailor your medical practice and interventions to each individual.

Who and why did you bring guest lecturers to promote understanding of diversity?

We had a nice variety of speakers. They were chosen based on the input from classmates on subjects that we felt would enrich our understanding of minority patient populations and would provide us with tools to better serve these patients as medical providers. Some of the speakers and topics that we had were: the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, the Grand Rapids African American Health Institute, LGBTQ issues in health care, ADHD, electroconvulsive therapy, genetic counseling, etc.

I was also able to develop a partnership with Spectrum Health Programa Puente, which is a program devoted to improving the health of the Hispanic population in Kent County. This partnership will allow PA students to interact and work with the Hispanic population, participate in health screenings, and have a chance to practice/improve their Spanish skills.

What ideas do you have for educating students about diversity?

Continue to provide opportunities that allow students to learn about diverse populations, ask questions, and see things from a different perspective.

What clinical experience have you enjoyed the most so far and why?

I’ve only had my Family Medicine rotation so far and I loved it. I had the opportunity to work with a clinic that serves a large Hispanic and underserved population. I enjoyed my time there not only because I was able to improve my medical knowledge, but also because I was able to work with compassionate providers that treated each and every patient with the utmost respect and kindness regardless of the color of their skin, cultural background, language barriers, or socio economic status.

Looking back on your didactic education, what advice would you give to students currently in PAS didactic education?

Don’t ever give up! There will be times during the didactic year when you will feel that you can’t possibly study anymore; but yes, you can!! PA school can be stressful and overwhelming at times so find a way to relax and recharge your energy. Always keep in mind what your motivation to be a PA is because this will keep you going on those hard days. This year will go by really fast and before you know it you will be in your clinical rotations. And believe me, all that hard work in didactics is so worth it once you are out in the “real world” and you get to put in practice all your hard earned medical knowledge!

Where (location or field) are you hoping to work when you graduate? Why?

I hope to stay in the Grand Rapids area. All my clinical experience prior to PA school has been in the hospital so I’ve been more inclined to want to stay in the hospital setting when I graduate. I have a big interest in neurology, oncology and endocrinology. However, after my family medicine rotation I can also see myself working in family med. I’m looking forward to the rest of my rotations as I think I will get a better idea of where I see myself after graduation.



sHaPe Camp

Diversity in Medicine: Starting Early

The need for diversity in the health care workforce is critical. By 2060, racial and ethnic minority groups will account for nearly half the population in the United States (Colby, S. L. & Ortman, 2015). Healthcare access and treatment for minorities is suboptimal. Additionally, minorities are underrepresented within the healthcare professions. The Health Professionals for Diversity Coalition (n.d.) posts increasing diversity in the healthcare workforce will lead to improved health outcomes for minorities and will strengthen the quality of healthcare for all Americans. sHaPe (Summer Health Activities and Professions Exploration) camp was created to explore and address the lack of diversity in healthcare by exposing young people to the variety of healthcare careers that are available.

The camp, hosted by Grand Valley State University's College of Health Professions and the Regional Math and Science Center, is a one-week day camp, offered preferentially to Grand Rapids Public School students. It introduces the diverse group of 7th and 8th graders to a variety of careers available within healthcare. Some of the professions explored include medical lab science, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, radiation therapy, sonography, dosimetry, sports medicine, and therapeutic recreation.

Dr. Ranelle Brew and Kathy Agee, who lead the sHaPe camp, are following graduates to determine if early exploration of the health professions increases the likelihood of students pursuing a health career. Preliminary data suggests that early exposure may encourage young non-white students to consider a health profession career. The table below illustrates the demographics of sHaPe camp attendees.

2010-2015 Demographics	N=273	%
African-American	n = 73	27%
Caucasian	n = 99	36%
Hispanic	n = 58	21%
Multi-Racial	n = 25	9%
Asian	n = 14	5%
Native American	n = 3	1%
Haitian	n = 1	1%

To learn more about sHaPe camp and their mission, visit the website at <http://www.gvsu.edu/shape/camp-information-6.htm>

References

Health Professionals for Diversity Coalition (n.d.). *Fact sheet: The need for diversity in the health care workforce*. Retrieved from <http://www.aapcho.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/NeedForDiversityHealthCareWorkforce.pdf>

Colby, S. L. & Ortman, (2015). *Projections of the size and composition of the U.S. population: 2014 to 2060*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf>

Fall in Love with STEM

An Open House of STEM activities geared towards middle school and high school students was held on February 18, 2017 at GVSU. This event is sponsored by the West Michigan Association for Women in Science. Faculty and students from the College of Health Profession, the Kirkhof College of Nursing and the Department of Cell and Molecular Biology developed an experience for middle school and high school students, which was held in the College of Health Sciences. This activity involved all of the components of STEM into the clinical scenario of asthma.

Using computer programs and simulation, students had hands-on opportunities to explore the components of the respiratory system, and the dysfunction associated with asthma. Volunteers from the PA program introduced the students to Peak Flow meters, pulse oximeter and nebulizers and explained their use. Students had chance to measure their lung capacity using a Peak Flow meter, and learned how it is used to monitor breathing disorders such as asthma. Through exploration of lung function, disorders, treatment, and causes, students were able to identify multiple areas of opportunity to explore in their future education.



2017 Admissions Update

The Class of 2019 is almost finalized, and we are now preparing for the Class of 2020! The Fall 2017 application cycle is now open. Application criteria includes completion of prerequisite courses, acquisition of a minimum 500 health care experience hours, completion of the Graduate Records examination, and submission of two recommendation forms. For additional details regarding application requirements, please visit GVSU's PAS website (<http://www.gvsu.edu/pas/admissions-criteria-91.htm>). All application materials are due September 15, 2017 to be considered for admission into the Class of 2020. Applicants will be notified of interview decisions mid-October 2017 and interviews will occur early November 2017. We currently have many alumni and clinical preceptors participating in the interview process, but we always welcome more. If you would like to participate in the interview process, please contact Jill Ellis at ellisji@gvsu.edu for further information.

Upcoming Conferences 2017

Register Now!
2017 Michigan Rural Health
Conference

REFRESH
RENEW
REFOCUS

May 4-5, 2017
Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort
Mt. Pleasant, MI

2017 Michigan Rural Health Conference
May 4-5, 2017
Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort
Mt. Pleasant, MI



AAPA
2017
LAS VEGAS

AAPA
May 15-19, 2017
Mandalay Bay South Convention Center
Las Vegas, NV



Fall CME Conference October 5-8, 2017



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*The mission of the program is to educate individuals to become competent
Physician Assistants*

The Physician Assistant Program at Grand Valley State University 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 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 online (www.gvsu.edu/give), by phone 616-331-6000, or via mail.

MAIL

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301 Fulton St. West
P.O. Box 2005
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501-2005

The background image for the bottom section is a photograph of the Cook-Devos Center for Health Sciences building. The building is a modern, multi-story structure with a curved facade and large glass windows. The name "COOK-DEVOS CENTER FOR HEALTH SCIENCES" is prominently displayed in large, white, curved letters above the entrance. The entrance area is covered by a glass and steel canopy. The foreground shows a paved plaza with some landscaping.

We Want To Hear From You!

Please update the GVSU PAS Program with your contact information so we can stay in touch with you! Send us professional activities, honors, newspaper articles, or any accomplishment you would like posted in the next newsletter!

Contact Mandy German PA-C Clinical Affiliate Faculty and Co-Director of Clinical Education
(616-460-7080) or germanm@gvsu.edu

You can update your email online at the following link:
<http://www.gvsu.edu/alumni/update-your-information-88.htm>