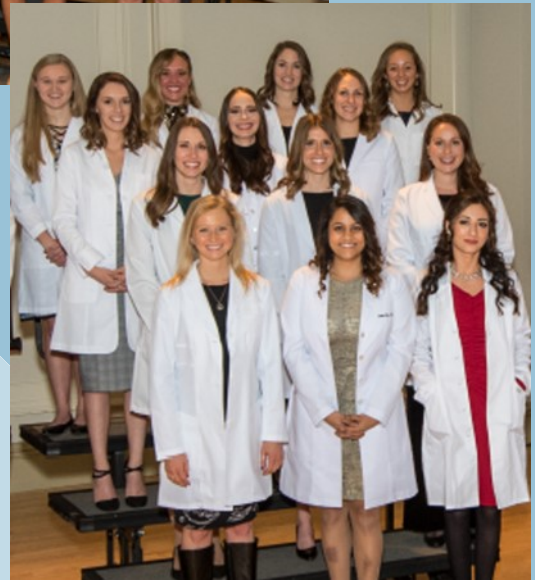
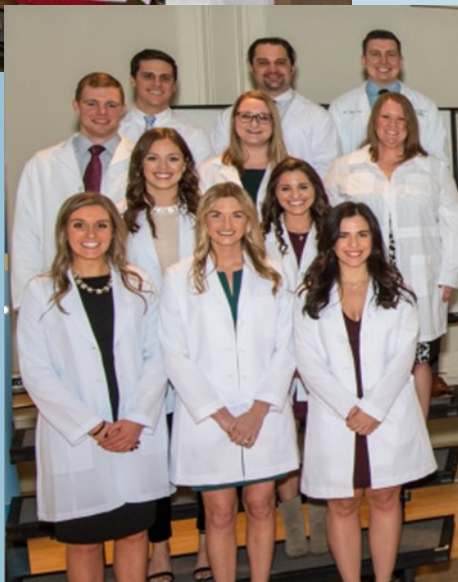




GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY®

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES



*Meet the Newest PAS Alumni and Colleagues
Class of 2018*

WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR



Paul Christensen, MD

Spring has finally sprung in Michigan. It was hard to imagine we would ever see the sun, or flowers, or new green growth as we struggled through the 'snow-pocalypse' in January. It seems like an appropriate time to reflect on the 'new growth' in our program.



The Class of 2019 is excelling in clinical rotations. It is incredibly gratifying to our program when a preceptor comments that they 'would rather have a GVSU PA student than any other learner'. These comments are especially important for our Clinical Team (Mandy German, Amanda Reddy, and Andy Booth) who continue to tackle the task of maintaining and growing our clinical opportunities in the community.

The Class of 2020 now has two semesters of classroom and laboratory studies under their belt. I am amazed by the incredible efforts put in by both the faculty and students to prepare these students in the science and art of medical practice. This class endured the unprecedented week that GVSU was closed in January (including 8 hours of my recorded lectures!) Not only do they keep up with their studies, but also I suspect took away lessons in resiliency and adaptability so important to being a good provider.

We have hired Michelle Strange, PA-C as a part-time faculty. Michelle is a graduate of our program and is a much-needed addition at the Traverse City campus. She has strong ties to the area and will take on a variety of teaching roles.



The PA program continues to refine the program assessment process that resulted in Accreditation-Continued status until 2024. One of the department goals for this year has been to implement a computerized testing and assessment tool. Dr. Lisa Pagnucco and Dr. David Geenen have spearheaded this effort. Fully implemented, this program will allow us to track our progress in covering NCCPA topics and competencies and give us insights to improve our curriculum.

The Dan and Pamela DeVos Center for Interprofessional Education adjacent to our current building, slated to open in 2021, continues to take shape. We look forward to dedicated laboratory space for PAS (not to mention more parking!) when this building is completed.

All of this 'new growth' keeps us optimistic and focused on the future. It is a future full of promise and we are glad that you are a part of it.

CLASS OF 2018 GRADUATION



FACULTY PROFILE: MANDY GERMAN, PA-C

Mandy is the Clinical Coordinator and a Clinical Affiliate Professor in Physician Assistant Studies. She joined our program at Grand Valley State University in 2012, previously serving as a Family Practice Physician Assistant at Cherry Street Health Services in Grand Rapids and Sheridan Hospital Clinics in Sheridan, MI. She has also worked for Dr. Charles Barker in Belding, MI. Her Bachelor of Science degree is in Medical Laboratory Science and she obtained her Master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies from Central Michigan University.

She is an indispensable member of the department as a co-leader in procuring clinical sites for our second-year students and conducting site visits throughout their clinical rotations. This has become an even greater task in recent years with the highly competitive environment for medical student clinical rotations in Western Michigan. Mandy is also responsible for organizing the pre-clinical year bootcamp and end-of-rotation examinations/workshops. In addition, she serves on the department's Program Review committee and provides input from our preceptors, students, and faculty to ensure the success of our clinical program. She also practices clinically for Cherry Health at the Montcalm Area Health Center in Greenville, MI one day a week and has been there for 10 years.



As part of her community involvement, Mandy volunteers with Alpha Family Center in Lowell as their Medical Director and board member. She also volunteers as the medical lead for her safety team at her church and is leader of a 4 H club in Kent county. She and her husband have a very busy family life as well with four daughters ranging in age from 10 – 15 years old. They maintain a small farm that includes cattle, pigs, horses, goats and chickens that keep them all busy.

Mandy maintains her calm personality by riding horses with her daughters and yoga!

Mandy, we are grateful for all you do for our department and the PA program!

2018 PRECEPTOR AWARDS



Dr. Suzanne West and Kristy Booth, PA-C, are providers at Spectrum Health Medical Group, specializing in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Both providers are outstanding preceptors and support the OB/Gyn rotation at their clinic. Dr. West was the recipient of the 2018 GVSU PA Preceptor award at the Midwest Interprofessional Education and Research (MIPERC) conference last fall. Kristy Booth was the recipient of the GVSU PA Faculty preceptor of the year award, presented at the GVSU PA graduation ceremony in December. Both Dr. West and Kristy practice primarily in the Grand Rapids clinic and Spectrum Butterworth hospital. They have been an incredible asset and supporters of the PA program at GVSU for many years! They work with a team of physicians, PAs, and NPs that provide an exceptional learning experience for our students, who get the opportunity to work both in the office and in the hospital. The way the rotation is organized provides great learning experiences for students, and providers are always ready to teach and they go above and beyond for PA students. Student comments from this rotation with Dr. West and Kristy include: "Follow Dr. West when she is on call if at all possible. She is amazing!!" And "Loved this place. I never could have seen myself doing OB before this but would be willing to if I could work here!" and "Kristy is an awesome provider. I appreciate her thoroughness and consideration when caring for her patients".

On behalf of the GVSU PA program, we congratulate and thank Dr. West and Kristy Booth and the SHMG OB/GYN team for your support and willingness to advance the education of the GVSU PA students!

GVSU PAS ALUMNI/PRECEPTOR CME DINNER

The GVSU PAS Alumni and Preceptor 4th Annual CME dinner was held on March 15th, at Founders Brewing Co. The event was once again, a big success! There were over 20 alumni present, along with a number of faculty, and our esteemed presenter, Dr. Mike Tiberg.

Dr. Tiberg is a graduate of Ferris State University College of Pharmacy and the University of Illinois at Chicago where he obtained his B.S. degree in Pharmacy and Doctor of Pharmacy, respectively. Dr. Tiberg practiced at Munson Medical Center for over 20 years as an Infectious Disease Clinical Pharmacy Specialist. During that time, he established a pharmacy based Infectious Disease Service as well as a Post-Graduate Year 2 (PGY-2) Infectious Disease pharmacy residency program. He is a Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist with added qualifications in Infectious Disease (BCPS AQ-ID). Dr. Tiberg's talk focused on antimicrobial resistance, new antibiotics, and the future of antimicrobial use. The talk was very well received, as was the reconnecting among friends and colleagues! Not only did the attendees get an opportunity to catch up with friends and learn new information regarding antibiotics, but almost everyone walked away with an awesome door prize!

Our next Alumni event takes place at the Fall Conference of the Michigan Academy of Physician Assistants at the Grand Traverse Resort, on Friday, October 4th, from 6:00-8:00 pm. Hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be available. If you are at the conference, or are just in the area, stop by and say hi!



STUDENT AWARD

Student Receives University Award

On April 8th, Austin Redick from the Class of 2019, was awarded the University Excellence in a Discipline Award! This award is given to the student in the PA program that has demonstrated academic excellence within the program as well as being a well-rounded student! Austin demonstrated both during his time in the didactic phase of the program!

Austin was joined by his family and his faculty advisor, Dr. Dave Geenen!

Congratulations Austin!



PA CLASS OF 2019 NEWS

The Class of 2019 is halfway done with clinical year and loving it! We are spread out all over the state and across a wide variety of core and elective rotations that are preparing us to launch into our careers. As you will read below, we have had many stretching and challenging experiences, but we remain motivated and excited for where we are headed. -The Class of 2019

"I am loving every moment of clinical rotations so far. From learning new procedures to putting my clinical knowledge from didactic into action to treat real patients, each day is challenging and rewarding. I am in the middle of my family medicine rotation and I love the mix of procedures, patient care, and building relationships with patients. It's hard to believe that we will be PAs in just a few short months!"

-Danielle Cook, GR Cohort

PA school is like a video game sometimes. It feels like there is a series of checkpoints to achieve in order to move to the next step. First, we got into school. Then didactic gave us a run for our money. Next came rotations. Finally a time to put our book knowledge to the test and apply it to actual patients. This is where I learned "textbook" patients should really be called "unicorns" because it seems patients can have any disease manifesting in any way that their body wants and "textbook" is not all that common. Which means there is always an opportunity to learn. But as for an update on me, the most recent checkpoint I've hit is being half way done with rotations. This is the time I'm gaining confidence to be a provider and thinking about where I want my career to start. It's a great place – and terrifying – but if there is one thing I've learned (and find great comfort in), it is that everyone has to start somewhere. And I'm well on my path. It has been a privilege to meet all those that I have and I am ecstatic to continue on this path of taking care of people for the rest of my life. PA school has certainly been the most challenging and rewarding experience I have ever had. I look forward to seeing what the final few checkpoints will be as I finish up my time here at GVSU, since they have been nothing short of exceptional.

-Kristen Struble, TC Cohort

I am wrapping up my elective in cardiothoracic surgery and I have loved my time in the OR and being able to build my procedural skills. While here, I have also been able to witness several heart and lung transplants. It is pretty unique to see an empty chest cavity in a living patient!

-Joseph Giovannucci, GR Cohort

I had the opportunity to rotate at a family practice clinic in Dearborn that primarily serves patients from the Middle East. Many of these patients are refugees and new to the United States. This experience provided me a great opportunity to practice working with a translator, having to understand another culture in order to treat the patient, as well as understanding disease processes not as common in the United States but extremely common in developing countries. In addition, many of these patients had been victims of crime and war, abuse, neglect, and have seen their families be torn apart. Thus, in addition to general medical conditions, there was also a lot of psychology involved in this rotation. One of our patients was a 60-year-old woman who was being verbally and emotionally abused by her husband, and her husband was also married to a younger woman in Jordan. She was taking care of her own children, as well as the children of the younger wife because the younger wife was still living in Jordan awaiting a visa. She was emotionally and physically exhausted. My preceptor and myself were able to provide this patient with resources to leave her marriage and provided her with psychology services through the clinic. Through this experience, I was able to learn both medically and culturally. I realized that sometimes patients just need to talk and have someone listen and provide them with resources. There was no medication we needed to give her at this visit, but we were able to help her navigate this challenging situation. I was also confronted with my own bias as having multiple wives is not a typical occurrence in US culture. I quickly had to recognize and drop this bias in order to help this patient. This is just one of the many experiences that challenged me and helped me grow as a PA student.

-Emily Smith, GR Cohort

"I had an amazing experience with Addiction Medicine at Spectrum's Center for Integrative Medicine. The clinic deals with complex patients that are struggling with a variety of substance use disorders. I have seen the highs and lows and all stages of treatment for these patients. There is relapse and great success and everything in between, but the team of doctors, PAs, medical assistants, care managers, and kick-butt social workers are there to support their patients through all parts of their recovery. It is really inspiring to see a patient regain hope and pull their life together when they have a strong care team on their side.

-Jordan Pretto, GR Cohort

PA CLASS OF 2020 NEWS

With our recent start to the third semester of the program, the Class of 2020 has been busy at work in the heart of didactic year. As this new semester progresses, we are welcoming a new type of summer as the long sunny days are filled with many hours of studying. While we have come a long way since our first day of PA school, we are excited for each new challenge as the program continues.

So far, the Class of 2020 has proven to be a close-knit cohort. We have continually taken on the obstacles of PA school as a team effort. "Sharing is caring" has been our class motto as we consistently share many study guides, flashcards, and practice material to help each other succeed through the rigorous academic curriculum. Through this hard work, many study groups and friendships have formed. This dynamic has transitioned beyond the walls of our classrooms, as many Grand Rapids and Traverse City students coordinate and attend group events to further grow these friendships.

During the first two semesters, the Class of 2020 participated in multiple fundraising and volunteer opportunities. The members of the RPC Student Society have been hard at work raising funds for future events including Black Tie and our White Coat ceremony. In addition to fundraising, our class has volunteered their time to causes such as Beer City Dog Biscuits, the Great Lakes Children's Museum, and the Great Lakes Humane Society. Members of RPC have also started an Instagram account to increase the presence of GVSU PAS on social media. We frequently use this account to post updates and general information about our program for prospective students, as well as alumni. Take a peak at @gvsupa to see more frequent updates from our class.

Recently, five members of the 2020 cohort traveled to Denver, Colorado for the annual AAPA conference. There, we were able to listen to many lectures, participate in activity-based ultrasound education, and represent the GVSU program in the Student Academy. We were joined by five members of the class of 2019. Together, we enjoyed the prospects of our future profession while learning about the many facets the PA world has to offer.

This summer is filled with many plans for the Class of 2020. In addition to our studies, we have made it a priority to do a number of activities outside of the classroom. These plans include a trivia night fundraiser for the Stephanie Urbanawiz scholarship

fund, participation in the Oasis of Hope golf outing fundraiser, many volunteer opportunities, and a mentorship program for the next cohort. This mentorship program will allow our class to welcome the incoming cohort into the program before they even step foot onto the GVSU campus in the fall. As a class, we appreciated all of the advice and help our mentors from the class of 2019 had to offer, so we hope to ease the transition for the next students in the same way. We have found that this program helped instill the team spirit and group dynamic that has led the identity of our class and hope to continue this for the future cohort.

While everyone warns you how fast time moves in PA school, it is hard to perceive the many hours of lectures, studying, practicing, failing, and succeeding as anything but long. Looking back at our start of the program in August 2018, it is crazy to think about how much material we have covered and how much we have grown as students and future professionals. It has been an exciting transition as we have moved from not fully grasping the true meaning of "studying" to becoming confident in our routines and abilities. While we have much to learn before heading out to our clinical rotations, the light at the end of this didactic tunnel is starting to be illuminated as we finish more and more modules in the classroom. The days have been long, but the amount of work and effort we have put into our future career has made the past months feel short.

I am extremely grateful to be a member of this cohort. Time and time again, my classmates illustrate how lucky I am to be associated with such a thoughtful, hardworking, and knowledgeable group of people. I'm continually impressed with the enthusiasm and intelligence my classmates portray academically, but I am even more amazed by the level of care we display for one another. Life does not stop just because we are now PA students. There have been many examples in the last months that I have been able to witness a huge level of compassion and respect among my classmates. While we aide each other in our studies, we are also helping one another become better humans. As these qualities transition into our professional careers, it is obvious that our future patients and healthcare teammates will be in good hands. This aspect of our cohort, our faculty, and the program as a whole is what makes me the most proud to be a member of the GVSU PA program.

Hannah Grinwis, PA-S Class of 2020

ELECTIVE—INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Sarabrooke Mowery

As a student of the Class of 2018, I had the privilege to embark on a trip to Tanzania, Africa. It was an incredible experience that not only challenged me physically, but also emotionally and allowed me to gain clinical knowledge. By the time I had started my rotation in Africa, I had already completed all required rotations except for psychiatry. I felt by this time I had gained a good grasp on physical exam skills, interviewing the patient, and learning which tests were best to order.

After many long flights and two days of travel I arrived around noon on a Monday. I dropped my luggage where I would be staying, and headed right to Kigoma Baptist Hospital, where I spent the month of October learning. As we pulled into the hospital, driving over the bright red dirt, I started to see the many faces of those desperate for medical care sitting outside the two buildings I would work in. I went inside the ward where there was one room for female patients and then there was a hallway which connected to a different room where the men would be treated. Unlike in the United States, there was a huge lack of privacy. As odd as it felt, there was a sense of community and family inside the ward. Our patients travelled for hours and days to seek care at this facility. I met Dr. Pepper who was my preceptor for the month and a wonderful mentor.

On day one I observed his interactions with the patients and their families and tried to pick up as much Swahili as I could. I learned very quickly medicine was extremely different there. First, I noticed the patients had to pay for their tests and services prior to admission to the hospital. Although the amount seemed small to me, to these families it was a huge burden. Second, if they wanted to eat during their hospital stay, it was up to their family and friends to supply them with meals. Third, there was a huge lack of resources. There were very few antibiotics available for us to use, the labs we could obtain were far from what is available in America. I was shocked to learn they had no means to check electrolytes, kidney function, and cardiac markers, among many others. As far as imaging, we had an ultrasound machine and x-ray. We used ultrasound every day to evaluate abdominal concerns and to perform echo exams. There was no CT scan or MRI. Kigoma is run completely by volunteers, which amazed me. We provided the best medicine we could with the resources we had.



Sarabrooke & Dr. Larry Pepper



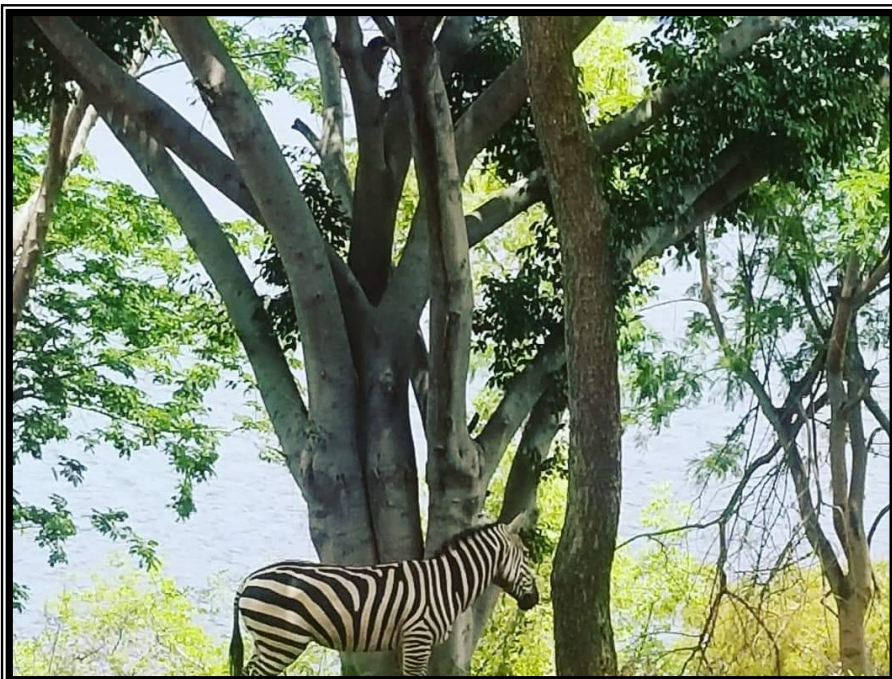
Sarabrooke & Dr. Meggie Hixson

Death was very prominent in Africa as many waited too long to seek services, or due to lack of available intervention. Children would often be taken to witch doctors or parents would try home remedies which left them very ill. A few unique experiences upon my time there include the following. 1. Performing CPR on a 3-month-old during a power outage. Prior to the outage his oxygen was dropping rapidly and was 68%. All we had was a nasal cannula which helped some, but was useless when the power went out. Unfortunately, he did not make it. 2. I had the opportunity to treat two children in the same week with tetanus, a condition I never imagined I would see in my medical career. As the parents carried them in, they were stiff, with board-like rigidity, worsened by noise and light, constantly spasming. We did not have access to tetanus immune globin, however, we placed them in a dark room and used Diazepam to help control their spasms. We did not have appropriate antibiotics or other pharmacological agents to manage their care. Both girls died from complications. 3. I was able to evaluate and treat snake bites, manage burn victims with honey dressings which worked wonderfully, and treat many patients with malaria, sickle cell disease, and HIV/AIDS. My jaw dropped when I read various lab reports with a hemoglobin of 2 or 3, but this was seen frequently. I could write for a long time on all the unique cases and patients I saw, but above were a few which stick out.



There is a need for volunteers to serve in Tanzania and provide medical care at Kigoma. If you have the opportunity, I would highly recommend it! I plan to return once I gain more clinical experience to give back to a community in desperate need. From this experience I learned to rely on my physical exam skills and to really listen to the patient to provide the best care possible. Always treat the patient, not the condition. Going outside your comfort zone allows for growth. Lastly, express empathy and show your patients you care. Maya Angelou once said, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel".

Sarabrooke Mowery



IN OTHER NEWS

There are more than 450,000 NCAA collegiate athletes across the United States. Only one gets the title of Division II national champion. Sarah Berger, a student in the PAS class of 2020, now has the distinction of holding that title. Sarah won the DII NCAA Cross Country individual Championship along with leading the GVSU women's track team to a championship in December of 2018. In addition to this distinction, Sarah has also been nominated as one of only 11 finalists for the prestigious 2018 Honda Athlete of the Year. The only thing that may be more impressive is that she has managed to obtain these athletic accolades, among many others, while being a full time graduate student in the Physician Assistant program. Grand Valley's Physician Assistant program would like to congratulate Sarah on her athletic accomplishments as well as her academic success. Her hard work and determination not only proved successful in making her a championship athlete, but also will no doubt make her an outstanding future PA!



Congratulations Sarah!

Welcome New Faculty Member



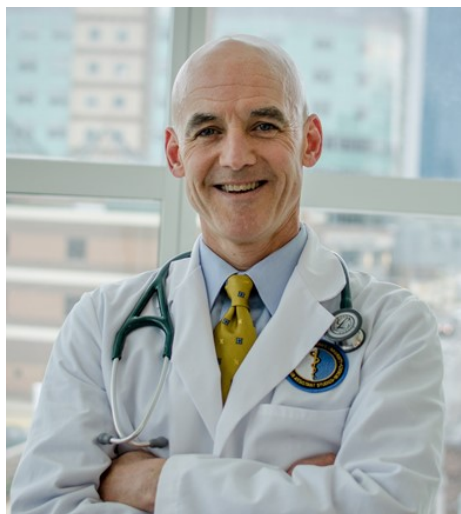
Grand Valley's Physician Assistant program is excited to welcome Michelle Strange, PA-C, as the newest member of the team to the Traverse City campus!

Michelle is a native of northern Michigan being born and raised in Manton, Michigan. She moved to Grand Rapids to complete her undergraduate degree as a diagnostic cardiac sonographer at Grand Valley. After practicing as a sonographer for a few years, she decided to further her education by completing her Master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies at GVSU. She then returned home to northern Michigan and worked as a cardiology PA for the past 5 years. She has always had a passion for educating students, particularly in the rural and underserved communities, which is why she made the decision to pursue a career change into academics. Michelle will teach a variety of courses within the program including anatomy lab, Evidence Based Medicine, Clinical Applications lab, Hospital Community Experience, and more. When she is not working, Michelle enjoys spending time with her husband Cole, their new baby boy Weston, traveling and hiking. In addition to her clinical experience as a PA and Sonographer, Michelle brings with her energy, kindness and a passion for educating future GVSU PAs. We are delighted to welcome her back to GVSU as a PAS faculty member. Welcome Michelle!

GVSU PA now on "the Gram"



The GVSU PA program students and faculty have joined social media forces in the development of [@gvsupa](#), our program social presence on Instagram. This is a joint effort between students (mostly) and faculty. This is a good space for our program to keep alumni and preceptors updated with some fun happenings within our program! Follow us and see what's happening at the GVSU PA program!



In Memoriam....

Mr. Peter Weiblen, a 2017 graduate of our PA program, died on December 8th, 2018, just one year after graduating from the program. Peter died from brain cancer that was diagnosed 2 months after he graduated. Sadly, Pete never had the opportunity to work as a PA.

Pete was incredibly positive and determined to win his war against the cancer that finally took his life. Everyone who knew him can testify to the inspiration of his courage, determination and positive attitude. Pete passed away at the age of 55. He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Barbara; daughters Emilee and Molly.

2019 PANCE Rates

The GVSU PAS program is pleased to report that it is continuing its record of academic excellence and we have continued to maintain our 5-year first time average pass rate for the PANCE at 100%! This is above the national average for PA programs across the country. We attribute this success to the great students who join the program each year, the quality clinical preceptors who tirelessly teach our students on clinical rotations, the dedicated faculty who continually review the PA program curriculum, and GVSU for providing necessary resources for success. The GVSU PA program prides itself on graduating well-qualified physician assistants who are ready for clinical practice. Part of the ongoing quality improvement process to ensure this tradition continues, our program looks not only at the average pass rates for the PANCE, but also the specific topic areas within the PANCE. NCCPA breaks PANCE topics down into medical content categories and task categories. The GVSU PA program has set its benchmark at achieving above national average for each of these areas. One area that we have struggled to meet our benchmarks over the past several years is the medical content area for Infectious Diseases. However, we are now pleased to report that this year we were able to meet that goal! We want to extend a huge thank you to all that made that happen!

Preceptor Feedback

I wanted to share a couple pieces of feedback with you both from our office. Several staff members (providers and other clinical staff) were talking about people who rotate through our office. We get PA students, medical students, residents and palliative care fellows. The agreement was the easiest to work with and most receptive to learning are the PA students. It is always a balance for us to take learners as it takes additional time but we all enjoy teaching. The Grand Valley PA students always result in a positive net balance for us being glad they were here.

I want to especially recognize Jordan for being very actively engaged in seeking out learning opportunities in our office. She is the best student we have had in quite some time. I know you are both aware of this but I always tell my students something I was told in PA school. You are in control of your learning and how you present in the office makes a huge difference. I watch as my colleagues are actively looking for Jordan before seeing a patient to make sure she has the opportunity to see more patients BECAUSE she is actively engaged. We don't always go looking for the student; that happens when they establish themselves.

One last pat on the back for Jordan. One of the physicians made the offhand remark "Why aren't all students like her?" Life is full of negative comments and feedback. I wanted to share something very positive because you deserve it Jordan. Keep up the good work and I'm proud to know you are joining our profession.

Scott Haga

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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

University Development
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L.V. Eberhard Center, 9th Floor
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 greenery and a few people walking.

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>