

Spring 2021

# PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

## Meet the Newest PAS Alumni and Colleagues Class of 2020



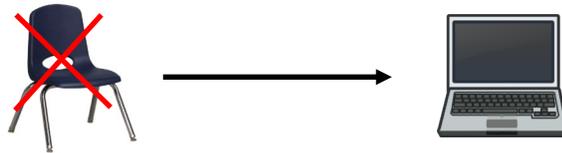
## WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR



Paul Christensen, MD

I have learned over the years that we are defined by the stories we tell about ourselves. Often, the most meaningful stories are about overcoming difficult times. It has been a year that few of us will forget.

It started on a Thursday in March. We were told that all didactic teaching (Class of 2021) had to be fully on-line by the following Monday. The faculty scrambled and tested Zoom as a workable platform. We lectured live but recorded lectures for anyone who lost internet connection. We gave exams remotely. Both the faculty and students adapted. (Like calling a certain professor because he started lecturing on mute and didn't see that everyone was waving for him to stop. Reboot. Start over.) A few weeks into our new way of teaching we received a video mash-up from the didactic students thanking the faculty for our efforts. As I watched the video, I openly wept.



Clinical rotations closed to all learners. The clinical team quickly pivoted to add a range of on-line experiences to keep students on track. As rotations slowly restarted, new hurdles popped up around Covid testing and PPE. Despite all this, nearly all of the Class of 2020 met the learning objectives to finish on time in December.

What about graduation? How could we celebrate this important passage during a raging pandemic? The faculty and students were once again resilient and undeterred. They held a virtual graduation. Each student shared the moment they donned a white coat and symbolically entered the PA profession virtually with family, friends, and classmates watching. It was a gift to witness this celebration.

The Class of 2022 started in August with a mix of socially distant in-seat classes and lab sessions donning full PPE. As the number of cases ramped up in November, they too had to shift to on-line learning. Now that cases have declined students from both the Class of 2021 and 2022 have been volunteering at local vaccination clinics doing their part to end a pandemic that has disrupted their education and turned everyone's life upside down. (I even got a shot from Brittany Plumb (Class of 2021).

All this has happened in just one eventful year. I am humbled by the dedicated work of our faculty and our adaptable, resilient, amazing students. Think of the stories we can tell about ourselves!

PJC



## PRECEPTOR PROFILE

### Elizabeth Suing, PA-C

Grand Valley PA graduates often find employment in traditional settings and providing similar roles to their various specialties. In certain circumstances, our PA graduates find themselves in leadership roles, such as division leads, Advanced Practice Provider (APP) leads, and even administration. Well, with Elizabeth Suing, (Class of 2011), she has found herself in the unique setting of virtual health and the lead APP for that service at Spectrum Health!

Elizabeth started at Spectrum Health working in outpatient internal medicine in 2012. She transitioned over to virtual health a number of years later and is now the lead APP for Spectrum Health's On Demand Virtual department.

Elizabeth states she really loves the variety the job offers. She enjoys being able to see patients (which is what she still loves the most!) as well as being able to help with process improvements for the greater organization from a PA provider perspective. When asked about advice for PAs regarding virtual health, Elizabeth states "Just give it a try! It's not as intimidating as it may seem. It truly brings care where ever you are in your time of need (even if that's in the middle of the night when your kiddo is ill, or if you are vacationing in northern Michigan and get poison ivy on your hike). Also, there are so many advances in providing virtual care."

Thank you, Elizabeth for being a great example of a GVSU Physician Assistant!



## PRECEPTORS NEEDED!

### Preceptors—We Need Your Help!

A big thank you for our long-time preceptors and new preceptors! This past year presented our program new hurdles in providing quality clinical education to our students. We would not have been able to make it through this past year without your support! We are finding some of these changes will be here to stay for some time. If you have never precepted and are interested in taking a student or are able to increase the number of students you take, please reach out to a member of our clinical team.

Amanda Reddy [redhya@gvsu.edu](mailto:redhya@gvsu.edu)

Mandy German [germanm@gvsu.edu](mailto:germanm@gvsu.edu)

Andrew Booth [bootha@gvsu.edu](mailto:bootha@gvsu.edu)

# CLASS OF 2020 GRADUATION

Virtual  
Graduation

CLASS OF 2020  
**WHITE COAT CEREMONY**  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2020



GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT  
STUDIES



## STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS / AWARDS

### ***Class of 2020 Student Scholarship Recipients***

Christos & Joan Panopoulous PAS Scholarship

Steven & Kathryn '83 Bandstra Health Science Scholarship

Steven & Kathryn '83 Bandstra Clinical Placement Scholarship

Stephanie Urbanawiz PAS Scholarship

Dakota Jordan

Lauren Hooker  
Savannah Molner  
Erin Mulder  
Rebecca Steenwyk  
Taylor Veldkamp

Samuel Boerckel  
Teagan Denslow  
Alex Hogarth  
Dakota Jordan  
Kelsey Ropp

Taylor Veldkamp

### ***Class of 2020 Student Award Recipients***

GVSU Graduate School Award for Academic Excellence in the Degree Program

GVSU Graduate School Award for Excellence in Service to the Community/Profession

GVSU Graduate School Award for Leadership and Service to GVSU

GVSU Graduate School Award for Excellence in Promoting Inclusion & Diversity at GVSU

GVSU Provost Award for Outstanding Major in Graduate Program

GVSU Phi Kappa Phi Award

Student Elected Cardiomegaly Award

Dakota Jordan

Lauren Hooker

Hannah Grinwis

Taylor Veldkamp

Alyssa Groendyke

Dakota Jordan  
Breyanna Otlewski  
Austin Hickock  
Rachael Wernette

## ***PAS Faculty/Staff***

Theresa Bacon-Baguley, Ph.D.  
Professor, Associate Dean of Research  
\*\*\*\*\*

Andrew Booth, DHEd, PA-C  
Assistant Professor  
\*\*\*\*\*

Paul Christensen, M.D.  
Department Chair / Program Director  
\*\*\*\*\*

Jill Ellis, DHSC, PA-C  
Associate Professor  
\*\*\*\*\*

David Geenen, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
\*\*\*\*\*

Steffen Genthe, M.D.  
Medical Director  
\*\*\*\*\*

Mandy German, PA-C  
Senior Affiliate Faculty  
\*\*\*\*\*

Nicholus Kopacki, DMSC, PA-C  
Affiliate Faculty  
\*\*\*\*\*

M. Lisa Pagnucco, PharmD, BCGP  
Associate Professor  
\*\*\*\*\*

Molly Paulson, DHSC, PA-C  
Associate Professor  
\*\*\*\*\*

Amanda Reddy, PA-C  
Affiliate Faculty  
\*\*\*\*\*

Martina Reinhold, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
\*\*\*\*\*

Michelle Strange, DMSC, PA-C  
Adjunct Faculty  
\*\*\*\*\*

Cathy Tomek  
PAS Academic Coordinator  
\*\*\*\*\*

## VACCINATION CLINIC

The pandemic has brought enormous change in the lives of students in the GVSU Physician Assistant Studies Program. Their adaptation from traditional in-seat lectures to Zoom synchronous lectures was virtually a seamless process which most likely is attributed to their ability to adapt to the emerging trends in technology driven education. One item that the pandemic has not influenced is their generosity for helping others and volunteering for the greater good. Once vaccines became available in west Michigan, the need for volunteers to administer the vaccines and to assist at the vaccination clinics was made known to the GVSU Physician Assistant Program. It only took the mention of helping to vaccinate individuals in west Michigan for greater than 80% of the first-year students and a majority of the second-year students to volunteer their time to be of assistance.

The first group of students rolled out their volunteer hours on February 19<sup>th</sup> at the GVSU Holland Campus where over 600 individuals were vaccinated. During the clinic, students primarily administered the vaccines, as well as educated the recipients on the side effects and knowledge of the vaccine. During this clinic, second-year student, Brittany Plumb, was able to vaccinate the program's Department Chair, Dr. Paul Christensen. Subsequent vaccination clinics occurred on February 26<sup>th</sup> at the Coopersville Middle School and on March 5<sup>th</sup> at the GVSU Holland Campus.



At the Coopersville Middle School vaccination clinic, three students from GVSU's Traverse City Campus specifically drove from Traverse City to assist in administering the vaccinations. At this clinic, Marissa Rogers, Rhi Cullip and Morgan Scollard were integral members in reconstitution of the vaccine, administering the vaccine, as well as observing recipients after their vaccinations. Additionally, these students experienced a true interprofessional team while working side-by-side with clinical pharmacists and medics from the National Guard.

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, 15 students volunteered to give over 900 vaccines to non-essential frontline workers who work in farming, agriculture, and food services. At this clinic, both first- and second-year physician assistant students worked together in administering the vaccinations and assisting with various jobs at the clinic. It was a great experience to witness the second-year students teaching the first-year students on the techniques of injection.

Words cannot describe how heartwarming these experiences were and how blessed I was to observe the eagerness of our students to give of their time and talent for the greater good. I have been humbled by this generosity and more grateful than can be expressed for being a part of their journey to becoming practitioners.

TBB



## RESEARCH ARTICLES

Culturally-sensitive communication is an essential skill for medical professionals. Jenna Saleh, PAS-2 and PAS faculty, Dr. Molly Paulson surveyed over 200 PA students from across the country, and contrasted their understanding of their skill in communicating with people from other cultures with 200 GVSU pre-professional healthcare students. The results of their survey were presented as a virtual poster at Midwest Interprofessional Practice, Education, and Research Center (MIPERC) conference that was held in September, 2020.



Jenna Saleh, PAS-2



Dr. Molly Paulson

In 2017, the program started its satellite campus in Traverse City. To effectively deliver the didactic curriculum to the distant campus, telepresence/teleconferencing technology was chosen as the method of choice as studies have shown that the audiovisual quality, resulting intimacy, convenience, and ease of use helped facilitate teaching and learning. According to the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the PA (ARC-PA) 2020 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards, expansion to a distant campus requires that the program must ensure “educational equivalency of course content, student experience, and access to didactic and laboratory materials.”<sup>1</sup>To make sure that the program complies with the accreditation standard, we implemented an assessment process that followed an intentional and reflective process. A review of the literature revealed that there was no publicly available evaluation tool to assess the implementation of a distant campus. Therefore, an evaluation tool was developed based on evidence-based literature that identified four potential areas of concern when delivering education at a distant campus: Technology equipment, technology reliability, utilization of technology by faculty, and resources available at each site. Data collected from the inaugural class with a distant campus was analyzed to identify strength and weaknesses of the equipment, the human component of using the equipment, as well as potential differences in resources between the two campuses.

By planning an evaluation and assessment strategy during the implementation and on-going phases of a distant campus, we were able to identify concern with the technology (i.e., screen size), concerns with faculty delivery (i.e., faculty engagement with students at both sites), and concerns with resources (i.e., availability of printers, access to laboratory equipment, and library resources). These concerns were quickly addressed resulting in the resolution of most issues. All students from each campus have since graduated and all have successfully passed their certification exam, underscoring the successful implementation of the distant campus.

The results of this study were published in 2020 (Bacon-Baguley, T.; Reinhold M. I. (2020) *Assessing Equivalency during the Implementation of a Health Profession’s Program to a Distant Campus: Development of a Distant Campus Evaluation Tool*. Education in the Health Professions. Vol. 3, No. 3. <https://www.ehpjournal.com/article.asp?issn=2590-1761;year=2020;volume=3;issue=3;page=93;epage=100;aulast=Bacon-Baguley>



Dr. Theresa Bacon-Baguley



Dr. Martina Reinhold

# PA CLASS OF 2021 NEWS

It may be an understatement to say that we are elated to be in clinicals after battling our way through our character-building didactic year. At times it felt like our clinical period was years away, but what do you expect when a pandemic casually emerges during the building stages of our medical foundation. Honestly, we just shake our heads to think how time has flown on our journey to where we are today. Currently, we are spread out across Michigan (some even across the country) each gaining our own unique experiences as we make our way through our first clinical semester. The best way to represent such a vast range of exposures and involvement with patient care is to hear what some students had to say themselves...



*"I've been privileged to work alongside many practitioners in a small family medicine practice seeing everything from individuals with coexistent chronic complications to performing an exam on a 4-day old child. In terms of practical skills, I have grown significantly in confidence with managing sutures, performing various biopsies, giving injections, etc. This role has been a rock-solid foundation to my clinical year, and I am very excited to build on it in rotations to come." -Jonathan Alvaro*

*"I went in with an open mind and an upbeat attitude which has opened doors to so many opportunities. As my family medicine rotation winds down, I can reflect on the last two months and remind myself why I chose to be a PA. Though the eastern upper peninsula is rural and testing is limited, being able to provide compassionate care to people in the region has been rewarding and allowed me to grow as a provider." -Annalise Pline*



*"I just wrapped up my general surgery rotation and loved it. The surgical environment can be intimidating but approaching it with humility and confidence were key drivers of my positive experience. Undoubtedly, the most sobering experience I had was witnessing a Gift of Life organ procurement. To see the procedure that would result in others receiving kidneys, lungs, a heart, and a liver was nothing short of a miracle. So many people took me under their wing and I will carry every little tip into my career as a PA." -Megan Cloutier*

*"During my orthopedic trauma rotation, I was able to get into the OR and work alongside the surgeon numerous times. I was first exposed to orthopedic trauma when I was a medical scribe for a trauma surgeon, so being able to come back 2 years later as a PA student was a very rewarding feeling! The rush I felt going down to the ED with the on-call resident to reduce a fracture in the trauma bay was indescribable. Orthopedics is something that I am very interested in as a future career, however, there is so much that I am going to learn and be exposed to throughout the next year as we move one step closer to replacing that 'S' with a 'C'." -Zach Hill*



Even with our busy schedules, we still have many exciting events planned to look forward to. Within the next few months, we have the annual IPE event with other colleges, as well as our long time coming black tie event. We were unable to have the traditional formal event this past December but we are thrilled to say we'll be having a summer-style black tie event at the end of June! This is just another example of how resilient our class has been even in the most difficult times.



Though we are only a few months into our clinical year, we have all experienced many of the "ahh ha" phenomenon we were told about. Those moments where we realized why we worked so hard to get here. The moments that make every late-night Zoom session and early morning exam cram worth it. Looking back at how much we have learned, there is nothing but excitement when thinking about what is yet to come. I'm so proud of what the GVSU PAS Class of 2021 has accomplished in the past year and I can't wait to see what amazing things we will do down the road. -Andrew Ashenfelter

# PA CLASS OF 2022 NEWS

The Class of 2022 is currently working through their Cardiovascular module and learning to read EKGs! We are enjoying Zoom lectures from the comfort of our home offices, but also look forward to collaborating and working on physical exam skills in-person on Wednesdays in both Grand Rapids and Traverse City.



The RPC Student Society is working toward getting a group of students registered for the virtual AAPA conference. Our volunteer chairs have gotten creative in providing opportunities for our cohort to connect and give back to our communities. In GR, students recently decorated Valentine's Day cards for seniors, and in TC, students are actively volunteering at their local Children's Museum. Together, we have been getting actively involved with Gift of Life Bone Marrow Registry. Our class successfully added 20 people to this registry!

With virtual classes, RPC Health & Wellness Chairs are helping us stay active and healthy with monthly challenges. This year we have focused on: hydration, sleep, and walk/run challenges. We have also been working to increase activity on the program's Instagram page with Instagram takeovers on our story featuring current students who take followers along on a 'Day-in-the-Life' of a PA student in the Class of 2022. We are also posting class profiles, faculty features, and highlighting alumni in order to educate prospective students, create community in our current cohorts, and connect to graduated students.

Staying connected has been difficult with the limited in-person interaction. In order to keep up with each other, RPC historians put on a monthly photo challenge. Last month was to submit a photo of something you love about PA school. In this way, we are able to feel a sense of community from our separate study environments.

Members of our cohort are also members of the program's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) committee. This committee is committed to putting the pillars of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice at the forefront of the program as we support education in medical justice for all. It is also a goal of the committee to provide education about health inequities and disparities.



Recently, our cohort has had the privilege in helping with the COVID-19 vaccination distribution. Students from the Class of 2022 have been able to give vaccinations and even vaccinate each other. As future healthcare professionals, we are extremely grateful to be able to take part in the effort to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.



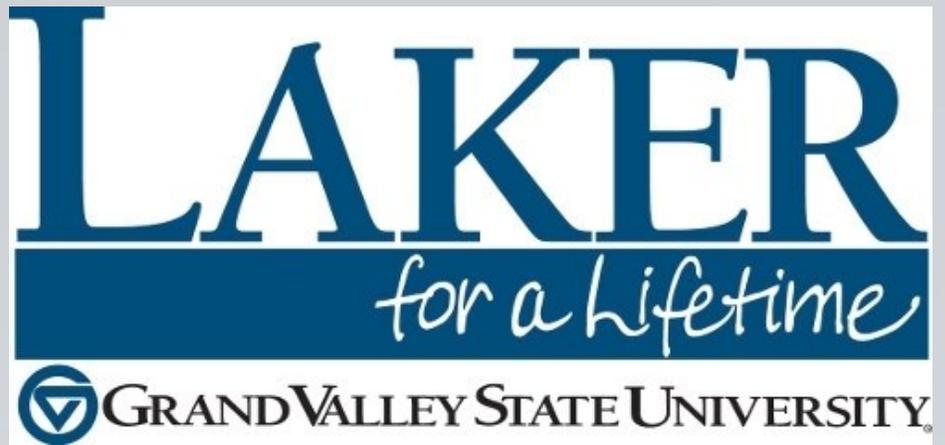
Starting PA school in general is a trying journey, but starting PA school during a pandemic has added an entirely different aspect for our cohort. We are finding ways to continue to connect with each other, our faculty members, and our community. I believe that through this unprecedented time we have truly been able to learn how to embody the PA way: embracing change, becoming adaptable, and filling in the gaps where we are needed as students.

Zoie Hulst, PA-S Class of 2022

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Physician Assistant Studies

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***The mission of the program is to prepare highly competent physician assistants who embrace diversity, equity and inclusion; lead and advance the profession; and provide quality patient-centered healthcare in all communities and settings.***

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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](http://www.gvsu.edu/give)), by phone 616-331-6000, or via mail.

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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! 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](mailto:germanm@gvsu.edu)

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