

Director's Corner



▶ As I reflect on the program happenings (and there were many) of the past year, I want to share with you some of the highlights. In August, we welcomed our twenty-fourth class of 75 students! The students in the Class of 2018 have graduated and are on their way

to amazing careers as PAs. The 2019 class are currently working with patients on clinical rotations and applying all of the knowledge gained during their didactic year. It is amazing to think of the longevity and strength of the Chatham PA program since its inception in 1995 and its network of great alumni! We are all truly proud!

The PA program continues to meet our goals related to PANCE pass rate, student attrition, and placement of students in underserved clinical sites. We are pleased to have met these goals as they reflect the hard work of our students, faculty, and staff. But our real accomplishments happen on a daily basis in our interactions with students. Each day we may see students supporting each other through academic challenges, or we may see faculty and staff taking extra time out of their day to reassure a student who is struggling with classes, personal issues, or with confidence. We also have students who take on additional “work” above and beyond the rigors of the program. This past fall, a number of first-year students enthusiastically taught local high school students about our profession at a career exploration open house. During the fall and spring terms, another of our first-year students created an American Sign Language Club. Students learned how to introduce themselves, how to ask medically relevant questions, and how to provide patient education with sign

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Chatham PA Program Faculty and Staff, 2018

From left to right: Lea O’Keefe, Dr. Jonathon Winkle, Janet Kuzora, Jessica Anderson, Susan Hawkins, Nicole Brown, Natalie Schirato, Dr. John Laird, Alyssa Abebe, Vicki Yann, Judy Truscott, Paige Cendroski, Denise Devlin, and Kelly Donkers



From the Dean



▶ During the 2017-18 academic year, Chatham University completed the Strategic Planning Process (https://www.chatham.edu/_documents/_about/strategic-plan.pdf). A highlight of

this process for me was the identification and continued reinforcement of Chatham’s values because I believe they strongly resonate with the culture and values within the School of Health Sciences. The values include: Health & Wellness; Community & Public Engagement; Collaboration & Innovation; Diversity, Inclusion & Respect; Active & Lifelong Learning; Global & Critical Thinking; Sustainability; and Women’s Leadership & Gender Equity.

The School of Health Sciences has had a very productive and rewarding year. We are in the process of completing a 3-year SBIRT grant (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment). While the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration awarded the grant to the Physician Assistant Studies program, it has truly been a collaborative effort among all of the SHS Programs. To date, we have trained over 700 students to effectively use patient centered, evidence-based techniques for assisting patients/clients with substance abuse disorders. The PA students have been active participants in this effort under the leadership of Gabrielle Strong, Jessica Anderson, Lea O’Keefe, and Judy Truscott.

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From the Medical Director

Dear Chatham PA Alumni,

► I am thrilled to be entering my fifth year as medical director of the Chatham PA studies program. As I have grown into this job, my focus has been on building relationships with the students and growing

in my own understanding of the partnership between PAs, physicians, and other professionals in the team environment where most of us now work. I have worked closely with several PAs in my own practice, and this past fall my practice welcomed in a newly-minted Chatham grad, who sought us out after hearing about the work that we do with underserved populations including refugees, people in recovery, and people who lack adequate insurance.

I will be continuing my involvement with the first-year class, both as a guest lecturer on topics including social and family history, diabetes, hypertension, vaccination, and end-of-life care, and as the instructor for the Critical Reading of the Literature course. In the age of evidence-based medicine, understanding cutting edge research and being able to assess its quality and relevance is a crucial clinical skill. I look forward to learning together in class, online, and in the small-group journal club sessions that I host at my house each year to make sure that we each meet personally. We will also continue to welcome second-year PA students for the Family Medicine and Pediatrics rotations. I will have the chance to mentor five second-year students, four

of them on an extended stay, combined rotation in Family Medicine and Pediatrics.

Finally, I hope that the coming months will see publication of my book, *Healing People, Not Patients: Building Sacred Relationships in Modern Healthcare*. The book explores the “micro-ethics” of communication in the one-on-one relationship between healer and patient and how that relationship fits (or doesn’t) into the system. I state this because in June, we will be launching a half-day communication class for the returning second-years, as they stand between their clinical rotations and real medical practice. We hope to reinforce the message of seeing the person first, not the disease, or the “consumer,” and provide real tools that can be used in the clinic to embody this message, not just give it lip-service. That message is the first step toward truly “sustainable” healthcare, a topic that I will be lecturing on during the May athletics course for the first-years for the first time this year, which follows the University mission to infuse the concept of sustainability across all disciplines and departments.

Thank you all for your continued support. I am proud of what I have seen our students accomplish in the time I have been here, and can only look forward with hope to even more in the future.

Jonathan Weinkle, MD, FAAP

The Jane Burger Advising Award Presented to Susan Hawkins!

► “The Jane Burger Advising Award, established in honor of Dr. Jane Burger an alumna of the class of 1966, recognizes a faculty advisor who best exemplifies the sensitivity, mentoring spirit, and commitment to students as expressed by Dr. Burger herself. The award recipient is selected based on the nominations of students who share how a particular faculty member has impacted their experience at Chatham University. The recipient of the Jane Burger Advising Award for the 2017-2018 academic year demonstrates a strong commitment to the academic, personal and professional development of students and engages with causes across the University to support students in and outside of the classroom and strengthen the Chatham community.”

Dr. Jenna Templeton presented this prestigious award to our very own Susan Hawkins this past spring at Closing Convocation. Students submitted stories of experiences with Susan — stories of gratitude of her advice, encouragement, and feedback. As many students can attest, Susan is beyond amenable to help any student at any time. Susan has been advising PA students for 23 years here at Chatham. Her wisdom in all areas — curriculum, test-taking, wellness, communication, and synergy among students has led to the success of hundreds of Chatham PA graduates. We congratulate her on this esteemed award!



Susan (2nd from left) with Sue and David Finegold and Judy Truscott at Closing Convocation.

Graduating Class of 2018!

► Congratulations to the PA Class of 2018! Chatham faculty and staff wish you the best in your future endeavors!



Chatham PA Pin

► The white coat, the scrubs, and the stethoscope are articles of who we are as PAs. Now, a purple pin of prestige can be seen on our alumni. As Chatham alumni—1,000+ strong— we practice with pride each day as we help those in need. This year, our Chatham University PA pin was designed for our alumni. This pin is a symbol of not only our accomplishment, but our allegiance, commitment, and of pride to our program. It is also given as a thank you to our alumni who have committed to service to our program and development of our students whether through precepting, interviewing, lecturing, and mentoring. As we practice in nearly all 50 states, the pin will serve as a valuable peer recognition and demonstrate the strength of our alumni relationships.



From the Dean, *continued from page 1*

Several highlights from the School merit recognition. The counseling psychology program was awarded a multi-year HRSA Grant (WELL Project) that focuses on training psychologists in integrated care models. The occupational therapy program co-sponsored the “Out of the Darkness Campus Walk” for the second straight year in collaboration with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The movement science department has begun the process of applying for initial accreditation for the athletic training program. Finally, the healthcare informatics program has developed two fully online 12-credit certificates, one in informatics and the other in analytics.

In conclusion, it was wonderful to meet many of you at the twenty-year anniversary celebration of the PA program last year. I look forward to the next event to meet even more of you!

My best to you all,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia A. Conway". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Amy Casale, MPAS '15, PA-C

Amy is a 2015 graduate of Chatham's PA program. Prior to practicing as a PA at the UPMC Stofman Plastic Surgery practice, she completed a UPMC Advanced Practice Provider Residency. Her road to becoming a physician assistant began with chemistry and psychology degrees from Case Western Reserve University. She then joined Teach for America in Connecticut. Amy is active in our Alumni Association and participates in PA program events such as our annual Alumni Forum. Her professional affiliations include the Association of Postgraduate Physician Assistant Programs (Alumni Chair) and AAPA.

Tell us about your fellowship at UPMC Advanced Practice Provider Surgical Residency.

► I spent my first year out of school as a surgical resident with UPMC. During this time a rotated between five different hospitals on various surgical services. It was a difficult year, as the expectations are extremely high, but it was one of the best learning experiences I have ever had. I had the opportunity to fine tune my surgical, patient management, and logistical skills, which are difficult for any first year PA. I also spent time with great doctors, residents, and nurses, which ultimately led me to find my perfect job.

What would you tell our students about pursuing a post-graduate residency?

► I believe that post graduate education is a great way to specialize in a certain field, or to gain more experience so that you can be more confident. I do not think that post graduate education in the PA field should be a requirement. I know plenty of high functioning PAs who did not have the same training as I did. I recommend that students who are interested in post graduate education should pursue it, but to not feel discouraged if it does not come to fruition.

What was a highlight of the PA program for you?

► Where do I begin! I absolutely loved our staff and my classmates. My highlight was probably when I guessed the first structure on Unit 6's anatomy test, as we always took bets on what it would be, and Dr. Laird didn't know what everyone was laughing about. It was awesome!

What was the most rewarding aspect of your graduate studies at Chatham?

► I really love the Chatham community and I love coming back to help out with the different events, whether it is interviews or a happy hour.

How did Chatham's PA program prepare you for healthcare and ever-changing medicine?

► Chatham's focus on making self-directed learners helped me become a lifelong learner. I feel that I am able to find the answer to almost any question because Chatham's PBL made me do that all the time. I feel that I am prepared for the changes because I know how to teach myself.

What are some lessons that you have learned since practicing medicine as a PA?

► Things are not always what they seem. I have had plenty of patients surprise me with either a strange diagnosis or an unforeseen obstacle. I think that it is important to try to see the patient

as a whole person, not just their illness or current problem. I try very hard to make connections with patient and their support group so that I know at the end of the day they will receive the best care.

Did you participate in any volunteer programs while you were a student? In what area do you hope that students become active?

► When I was a student, I actually was caring for a sick family member which limited my ability to volunteer. I wished that as a student body we were more active in community health outreach projects, whether it be doing first aid at the marathon, or volunteering at a local shelter. I think having those opportunities readily available for students is a great way for them to interact with the community.

What advice or insight do you have for our newest graduates and students who are entering the program?

► For graduates, find a job you love and know that your first job may not be that. After PA school you need to do some soul searching to discover what kind of PA you want to be and how you want to work, then try to find a job that comes close to that.

For new students, get comfortable being uncomfortable. The next few years are going to be uncomfortable at times. You are going to have struggles and successes. Cherish both, as they will make you a better PA and person. Also, be organized. Get your work done in a timely manner, because you are part of a team and your team needs you.

For both groups: be nice. It is my policy to be nice to everyone I meet no matter how bad of a day I am having.



Sign Language Club

Shea Shovlin, PA-S, Class of 2019

► I wanted to start a sign language club because I think that as future health care providers, it is important to learn about individuals from a variety of backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities. Furthermore, I think that communication is a vital part of being a compassionate provider. Many of my relatives are deaf and they have taught me so much about deaf culture, embracing differences, and the importance of not only communication, but also understanding.

Since November 20, 2017, my fellow classmates and I have met once a week during our lunch break. The meetings start with a video about deaf culture, which is followed by a discussion of the video, and then learning words and short phrases in sign language. This year, the class learned the alphabet and phrases such as, "Hello, my name is" and "It is nice to meet you." In addition, they have learned useful terms for clinical year including *allergy, medication, surgery, x-ray, hurt, help, and sick*. Since the start of clinical year, four classmates have had interactions with deaf patients. One student, Brandyn Reinhart, states, "Being able to sign to a deaf patient was not only rewarding for me as a future provider, but also the huge smile and joy on the patient's face when I was simply able to greet him and tell him my name, made the time spent in Sign Language Club 100% worth it!"



participated in Mustache March with some interesting growth of their mustaches throughout the entire month of March. Great job gentlemen and to all who supported this cause! Many students also participated in the "Out of the Darkness" walk on Chatham University's campus on April 7 to increase awareness and raise funds that allow AFSP to invest in new research, create educational programs, advocate for public policy, and support survivors of suicide loss.

Suicide Prevention

► Chatham PA students helped to raise not only awareness but also \$1,400 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the Brain & Behavior Research Foundations. The gentlemen from the PA Class of 2019



WELLNESS Luncheon



► The tradition continues! The class of 2019 feasted on a delicious and healthful WELLNESS luncheon provided by the PA faculty and staff this past spring in celebration of "Wellness." Students designed individualized wellness programs that impacted their personal health during the spring term. These aspects included physical, emotional, spiritual, mental, intellectual and/or social wellness. Students discussed their plans amongst their PBL groups and received and provided support for each other. Students then had the opportunity to reflect on themselves and the impact of attaining their wellness goals.

We know, as practitioners, the importance of creating and maintaining healthy lifestyles so that we can better provide care to our own patients. We all have encountered our own struggles with wellness at some point in our lives. Understanding and achieving our own wellness will always be imperative for ourselves and the people who surround us. How are you doing today? How well are you? Have you set some personal wellness goals? Is it time to take time for yourself so that you can take care of your family, friends, and patients better? Send us your thoughts! What have you done for your own personal wellness? Inspire us! Tell us about your wellness plan: p.cendroski@chatham.edu.

See who we are and picture yourself here....

Career Exploration within the School of Health Sciences

► On October 20, 2017 the School of Health Sciences (SHS) partnered with Chatham's Office of Admission to pilot a SHS Career Exploration Day for high school students. The goal was exposure and differentiation of the health professions. Twenty-five high school juniors and seniors from three neighboring high schools participated in hands-on exploration of the following disciplines: nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, and psychology. All activities were developed to be engaging and increase knowledge of what each health profession does in the field. Fifteen first-year students from the PA Class of 2019 served as graduate student guides, session assistants, and post-discussion facilitators. In the skills lab, PA students and faculty guided participants through a patient encounter simulation, as participants practiced a basic eye exam and reflexes. Comments from participants included, "I learned a lot more about PAs because I didn't know much about them." and "The profession I was most interested in was psychology, but I took an interest in PA."

A shorter version of this activity was run in July 2018 over three sessions with 32 middle school students from the FAME Academy*. Participants learned about the PA profession from faculty; eight members of the PA Class of 2018 discussed activities that occur during their year of clinical rotations, and then gave tours of the PA skill lab tours.

*FAME is the Fund for Advancement of Minorities Through Education. FAME provides both rigorous preparatory education and scholarships to African American youth.

Jewish Healthcare Foundation — Death & Dying Fellowship

► The Death & Dying Fellowship is a 10-week fellowship offered through the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and aims to expand knowledge, comfort, and competence surrounding the medical, legal, social, cultural, and spiritual aspects of end-of-life care for patients. Fellows chosen are graduate students from interdisciplinary disciplines including the health sciences, public health, law, pastoral care, and business among others. The 2018 fellowship cohort included two Chatham MPAS students who shared the following sentiments regarding their experiences:



"I was fortunate to participate in the 2018 JHF Fellowship on *Death and Dying*. My experience included working with other healthcare professionals to learn about how to provide better care for our patients near the end of their lives. I had the opportunity to hear providers in diverse settings (such as skilled nursing, hospice, intensive care, community health, and pediatrics) discuss their unique successes and challenges. Equipped with this experience, I recognize the communication skills, compassion, and clinical competency it takes to be a good provider to these patient populations."

Jacob Birkline, PA-S, Class of 2019



"Seventy percent of Americans say they prefer to die at home; only 25% actually do. Eighty percent of people want to talk to their doctor about end-of-life care; only 7% have. Ninety

percent of people think it is important to talk about end-of-life care with family; less than 30% have.' These are the statistics that made me want to learn more about *Death and Dying* and how to have conversations with my future patients.

The *Death and Dying* fellowship challenges healthcare providers to look at the current standards of care and determine how we can make a difference. We visited different facilities each week including a long-term care facility, hospice facility, children's hospital, and intensive care unit to name a few. I think it is important to see each level of care and how conversations about death and dying are vital in each level of care.

Families and patients will remember most when their healthcare provider says, 'The cancer is back.' or 'We did all we could, but your mother has passed.' The fellowship teaches how to have these conversations in the most compassionate way. Compassion includes understanding spiritual and cultural differences, which are also touched on during the fellowship. They even allow you to practice!

From the hardest conversations to establishing advanced directives and living wills, we owe it to our patients to be well versed in their options. Death will happen and the patients' wishes are most important.

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation Death and Dying Fellowship is an amazing opportunity. You will leave with a strong foundation which will grow with practice!"

Ariel Lucci, PA-S, Class of 2019

PROGRAM ARCHIVES

► A short 23 years ago, the Chatham PA program was housed in the basement of the University's Chapel. After then spending the next 15 years in Dilworth Hall, the program has been in Chatham Eastside since 2008. Thank you to the Chatham University Archives & Special Collections for a trip down memory lane! These photos illustrate the early years and the first PA class who graduated in December of 1997. Students shown are Mary Stallings Gump, Michael Durbin, and Dawn Griebling. Instructors are Susan Hawkins and Dr. Linda Allison.



Alumni, *continued from page 4*

You are among one of the first physician assistant alumni to be elected to the Chatham University Board of Trustees. What do you think you have to offer as a representative of the healthcare community?

► I am a firm believer in how amazing Chatham's PA program is. As an Alumni Board member I hope to engage both our alumni and current undergraduate students to believe that as well. I hope to bring back alumni from our program who maybe are disengaged. I also look forward to the many service opportunities that exist and hope to bring access to the healthcare community back to Chatham University.

What does the future look like for you?

► Currently, I am living the dream. I truly enjoy my work and the wonderful people with whom I spend my day. I think that eventually I would like to return to education. After college I joined Teach For America and taught middle school and high school science for three years. I have always had a passion for sharing my knowledge and I would love to extend that in a more formal way to future PAs. Other than that, I will be here at Mercy Hospital serving the great people of Pittsburgh.

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language. I recently saw the student who ran the club. She was very excited to tell me that five of her classmates had signed to patients while on rotations. Although the students' limited ASL skills will not replace an interpreter, even a brief signed interaction may make a patient feel more comfortable. These experiences with students are just some of the accomplishments that shape our success in the PA program.

Across the span of the didactic and clinical years, we witness truly amazing student growth. It is humbling to see students develop into compassionate and caring PAs. Students come to the program with such enthusiasm and hope. I would be dishonest if I didn't acknowledge that this is tested during the rigor of the program (as you all know), but their enthusiasm and hope are rejuvenated when they walk across the stage at our White Coat Ceremony. Recently, I visited a student at a clinical site and was so pleased to hear the preceptor comment that the student had strong clinical reasoning skills, held her own with pharmacology knowledge, and had good presentation skills. I am pleased to know that the

program helped her develop a strong knowledge base. But what makes me most proud was to also hear of how professional and respectful she was with patients, the office staff, the physician, and the PA with whom she worked. This is a recurring theme that we hear in respect to our students. They are strong clinically AND have excellent inter-personal skills. Although we have measurable goal results that I am able to report to you, I am so proud to be able to report that we have amazing students who become amazing PAs—like all of you. We welcome you to meet them! We'd love to have you come and help with alumni forums and with admission interviews so you can meet the students. We'd also love to see you at program alumni gatherings. Keep an eye open for upcoming events!



Judy Truscott, MPAS, PA-C



Precepting

► The Chatham University PA program is seeking to partner with new preceptors from any US geographic location in emergency medicine, family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, surgery, women's health and electives. Please contact the program at PAProgram@chatham.edu for specifics.

Stay connected

Please keep the PA program updated with your achievements! E-mail Paige Cendroski, alumni coordinator, at p.cendroski@chatham.edu with any updates including e-mail address, address, news, publications, accomplishments etc.



Chatham University Physician Assistant Program



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