Program Director’s Message

It’s that time of year when change occurs rapidly; welcome to the fall! I hope you are enjoying the start to the cooler weather—the holiday season is fast approaching, as is turning the clocks backward by one hour. We’re in for shorter days and longer nights, especially as you navigate farther north. October 6 also marked a great time of celebration for the PA profession: Happy PA Day! With so many changes in the air, let’s recap a busy summer for the AACC/UMB Collaborative PA program. There is a great deal to be proud of!

The Class of 2018 graduated July 19 in perhaps the largest ceremony we have ever hosted. Families and friends of the 46 graduates were there to celebrate their achievement. Dignitaries from around the state were on hand, and many of our alumni were sprinkled throughout the audience. Dr. Dawn Lindsay, president of AACC, and Dr. Bruce Jarrell, Vice President, Provost, and Dean of the UMB Graduate School, joined the faculty and staff on stage to offer their kind words and heartfelt congratulations. Class of 2013 alum Jeff Russell gave a rousing commencement address.

We sent our Class of 2019 off to perform their clinical rotations in May; they are doing well. Many of them are practicing with new preceptors, a few of whom have not had any experience with a PA. I’m proud to report our students have demonstrated what a PA is capable of doing, so much so that these preceptors now want to hire our PA students upon graduation. That speaks volumes about this cohort of 30; they are always striving to perform their best. Speaking of best, the Class of 2019’s Challenge Bowl Team earned top honors at this year’s MAPA conference.

We welcomed our program’s 23rd cohort, the Class of 2020, with orientation May 5. Classes started May 23, with 40 wide-eyed, excited yet nervous students. In a male-dominated profession in its humble beginnings, the demographics of nearly every cohort around the nation became saturated with females around 2007; at times, there were fewer than 5 males in our classes of 40+ students. The Class of 2020
sports 40% males, and it’s truly refreshing to see the cohesiveness, comradery, and entertaining interaction between all the members of this class.

As classes started in the fall, things have not actually quieted down, but have gotten into a methodical rhythm of dedicated study and perseverance. And there is a new beat: I am inspired to see alumni come back to campus to teach. It’s exciting to mentor former graduates so they can fulfill the next chapter in their PA careers as medical educators. It is time to start focusing on the next generation of PA faculty nation-wide, as the old guard is, well, old. I’m looking forward to the next phase in this program’s long tenure, and it starts with creating a pathway for all interested PA-Cs to learn to become educators. That is what the AACC/UMB Collaborative PA program has in store. Stay tuned for more on this exciting venture!

Dr. Cheri Hendrix

Meet Theresa Neumann, PA Program Clinical Coordinator

Theresa Neumann is a veteran PA and PA educator who is also very involved in state and national leadership and advocacy. Theresa received her bachelor’s degree from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland where she majored in Biology Pre-Med and minored in both Chemistry and Mathematics. After working in Infectious Disease research for the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine for 5 ½ years, Theresa attended and graduated from the Essex Community College PA Program (now the Towson University/CCBC-Essex PA Program) in 1994. She spent her clinical career in Emergency Medicine, introducing the PA concept to Emergency Medicine at Good Samaritan Hospital. Theresa has also worked in legal medicine, providing expertise in both Denial Management and Medical Malpractice (plaintiff and defense work), for 10 years.

Theresa started teaching as an adjunct professor for the Towson University/CCBC-Essex PA Program in July 2009. She became the Interim Academic Coordinator of that program in 2012. In 2013, she entered the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s master’s program in Physician Assistant Studies, specializing in PA education. After graduation in 2014, she became the Academic Coordinator of the PA program as a Clinical Assistant Professor for Towson University. Theresa has received awards for teaching innovation and has ardently supported interdisciplinary simulation events, “Operation STAT” (a large-scale disaster training event at Towson University), ultrasound training for PAs, as well as PA exposure to legal and ethical practice of medicine.

In addition to scholarship, Theresa has received the Outstanding Service Award for 17 years of service to the Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants (MAPA) whom she has served in a variety of leadership roles, including President, Vice President and Legislative Director. She has been advocating for the PA profession in Maryland and nationally, having most recently successfully promoted a bill to allow PAs to dispense medications in the state. Theresa’s work with the legislature and Board of Physicians has provided her with significant expertise on laws and regulations.
The Class of 2019 officers:
Laurena Richardson, President
Allison Leonardi, Vice-President
Shannon Gaskins, Secretary
Kyra Kearney, Social Chair

The Class of 2020 officers:
Donovan Young, President
Evelyn Shapter, Vice-President
Michael Pham, Treasurer
Mark Symancyk, Secretary
Rita Younes, Social Chair
Meghan Byrne, Social Chair

governing PA practice in the state of Maryland. She is a regular contributor to the MAPA newsletter and has spoken at both the state PA conference and nationally.

On a personal side, Theresa lives in southern Maryland where she loves to hunt, fish and look for fossils, including megalodon teeth and arrowheads. Other hobbies include gardening, yard sale shopping, auction shopping, cooking, reading, and long walks on the beach with her husband and dog. She and her husband are currently building a cabin in the Virginia mountains on family property as a weekend get-away and hunting cabin. Theresa’s dog, a rescued pit bull, loves the outdoors, and her forever-home(s) offers her all of the opportunities to enjoy outdoor southern living.

Welcome Class of 2020

The AACC/UMB Collaborative PA Program welcomed 39 students! The faculty and staff are enjoying working with this fun and hardworking class!

Congrats Class of 2018!!

The AACC/UMB Collaborative PA Program said goodbye to 46 graduating students! We wish them success in their future medical practices.
Class of 2018 Awards

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<th>Award Type</th>
<th>Winner</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dean’s Award</td>
<td>Ms. Vonai Moyo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Award</td>
<td>Ms. Stefanie Malouf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinician’s Clinician Award</td>
<td>Ms. Kaitlyn Ayerle</td>
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Physician Assistant Honor Society Awards

Pi Alpha is the national Physician Assistant honor society organized for the promotion and recognition of both PA students and graduates. This year’s recipients of the awards are Kaitlyn Ayerle and Aziza Mdarhi-Alaoui.

MAPA’s 2018 Medical Jeopardy Challenge Bowl Winners

→ AACC Class of 2019!

And the Golden Bedpan award goes to...

The Maryland Academy of Physician Assistants (MAPA) held its annual Continuing Medical Education Conference in Ocean City, Maryland, during which the annual medical challenge bowl for students was held. Although the format was a little different (Jeopardy style as opposed to first buzzer answers the random question), the challenge and fun were the same. There were three teams actively vying for the bragging rights of taking home the Golden Bedpan award.

After 5 straight years of AACC bringing home the trophy, demonstrating their prowess at medical knowledge, the trophy was taken to Pennsylvania in 2017 after Penn State’s team defeated all other challengers. That just added fuel to the fire, and this year, the AACC team of Allison Spatz, Jonathan Wilson, and Georgia Harper went prepared to regain bragging rights. Penn State was eliminated first, then the old rivalry between the Towson University/CCBC-Essex PA Program and the AACC/UMB Collaborative PA Program was reignited for the final rounds of jeopardy. In the end, AACC/UMB was victorious! There was incredible sportsmanship displayed and much collegiality among the participants.

Pictured below are the members of AACC/UMB’s team (front row, left to right: Jonathan Wilson, Allison Spatz, and Georgia Harper); the new MAPA President, Tara Mahan, PA-C, who is also a graduate of this program (middle); and Richard Smith, PA-C, adjunct faculty for this PA program (back row). Other faculty members present and supporting the student team were Dr. Mary Jo Bondy and Theresa Neumann. The challenge bowl was followed by “Vegas Night”-themed activities as well as a DJ and dancing. It was an enjoyable and fun evening for all, especially with the added bonus of the challenge bowl victory. Congratulations to the AACC/UMB PA students!
Faculty News

Professor Cheri Hendrix
Dr. Hendrix participated in the following:
- The ARC-PA and You Workshop, Cleveland, OH, on July 22-24, 2018.
- Adventist University of Health Sciences PA Program, Orlando, FL, Commencement Speaker on August 9, 2018.
- CME Resources PANCE and PANRE board review lecturing from May to September for a total of seven days in seven cities. Topics included neurology, nephrology, urology, ENT, ophthalmology, heart failure, vessel disease, and endocrinology.

Professor Tim Parker
Mr. Parker participated in the ARC-PA and You Workshop, Cleveland, OH, on July 22-24, 2018.

Preceptor of the Year, Mr. Chris Wilde!

The Class of 2018 overwhelmingly selected Mr. Chris Wilde as the Preceptor of the Year. Mr. Wilde was a preceptor to several students in the class of 2018 and he also taught their class during clinical boot camp.

Ms. Kaitlyn Ayerle offered special thanks to Mr. Wilde at the graduation ceremony on behalf of the class of 2018. She said that Mr. Wilde was a preceptor who went above and beyond to impact the lives of his students. She noted that they first met him during their clinical boot camp, where he inspired them about the basics of navigating an emergency department. “His charismatic nature and positive energy have left a lasting impression on everyone he has encountered,” Kaitlyn said. “Thank you, Chris, for all you have done and for joining us today.”

“Chris is extremely energetic and passionate about his career as a PA to the point it is contagious. I think this inspired many students during their clinical rotations,” Kaitlyn says.

Chris currently works in emergency medicine at Medstar Harbor Hospital. He also is very involved in the hospital and participates in running events throughout the community.
The critical role of PAs in psychiatry: An AACC alum’s journey from psychiatry rotation to practice

Colleen Ohm, a 2007 AACC PA program graduate, holds a bachelor’s degree from Towson University in Community Health Science and a Master of Medical Science from Saint Francis University.

Colleen discovered her passion for psychiatry during her psychiatry rotation at the Washington, DC, VA Medical Center. She has always found psychiatry to be intellectually stimulating, challenging but fulfilling and rewarding at the same time. With the support of her teachers and mentors through the years, Colleen has built patience, skill, compassion, and empathy in treating patients with mental illness.

After finishing PA school, Colleen took a psychiatry position at Johns Hopkins Hospital working on the inpatient schizophrenia service and day hospital. The unique position was created to provide continuity of care on a busy service where residents and students rotated monthly. Colleen was the first PA to work in the department of psychiatry in Johns Hopkins history.

Over her six-year tenure at Johns Hopkins, Colleen developed expertise in treating individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety disorders, substance abuse and personality disorders. She became well versed in performing full psychiatric evaluations, including history, mental status/physical examination, obtaining and interpreting appropriate laboratory tests, developing treatment plans and managing psychotropic medication. She frequently testified at involuntary commitment hearings, presented multiple patient cases at the department’s Grand Rounds, and was involved in the development and rollout of the department’s electronic medical record system. In addition, Colleen embraced the responsibility of educating medical students, PA students, Nurse Practitioner students, residents, and nurses.

In 2013, Colleen took a job with Alliance, Inc. (now Mosaic Community Services) in Harford County, serving on their Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team. She was inspired to work with underserved patients in the community and be part of their long-term treatment and wellness. On the ACT team she provided community-based, mobile mental health treatment through comprehensive psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation, and support to persons with severe and persistent mental illness and functional impairments. Her patients often had co-existing problems such as homelessness, substance abuse, frequent hospitalization, and/or involvement with the judicial system. On the ACT team she served as interim Team Leader for a year. She developed lasting therapeutic relationships with patients and became well versed in managing crisis situations.
In 2016 Colleen took a position at an outpatient practice, American Psychiatric Care, LLC, in Bel Air, MD. In this position Colleen has been able to further her expertise in treating patients with all forms of mental illness.

In addition to her psychiatry experience, Colleen also holds an adjunct faculty position at AACC, where since 2013 she has been working with second-year PA students during their psychiatry rotation to help them prepare and be successful. She has also been a lecturer for the program and hopes to precept a student in the future.

Over her nearly 12-year career, Colleen has developed an intimate knowledge of the barriers to working in psychiatry as a PA in Maryland. As a result, she has developed a passion for working to resolve these and ensure PAs get recognition as critically important members of the mental health community.

Graduate Survey

Dear Graduate,

Please complete this graduate survey which serves to measure the impact of the AACC/UMB Collaborative PA Program every five-years on PA education and identify the current medical specialty areas of our graduates.

Thank you and we appreciate your time and valuable contributions to complete the survey which is also required by our accreditors and helps us with program evaluation. Please click on the link to complete the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AACCGRADSURVEY

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