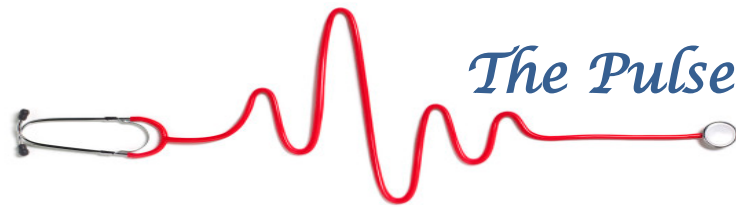




AACC/UMB Physician Assistant Program



Fall 2019

Newsletter Issue 5: November 2019

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Keep in Touch!

AACC/UMB Collaborative Physician Assistant Program

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Program Director's Message

Continued Accreditation

I have very exciting news to share with all of you; there is so much going on at the AACC/UMB Collaborative PA Program! We are proud to announce we have just received "accreditation-continued" status from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) through September 2029. This is a testament to both institutions, our faculty, staff, preceptors, students, alumni, and community partners. We should all be proud of this great accomplishment.

Change of Sponsorship to UMB

In addition, the ARC-PA has granted our request for program change of sponsorship to the University of Maryland Baltimore starting January 1, 2020. While this news is significant on so many fronts, we will still enjoy our incredible partnership with AACC. The institutions have done so much together as wonderfully creative collaborators, and will continue to do so. We aim to become one of the top PA programs in the country, and we are well on our way.

Accelerated 3-2 Pathway

I want to share the many new pathways available to those interested in a career as a PA to become one of our graduates. Besides selection as a traditional post-baccalaureate applicant, those desiring to become a PA can apply without a bachelor's degree if they progress through our Accelerated 3-2 PA Program option, only available through AACC and UMB. Successful students in this program can become a PA in 5¼ years while earning both their BS and MS degrees in Health Sciences - a much quicker option for those entering as college freshmen. Those interested in the profession as a second career, who have not been in college for a while and need to refresh their knowledge, or who need to take extra coursework have the option to progress into the PA program through the rigorous Interprofessional Healthcare (IPH) Certificate.

UMB and AACC have developed both of these options as long-coveted partners in graduate healthcare education. Students entering through these pathways gain valuable academic and hands-on patient care experiences to help them achieve their goal of becoming a PA. As with our PA program currently, all interested students

CLASS OFFICERS

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*

The Class of 2021 officers:

Sean Neehan, *President*
Julian Slick, *Vice-President*
Courtney Vargas, *Secretary*
Parisa Zolfagharian, *Treasurer*
Tiffany Ryder-Ligon, *Social chair*
Kristine Heffelfinger,
MAPA Representative
Brooke Sullivan,
SAAAPA Representative

entering any of our pathways must maintain a solid academic record while meeting our very stringent PA program application requirements.

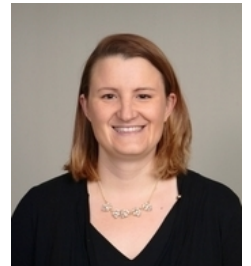
PANCE Pass Rate for 2019

Finally, I wish to congratulate the recently graduated PA Class of 2019, as they have earned a 97% PANCE pass rate, increasing the first-time taker pass rate from 96% last year. This program has so much of which to be proud. It is time to celebrate!

Dr. Cheri Hendrix

New faculty, Ms. Kerry Birney: from emergency medicine to PA education

Kerry Birney, PA-C, is a 2011 graduate of the George Washington University Physician Assistant Program. She is a lifelong Marylander and was a firefighter/paramedic and US Air Force Reservist prior to becoming a Physician Assistant. Spending the majority of her career in emergency medicine, Kerry has been involved in education on a part-time basis for most of her life, from swim coaching in her teens to creating educational podcasts for emergency apps in recent years. She continues to work part-time in several emergency departments in Maryland.



*Kerry Birney, MSHS,
PA-C*

Kerry joined the AACC/UMB Collaborative PA Program in May 2019 as a Senior Lecturer. She has been re-developing and coordinating the History and Physical Exam course for the first-semester didactic students. She is passionate about teaching future clinicians the skills that they will need to remain empathetic and engaged with patients for long and fulfilling careers in medicine. "I look forward to continuing collaboration with the faculty, staff, adjunct instructors, preceptors, and alumni of AACC/UMB to bring our already excellent program to new heights," Kerry said.

Class of 2020

August and September 2019 have been busy months in the world of the AACC/UMB PA students. First, congratulations to the class of 2021 for finishing their first semester of PA school! The senior class of 2020 is well into their clinical year and enjoying every second of it while trying to absorb all of the information being hurled at us.

In August, the first MAPA Student Social was hosted by Donovan Young, the class of 2020 president and MAPA Student Representative. AACC/UMB and Towson/CCBC programs were both represented, and a good time was had by all.

The annual MAPA Conference took place in September and three of our peers, Michael Pham, Lucas Spaeth, and Jack Taylor, competed in the Challenge Bowl.

By Donovan Young, Class President

FACULTY

Ms. Kerry Birney
Senior Lecturer

Dr. Kim Bizzell
Medical Director

Dr. Robert Cook
Senior Lecturer

Ms. Shani Fleming
Senior Lecturer

Dr. Cheri Hendrix
Program Director

Ms. Theresa Neumann
Academic Coordinator

Ms. Larisa Odessky
Lecturer

Mr. Tim Parker
Clinical/Academic Coordinator

Ms. Nicole Wooten
Senior Lecturer

STAFF

Ms. Sharon Ousman
Communication and Assessment
Specialist

Ms. Piper Watkins
Academic Program Specialist

Congrats, Class of 2019!

The AACC/UMB Collaborative PA Program said goodbye to 30 graduates from the Class of 2019. We wish them every success in their PA journey!



Dean's Award

Ms. Shannon M. Gaskins
Ms. Cassandra L. Rullman

Faculty Award

Ms. Georgia L. Harper

Clinician's Clinician Award & President's Award

Ms. Laurena D. Richardson

Physician Assistant Honor Society Awards

Pi Alpha, the national Physician Assistant honor society, is organized for the promotion and recognition of both PA students and graduates. This year's recipients of the awards are **Rachel N. Gerardy, Shannon M. Gaskins, Cassandra L. Rullman and Alison M. Spatz.**

Faculty News

Professor Kerry Birney

Professor Birney participated in the PAEA Faculty 101 Workshop on October 13-15 in Washington, D.C. The workshop is designed for new PA faculty members transitioning from the clinical arena into academic instruction. Professor Birney was grateful for the experience to network with other new faculty members from PA programs around the country, and to gain some practical knowledge and skills to assist our students.

Professor Cheri Hendrix

- Dr. Hendrix participated in the PAEA Specialty Examinations Workgroup on November 2-4, 2019 in Chicago.
- Dr. Hendrix also participated in the NCCPA's PANCE Workshop on September 16-17, 2019 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Professor Theresa Neumann

Ms. Neumann received national recognition as an **AAPA Distinguished Fellow** honored for going "above and beyond" in service to community and the profession

2019-2020 Academic Calendar

Fall

August 24 – December 20, 2019

Winter

January 6 – 21, 2019

Spring

January 22 – May 22, 2020

on April 5, 2019. Theresa earned this national recognition due to her outstanding contributions to patient care and the profession during her years as a PA.

In 2007, the AAPA established the Distinguished Fellow program in order to recognize the exceptional contributions of PAs to the profession through professional achievement, leadership, professional interaction, learning and community service. Distinguished Fellows of AAPA represent only two percent of the entire AAPA membership.

Submission from the AACC/UMB PA Program to the PAEA Education Forum, Washington, D.C, October 10-12, 2019:

- Dr. Hendrix co-presented with Tim Parker, Mary Jo Bondy and Dixie Pennington on *“Admission Gatekeepers: Are We Excluding the Introvert?”* for an invited presentation.
- Dr. Hendrix and Larisa Odessky presented research poster on *“Teaching PA Students Applied Pharmacology via Electronic Health Records.”*
- Dr. Bondy and Sharon Ousman presented research poster, on *“Relationship Analysis between Student Performances on Rotation Exams, Preceptor Evaluation and PANCE Variables.”*

Mr. Darpan Parekh is the 2019 Preceptor of the Year!

Darpan Parekh, a 2011 AACC PA program graduate, received his Master’s in Medical Science from St. Francis University and Master’s in Public Health from San Diego State University. He has been practicing as a Staff Physician Assistant at Concentra Urgent Care since 2011. Darpan has also been guest lecturing in the PA program since 2015 and was nominated as the Preceptor of the Year in 2015.



Darpan Parekh, PA-C

Darpan has been precepting PA students since 2013, which was set in motion during his senior year at AACC, when he was the elected tutor for the junior year students. Over the past six years, Darpan has enjoyed being involved in PA teaching and finds it extremely rewarding. “It’s a fantastic feeling to positively impact the young minds through mentoring and coaching on what you felt was lacking when you were a student and to see the students become great clinicians,” Darpan said. “It’s a great way to pay it forward and train those who will probably be taking care of us and our loved ones.” Darpan is looking forward to expanding his mentorship role at AACC.

Advice to potential preceptors

Darpan’s motto is to identify what style suits you the most and works best for the students since different students have different learning styles; similarly, the preceptors have different styles of teaching. He always asks students for feedback, since his goal is to help and support students to become great clinicians. He said that, over time, self-reflection and staying open-minded help with confidence and understanding and identifying the best teaching style for you and your students.

Challenges of precepting

Darpan believes that the ultimate aim of precepting is to provide valuable teaching and learning experiences to the students using evidence-based medicine, but sometimes it comes with challenges. Extra time may be needed to keep abreast of all the new and vital developments in the field of medicine. The workflow in a hospital or an outpatient-based center can vary, and on days when it is fast-paced, it can be stressful to balance the workload and to precept students.

Lasting impacts on the Class of 2019

Darpan's efforts left a lasting impact on the class of 2019.

"I had Darpan as my preceptor on my first rotation when learning to do H&P's. He took the time to ensure that I felt comfortable on site, that I knew exactly what was expected and going over what was not entirely clear to me. Darpan also took the time to give me tips on how to study for school exams, he sent multiple sources to help when taking PANCE, and he even reached out after the rotation. He also helped me understand the difference between clinical medicine and book medicine. Darpan was a preceptor that truly took time out of his day to ensure that he was teaching information that was above and beyond what we needed to cover during that rotation." **Kyle Maio, PA-C**

DeAssis agrees with Maio.

"My decision was based on his teaching methods. Darpan would review concepts on a daily basis, things that were clinically relevant, while also reviewing foundational knowledge. Darpan cared for his patients and it was evident in his practice. He encouraged me to be an autonomous provider and to think for myself, but never be too afraid to ask for help if needed." **Vanessa DeAssis, PA-C**

Beth Ryan's journey of finding a new path into the PA world and hiking the Appalachian Trail

Beth Ryan, PA-C, a 2009 AACC PA graduate, practices in internal medicine at Dr. Jeffrey Gaber and Associates, Baltimore and Pikesville, MD. She said becoming a PA has been a journey with plenty of twists and turns and wanting to help people, and she thinks that is what makes each PA unique but similar.

Before becoming a PA, Beth had always enjoyed building and fixing things, eventually leading her to a career in engineering and research. She earned a bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering and worked in the field for 15 years before realizing that she wanted to work with people more than machines.

Beth attended graduate school at Oklahoma State University, earning a master's degree in Health, Physical Education and Leisure, and worked for the next five years



**Beth Ryan, PA-C & 2009
AACC PA Graduate**

Contact Us

Do you have a newsworthy activity/achievement to share? Please send specific details and related photos to **Sharon Ousman**.

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Cathy Prah
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in recreation therapy. In the outdoors, Beth taught coping and life skills to young adults, and then later at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), she worked with adults with mental illness participating in research.

Beth's interest in medicine grew while working at NIH and the next step was to try to integrate her engineering skills with helping people and learning more about medicine. Becoming a physician assistant seemed to be the logical and perfect answer and she was grateful for being accepted into the AACC PA program. "During my years at AACC, I made amazing lifelong friends and had many gifted mentors that have made the journey even more enjoyable," she reflects. "My journey accelerated!"

After graduating in 2009, her first position was an extension of her last elective rotation in vascular surgery. Beth thoroughly enjoyed learning how to diagnose and treat a host of vascular issues, assisted in many vascular surgeries and provided surgical assistance to other specialties. Almost two years later, she had the opportunity to work in the ER at Children's Hospital in Washington, DC. "The gift of my diverse PA education and clinical rotations allowed me to move easily between these two positions," she says. "I was also able to transfer many skills learned in vascular surgery to help treat my pediatric patients in the ER."

Driven by her love for research, her next career move was working in pharmaceutical research as a sub-investigator in Phase I Clinical Trials, learning how medications are developed and reach the marketplace. After four years, Beth returned to the roots of the profession in primary and urgent care with a greater appreciation and improving her own health and balanced life while caring for others.

Recognizing that a wellness approach and reconnecting to purpose helps professional satisfaction, Beth decided to pursue her lifelong dream of hiking the Appalachian Trail. "My PA career facilitated that adventure, knowing that my profession was secure and in great demand, I was able to take a six-month sabbatical to hike a long section of the trail," she says. "I continue to learn about myself and experience the world around me. It was in short, amazing!"

Beth has since returned to working in internal medicine as a more capable provider deepened by her diverse experiences pre and post PA school. "I am able to diagnose and treat common conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia," she says. "I can talk with patients about their medications and help them find affordable solutions and recognize emergent conditions and help patients get timely and appropriate care." She acknowledges that she been able to relate to patients in ways she could never have imagined while strengthening her relationship with patients.

Beth's journey as a PA continues to be an adventure and she is very grateful to the AACC PA program for believing in her and teaching her skills that continue to evolve and help her to serve others.

<https://www.aacc.edu/about/schools-of-study/health-sciences/physician-assistant/>