

## Director's Corner



► What an exciting year we've had in the PA program! Here are a few highlights:

First, I'd like to welcome two new faculty members to our program, Stacie Agnesi and Jessica Anderson! Stacie is a 2000 graduate of our program and her specialties include Cardiothoracic Surgery and General Surgery/Trauma. She was a PBL adjunct for three years here before transitioning to Skills Coordinator/Assistant Professor. Stacie's strong organization

and teaching skills have brought new life to the skills area of the curriculum. Jessica is a 2010 graduate of our program and has been working in primary care and occupational medicine, as well as being an adjunct faculty member for us over the last few years. She is now the Associate Director of Clinical Education/Assistant Professor and is managing all the clinical aspects of the program. Even though she just began working with us in January, she is already working on ways to improve student experiences while on rotations. We're so glad you joined our team, Stacie and Jessica!

Next, I would like to pay tribute to a very special faculty member, Mark Hertweck, who has decided to continue his PA career in the VA Healthcare System. Mark has been a vital member of our faculty since 1995 and we were so happy for him but so very sad to see him go. Mark has been a cornerstone for the program and a veteran PBL facilitator since its inception. He has been instrumental mentoring PA students and undergrads in the Chatham Pre-PA Club assisting students in transitioning from undergraduate work to the PA program. He will be greatly missed by the faculty, staff, and students.

In terms of program successes, our PANCE pass rate for the last two years has been 100% and 99% respectively! Congratulations to our hard-working students and faculty! Additionally, in March 2014, our accreditation body, the ARC-PA granted us Continuing Accreditation for seven years expiring in 2021.

In 2014, I was elected to the Board of Directors of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) for a two year period. During this time, PAEA has forged a partnership with the American Academy of Medical Colleges (AAMC) and has moved to the AAMC building in Washington DC. We believe this new relationship will help to continue moving our profession forward and giving PAs a bigger voice in Washington!

continued on page 5

## From the Dean



► The School of Health Sciences' inaugural year is winding down. Last July the physician assistant studies program joined with graduate programs in occupational therapy, nursing, physical therapy, and psychology, along with undergraduate

programs in exercise science and integrative health studies, to form the new School.

The past year has been a busy and exciting one for the School of Health Sciences. For the first time we will be providing guaranteed admission into the graduate health science programs to a select group of highly qualified undergraduate students. In relation to this, we developed new interdisciplinary undergraduate degrees in health science with concentrations in biology, exercise science and psychology. Other new programs that have started include: a master's degree in nursing for an international cohort from the Shanghai University of Medicine & Health Sciences, a healthcare and business management bachelor's degree and an infant toddler development bachelor's degree. The School is currently developing an interdisciplinary master's degree in clinical informatics and is in collaboration with the Falk School of Sustainability to develop a global health and sustainability master's degree.

My best to you all,

## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



### **Alyssa Abebe, MPAS '06, PA-C**

#### *Assistant Professor*

Alyssa is a 2006 graduate of Chatham's PA program and still work one day a week in HIV clinical research. Though she loves Pittsburgh sports, she is an Ohio State buckeye fan first and foremost! In her spare time, she likes to read and try new restaurants with her husband and hang out with her two children. Alyssa says it is has been great to be back at Chatham teaching and facilitating PBL!



### **Stacie Agnesi, MPAS '00, PA-C**

#### *Skills Coordinator, Assistant Professor*

Stacie Agnesi is a 2000 graduate of Chatham University's PA program. After graduating from Chatham she worked at UPMC Mercy in cardiothoracic surgery for four years followed by six and a half years in general surgery. She worked part-time as an adjunct faculty in Chatham's PA program since January 2012. In June 2014, Stacie joined Chatham on a full-time basis as the Skills Coordinator.



### **Jessica Anderson, MPAS '10, PA-C**

#### *Associate Director of Clinical Education (Clinical Coordinator), Assistant Professor*

As a 2010 alumna, former preceptor and adjunct, Jessica rejoined Chatham's PA program as the Associate Director of Clinical Education in January of 2015. She plans to continue working in a primary care setting once a week. She devotes her time outside of Chatham to her husband, Spencer, and their active and curious toddler, Aaron. It's been an exciting year for the Anderson household, as Jessica's husband graduated from Duquesne law school in June and they will celebrate ten years of marriage in November.



### **Denise Devlin**

#### *Clinical Coordinator Program Assistant*

Denise has been working with the Chatham PA program since 2008 to help coordinate the students' clinical rotations. She takes pride in ensuring that our students have the best possible clinical experience. Her personal interests include gardening, vegetarian food, movies, and her volunteer work for Foster Cat, Inc.



### **Kelly Donkers, MPA, PA-C**

#### *Academic Coordinator, Assistant Professor*

Kelly began working for the PA program in August 2008 as a full time PBL facilitator, and since then has also served as the Skills Coordinator before taking the position as Academic Coordinator. She serves as the liaison for simulation studies to the STAR Center at West Penn for the PA Program. She has served an AAPA Delegate for the states of Maryland and Pennsylvania. Kelly resides with her husband, Jason and daughter Keira.



### **Susan Hawkins, MS ED, PA-C**

#### *PBL Coordinator, Associate Professor*

Susan continues to tend and nurture PBL at Chatham. She and her husband biked from Pittsburgh to Washington, DC last summer and plan to hike for a week in Yosemite this summer. Yay wellness!



### **Janet Kuzora**

#### *Program Assistant*

Janet began her employment at Chatham in September 2009 after an extensive administrative career, working mainly at Duquesne Light for 25 years. After spending some time at home to raise her daughter, she began here as a part-time administrative assistant in the interior architecture program. Janet was always interested in becoming a part of the PA team, as she found the subject matter of extreme interest. Janet is married with one teenage daughter. In her spare time, she enjoys swimming, beach vacationing, shopping, experiencing restaurants and spending time with her family and friends.

## John Laird, ND

### *Admissions Coordinator, Associate Professor*

John Laird earned his Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine degree from John Bastyr College of Naturopathic Medicine in Seattle, Washington. He was Phi Beta Kappa at Franklin and Marshall College where he received a BA in Anthropology. He was a licensed primary care provider in private practice in Seattle and is currently a naturopathic counselor at the UPMC-Shadyside Center for Integrative Medicine where he specializes in clinical nutrition and botanical medicine. He is active in lecturing in Complementary and Alternative Medicine to regional, state and national professional groups. His experience in academic settings spans nineteen years and includes positions as instructor at Carlow College and the Community College of Allegheny County prior to becoming a faculty member in the PA program at Chatham University in 1996. He has taught courses in anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, nutrition, biology and pathology; and currently teaches Clinical Application of the Basic Sciences at Chatham.



## Lea O'Keefe, MPA, PA-C

### *Clinical Coordinator, Assistant Professor*

Lea was a part-time clinical coordinator at Chatham University from 2006-2007. She rejoined Chatham in 2013 as faculty and clinical coordinator for the physician assistant studies program. She has worked clinically in surgery and gastroenterology since graduating. Lea enjoys

spending time with her husband and two children.



## Judy Truscott, MPAS, PA-C

### *Associate Program Director, Assistant Professor*

Judy joined Chatham as an adjunct PBL facilitator in April 2012 and shortly after became a full-time faculty member. As a former student of the program, Judy really enjoyed the PBL methodology of learning and wanted to be more involved as a facilitator. After one year on the faculty, she

became the associate program director. Judy has continued to be a facilitator in PBL and has enjoyed teaching program to practice and the final evaluative course prior to students completing the program. This position with Chatham has made her a more well-rounded physician assistant, but has also allowed her to develop relationships with the great faculty, staff, and students.



## Victoria Yann, MS Ed.

### *Assistant Director of Education*

Victoria Yann holds a bachelor of science degree in biology from Allegheny College and a master of science degree in education from Duquesne University. After working in brain research and cancer research for seven years, she moved into the field of education where she has been employed for the past nineteen years. She was a full-time instructor

at several post-secondary schools then served as the Health Career Coordinator for Southwest PA Area Health Education Center. At Chatham, she acts as the Assistant Director of Clinical Education.



## From the Medical Director

► As I enter my second year as medical director, I want to welcome the new class of 2017 to Chatham. The first year on the job has given me a deep appreciation for how challenging this program is, trying to absorb the whole foundation of practical medical knowledge in one year, and the basics of providing care to live patients in a second. The temptation to “teach to the test” – and to study to the test – is strong.

When it strikes, remember that at the other end of these two years, there are no exams and no grades, only the greatest test of all: promoting and restoring health of body and spirit to people in need. They will see only your title and whatever empathy and skill you bring to the job, not how many percentage points you scored in your Essentials exam. Study hard, sure, but remember why you are studying. Your future role, whether it is in primary care like me, or in surgery, obstetrics, or psychiatry, is one of the most rewarding and challenging things anyone can do in this life. Enjoy the privilege, and good luck.



Jonathan Weinkle, MD, FAAP

# Farewell from Mark Hertweck

► When I think of change I reflect on the challenge and opportunity of the future and the familiarity and the accomplishment of the past. I have enjoyed a wonderful and fulfilling career as a PA and I count my role as member of the faculty at the Chatham University PA program as one of my greatest accomplishments. Nearly twenty years in the presence of generous and gifted academic colleagues surrounded by energetic and driven students soon to be colleagues. I have had the distinct pleasure and horror of witnessing the growth of the program from it's infancy as a fledgling PA program utilizing a wholly innovative curriculum to its current level as one of the most respected programs in the country. I have personally watched the diligence of the faculty guide the students through the transformation into a collection of practitioners providing care at the highest levels and impacting the lives of literally tens of thousands of patients and their families. I am truly humbled when I think of the sacrifices that my colleagues and our students have made to make this all possible.

I am proud to have represented the program, the faculty, and the students at national, state, and local venues and I have been pleased to have heard that the program, the students and the graduates are held in such high regard by virtually everyone who has approached me. I take little credit for this outcome as a faculty member but I take great satisfaction in having been associated with such an outstanding group of individuals. In 1999 I was chosen by the PSPA as PA of the Year for Pennsylvania. This honor was fueled by the recommendations of students and faculty at Chatham. I am grateful for the recognition but I am more gratified by the support of my students and colleagues.

Moving forward, I plan to continue my involvement with the PA program, its students and graduates and I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Thanks to all, congratulations to the graduates and best of fortunes to all of those that I have come to know through my time here at Chatham.

*Mark Hertweck, MA, PA-C*



## Graduating Class of 2015!

► Congratulations to the Class of 2015! Chatham faculty and staff wishes you the best in your future endeavors!



## DIDACTIC EDUCATION

### Poverty Simulations: Taking a Walk in Patient's Shoes...

► Beginning in early 2014, Chatham University's physician assistant students began participating in Poverty Simulations as a part of their didactic education. The goal in utilizing this nationally recognized role playing tool is to provide education and awareness about poverty. Participants role play a month in the life of an individual with low-income over four 15 minute "weeks," attempting to meet their basic needs. Participants interact with the surrounding community resources such as the utility company, employer, school, bank, and social service agency etc. Realizing that poverty and its ramifications are complex; this is only one in a series of activities related to health care disparities and cultural competence. One theme processed with students is, "How would this experience impact your practice as a future health care provider?" Are you interested in participating in the future? Contact Alyssa Abebe at [aabebe@chatham.edu](mailto:aabebe@chatham.edu).



#### Director's Corner *continued*

Chatham University has undergone some academic restructuring in the past year as well, and now our program is housed in the School of Health Sciences and our new dean is Pat Downey, PT, Ph.D. This is very exciting for us as the restructuring has helped to foster an interprofessional environment that includes nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and psychology.

Please read on for more information on our staff and faculty and exciting updates in our program! If you have

news you would like to share with us, please send it to me at [cgarrubba@chatham.edu](mailto:cgarrubba@chatham.edu). We enjoy staying in touch with you!

Best,

Handwritten signature of Carl Garrubba.

Carl Garrubba, MPA, PA-C  
Program Director, Assistant Professor



## ALUMNI EVENTS

► Thanks to all alumni who joined us for the Chatham University Physician Assistant Alumni Reception at the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) in San Francisco! In October 2015, please join Chatham for an upcoming event at the Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants (PSPA) conference in Erie, PA. A special thanks to Chatham University's Office of Alumni Relations for their help and support with these events!



## Whiteside-Schilling Scholarship for Master of Physician Assistant Studies Students

► The Whiteside-Schilling Scholarship, established by Dr. Richard J. Schilling and Barbara Whiteside-Schilling '50 in June 2014, serves to provide significant fellowship funding for the ongoing recruitment and retention of high quality Chatham undergraduate candidates to Chatham University's Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program. The initial award is \$10,000 for the first year of study and will be renewed for the second year of study if the student passed all first year courses and remains in good academic standing. The initial awards were made in spring 2015 to two students, Kayla Averell and Shannon Hiles, who will enter into the PA program in fall 2015. Congratulations to Kayla and Shannon and thank you to Dr. Richard J. Schilling and Barbara Whiteside-Schilling!

## Health Resource Services Administration (HRSA) Grants!

HRSA PA Training Grantee 2010-2015. This funding has allowed the program to:

- Support 267 students by providing funding for travel related costs to 409 primary care clinical sites in rural and Medically Underserved Areas.
- Update didactic year training materials from paper to a highly interactive electronic problem based learning system (smart boards, tablets and newly updated cases).
- Integrate cultural competency and health care literacy more fully into the curriculum with supplements including Poverty Simulations and health care disparities data to more fully prepare them for successfully treating all populations.
- Increase student exposure to medically underserved areas as well as vulnerable populations by 100%. Over 115 clinical training sites were added with a focus on urban underserved, rural and frontier locations

HRSA Expansion of Physician Assistant Training (EPAT) Grantee 2010-2014. Under this grant the program has assisted seven students with scholarships towards the cost of their education.

**Do you have professional news? Are you interested in accessing the online directory? In order to get the most up to date information from your alma mater, please be sure to keep your contact information updated with the Office of Alumni Relations.**

Keep in touch with Chatham and your classmates by visiting [chatham.edu/alumni](http://chatham.edu/alumni). There you can become a member of the alumni directory, view and share classnotes, as well as register and pay for events online! Contact [alumni@chatham.edu](mailto:alumni@chatham.edu) for your unique ID needed to login!