

# Physician Assistant Studies

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PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

FALL 2012

## From the Program Director

On behalf of everyone in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies, I hope that this newsletter finds you in good health!

The past year has been an exciting one, full of change. In January, faculty and the members of the class of 2013 moved into the new science building. Thousands of hours were dedicated to planning, designing and constructing this state-of-the-art, 48,000-square-foot facility, and we are blessed and privileged to have the opportunity to work in this phenomenal space. I am particularly proud of how well our students made the transition to this building, and how quickly they embraced its classrooms, collaborative learning spaces, and cutting-edge laboratories, all of which will assist them in learning to care for their future patients. They are now completing their clinical training at various medical facilities in the region.

Our current academic year began on Aug. 20, when we helped orient 42 members of the class of 2014. The Health Resource Services Administration primary care training grant that the College was recently awarded will allow us to provide these students with an expanded curriculum, a greater number and variety of clinical sites, and additional caring, dedicated faculty to aid them in understanding primary care concepts. The emphasis of this year's service-learning projects will be on health literacy, and we are pleased that Peter Saver, who previously helped to train our students in caring for patients from a variety of cultural backgrounds, has rejoined the team to oversee these projects.

Finally, the members of the class of 2012 made an important transition of their own this summer as they entered the workforce. We have received outstanding reports on their work to date, and were pleased to celebrate their achievements during their white coat ceremony in August. We wish them much happiness as physician assistants, and know that they will provide quality, compassionate quality care to their patients.

Sincerely,

Mary Springston, R.P.A.-C., M.S. Ed.  
Assistant Clinical Professor and Director of the  
Physician Assistant Studies Program

## Members of the Class of 2012 Present Master's Projects

By William Holmes, Ph.D., research coordinator

The members of the class of 2012 presented the results of their master's projects at the annual Department of Physician Assistant Studies poster session in May. They discussed with family, friends and faculty the wide range of topics they'd researched, including: parental attitudes toward pediatric vaccination, contact-isolated patients' satisfaction with their hospital stays, the effectiveness of incentive programs in recruiting physician assistants to rural communities, emergency department providers' sensitivity to designing affordable treatment plans, the impact of high-fidelity medical simulation on physician assistant students' clinical skills, physician assistants' opinions about complementary and alternative medicine, physician assistant awareness of concussion symptoms and return-to-play decision criteria, HPV recommendation patterns among physician assistants, the physician assistant community's readiness to respond to the needs of returning veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and hiring criteria used by employers of new physician assistants. The hour-long session took place on campus in the Dolphin Den prior to the College's graduate program commencement ceremony.

The members of the class of 2012 were the first to complete their master's projects under a new, more rigorous timeline. While in past years projects were finished in August of the students' second year of the two-year program, they are now completed three months earlier. One reason for this change was to provide students and faculty members with more opportunities to present their findings at regional and national conferences. In all, five projects completed by members of the class of 2012 have been accepted for presentation – four at the annual conference of the New York State Society of Physician Assistants in Tarrytown in October, and one at the Physician Assistant Education Association annual forum in Seattle, Wash., in November. ■



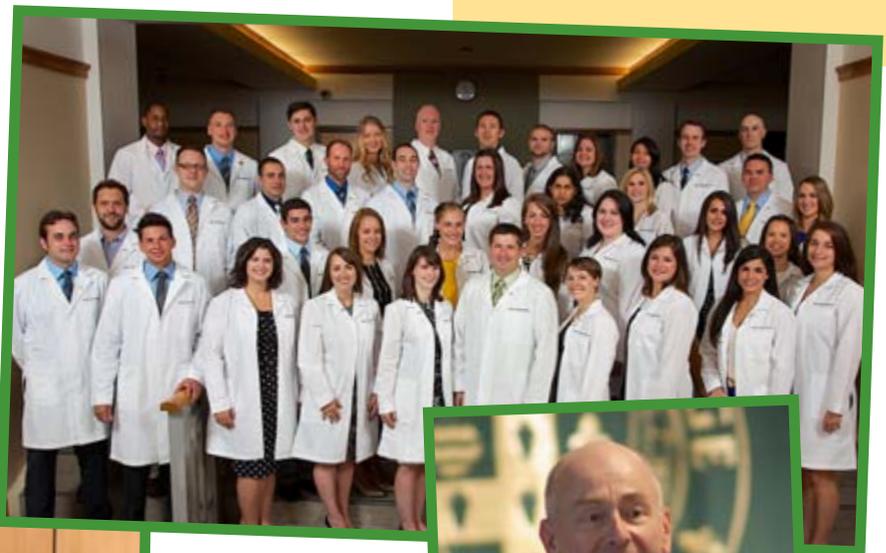


## Clinical Opportunities for Students Grow

By Beth Cappelletti, RPAC, clinical coordinator, Edward Wolfe, R.P.A.-C, assistant clinical coordinator

The clinical team continues to be extremely busy as we work to place more than 40 students in their second year of the program at clinical sites throughout the region. We heartily thank all of the physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners, as well as the administrative staff in hundreds of offices and hospitals throughout the area, who act as preceptors for our students. This year has seen students placed in hospitals and clinics from Massena to Binghamton, N.Y. We have expanded the preceptor base in the Cooperstown, N.Y., area, added preceptors in Northern New York, and are currently developing sites in many new locations. Without the contributions of our preceptors, who generously share their time and experience with our students, there would be no physician assistant education. We applaud their commitment to our students, to Le Moyne, and to the profession at large. ■

## P.A. Program White Coat Ceremony



## Physician Assistant Student Society Hosts Third Annual Fun Run

By Rebecca Brown, R.P.A.-C., faculty advisor for P.A.S.S., co-academic coordinator

More than 140 individuals participated in the Le Moyne College Physician Assistant Student Society's third annual 5K Fun Run, which raised \$1,500 for Amais Health Services, an organization that provides health care to economically disadvantaged or uninsured adults. A crowd of family, faculty and friends came out to support P.A.S.S. members at the race, which was held in April. Funds were raised through a combination of race registrations, donations and raffle ticket sales.

Funds were also raised at the race to send first-year student Ben Eachon and second-year students Danielle Kappel and Erin Woody to the American Association of Physician Assistants conference in Toronto, Canada, where they competed in the first round of the Medical Challenge Bowl. ■



# Simulation Training: An Invaluable Educational Tool

By Beth Mercer, R.P.A.-C., M.P.A.S., adjunct instructor and problem-based learning facilitator

Simulation has always been a part of medical education. It is a tool used to help students learn in a safe environment, where skills can be practiced and refined without the concern of harming the patient.

At Le Moyne, we provide our students with simulation experiences that give them opportunities to practice interviewing and physical examination skills on standardized patients. We also use simulation to practice technical skills (phlebotomy, lumbar puncture, catheterization, insertion of IV lines and central line insertion). Our instructors create experiences that simulate what it would be like to drain an abscess or suture a wound. We are also fortunate to have three high-fidelity simulation mannequins that afford students the opportunity to manage the “complete” patient.

These simulations provide a safe, supportive atmosphere for students to work a patient up from presenting signs and symptoms to diagnosis and management. Faculty members are able to provide their students with immediate feedback about the care they are providing to their patient. We can observe the students’ clinical techniques, assess communication skills, and evaluate teamwork and professionalism, all with the help of video debriefing and guided reflection sessions where the students can observe their encounter and critically analyze their performance along with the instructor.

Truly, these simulation opportunities are knowledge in action. Our laboratory is a place where students develop confidence, competence and readiness for clinical practice. ■



## The Wyoming Project: 2013

By Anthony Vinciguerra, M.D., associate clinical professor and academic coordinator

Months of work have already been poured into what will surely be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our students to gain valuable training in primary care medicine in the pristine, rural mountain area of the Wind River Range near Dubois, Wyo.

This experience in an underserved, impoverished and mostly Native American community is much more than primary care in a far-away place. It is actually a mini, multidisciplinary curriculum that will put into action the Jesuit concept of *cura personalis*, or care for the whole person, and allow our students to practice humanistic (bio, psychosocial, spiritual) medicine. It will be, in a word, transformative.

Eight students were selected to participate in this unique clinical rotation experience. They were chosen based on their academic work and essays they wrote about what they wanted out of this training, which will take place in July and August of 2013.

We will work in two medical clinics – one in Dubois (population 900) and one 78 miles away in Riverton (population 10,000). Students will gain experience in family, geriatric and psychiatric medicine, and in treating substance abuse.

To the best of our knowledge, of the more than 160 physician assistant studies programs in the country, Le Moyne’s will be the first to introduce the concept of a multidisciplinary clinical rotation in rural medicine in that our

medical humanities advisor, Lynne Arnault, Ph.D., will accompany us on this trip.

At the end of each clinical day, we will have dinner together “ranch-family style.” Given the high rates of obesity, diabetes and hypertension among the population we will be serving, we will promote health literacy by discussing the importance of sensible, balanced eating while on a highly restricted budget with our patients.

To understand what that really means, we will dine on \$15 of food every night – the real sort of challenge impoverished people face. Healthy, palatable, affordable choices will be something we practice as well as preach.

After dinner, each student will share a “case of the day” wherein we will discuss all facets of treating the “whole person,” and taking into account all issues impacting health, both directly and indirectly.

It is our hope that this exciting project will continue annually, and that it will become self-sustaining. We are already looking into faculty exchanges as well as ongoing cross-institutional education opportunities.

Such an opportunity, however, is not inexpensive. We are looking at grants, scholarships, fundraisers, etc., to help us finance this very worthwhile endeavor. A report will follow after the trip and will be presented at various venues.

If you wish to make a contribution to this effort, please contact Anthony Vinciguerra, M.D., at (315) 445-4737 or vincianj@lemoyne.edu. ■

## Become Involved with the P.A. Studies Program

Le Moyne College is dedicated to preparing outstanding physician assistants to serve our community, particularly the impoverished, the mentally ill and the socially disenfranchised.

Whether traveling to Wyoming to practice rural western medicine practice or to South Sudan to help combat the HIV epidemic there, our continuous quality improvement model strives for the creative and practical application of clinical medicine. As always, our commitment is to improve the quality of life for as many people as possible.

It is in this spirit that we ask for your support and assistance. Giving back is a wonderful way to make a difference in the lives of others, and to experience a real sense of personal growth and spiritual fulfillment.

Here are a few ways in which you can give back. Thank you in advance for all that you do for us.

### If you want to post a P.A. position:

Contact Sheila Faulkner at [faulknsa@lemoyne.edu](mailto:faulknsa@lemoyne.edu).

### If you are interested in an opportunity to lecture or provide a workshop in your area of expertise:

Contact the Anthony Vinciguerra, M.D., academic coordinator, at [vincianj@lemoyne.edu](mailto:vincianj@lemoyne.edu) or Mary Springston, program director, at (315) 445-4745.

### If you are interested in serving as a preceptor for a P.A. student or would like to learn more about our remitted tuition program:

Contact Beth Cappelletti, R.P.A.-C., clinical coordinator, at [cappellem@lemoyne.edu](mailto:cappellem@lemoyne.edu) or Edward Wolfe, R.P.A.-C., at (315) 445-4745.

### If you would like to make a donation or provide monies for scholarships:

Contact the Division of Institutional Advancement at (315) 445-4545 or Mary Springston at (315) 445-4745.

### If you have an interesting idea or want to share a story about a P.A. student or graduate:

Contact Mary Springston, R.P.A.-C., at [springme@lemoyne.edu](mailto:springme@lemoyne.edu) or call (315) 445-4745.

### If you know someone who wants to be a Le Moyne P.A. student:

Contact Kristen Trappasso, director of graduate admission, at (315) 445-5444 or send an email to [PhysAssist@lemoyne.edu](mailto:PhysAssist@lemoyne.edu).

# Department Welcomes New and Returning Faculty Members

By Anthony Vinciguerra, M.D., *associate clinical professor and academic coordinator*

The Department of Physician Assistant Studies recently welcomed three new or returning faculty members.

Elizabeth (Beth) Mercer, R.P.A.-C, who has previously served as the department's problem-based learning facilitator, will continue in that role while also serving as its SIM educator and working on special project grants. Mercer received her certification as a registered physician assistant from Albany/Hudson Valley Physician Assistant Program, and her master's degree from the University of Nebraska. She has also served as an academic coordinator at D'Youville College in Buffalo, N.Y., and as a preceptor in a variety of clinical settings.

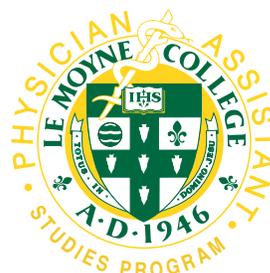
Amy Roberson '07, R.P.A.-C., also serves as a problem-based learning facilitator for the department. In addition, she works with Le Moyne's physician assistant studies students as a preceptor at the Medical Arts Ob-Gyn clinic in Utica, N.Y., where she is a practicing physician assistant.

Marc Maller, M.D., returned to Le Moyne this semester to teach pharmacology. He currently practices at the Canandaigua V.A. Medical Center. Maller earned his undergraduate degree in biology from Union College and his medical degree from Tulane University. ■

## Grant to Support Students Pursuing a Career in Geriatrics

The Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York has approved a three-year extension to support physician assistant scholarships in geriatrics. The Community Health Foundation Scholarship has been created for the purpose of providing financial assistance to Le Moyne College physician assistant studies students who have a strong commitment to pursuing a career in geriatric medicine.

The fall 2012 scholarship recipients are Katrina Wojciechowski and Tiffany Schaefer. ■



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