

SEPTEMBER 2019 | VOL. 1

THE PLEXUS POST

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE
MODERN HUMAN ANATOMY - ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (MHA AA)

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HELLO, FROM THE MHA AA

**WE'RE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE
INAUGURAL EDITION OF THE PLEXUS POST**

Plexus: a network of nerves or vessels in the body; an intricate network

With the establishment of a formal Modern Human Anatomy Alumni Association (MHA AA), we are excited to contribute to our own definition of "plexus." With this association, its triannual newsletter, and our mission statement, we aim to create our own plexus of MHA alumni that extends across the country and globe.

We're very excited about the prospects of this newsletter. Inside, you will find alumni profiles, networking tips, and program updates. You'll also see calls for you, our alumni: we want to hear from you, have you be active contributors to future newsletters, volunteer for Leadership positions within the MHA AA, and assist in creating an amazing network between MHA and its alumni.

We're just getting started, but take a look, and welcome, from the MHA AA and the Plexus Post!

**Save the Date! Tentative
MHA AA Reunion
Weekend
June 26-28th, 2020**

A MESSAGE FROM PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

As we reflect on our program, our greatest reward is witnessing the growth of our students and alumni. From the rigor of the first year curriculum, to the completion of awesome capstone projects, to the many opportunities that served as stepping stones to future endeavors, we are so proud of what our students achieved here and what you all continue to achieve in your educations and careers. We cherish the MHA community that you helped build and continue to maintain, and we look forward to your engagement with our Alumni Association. Once an MHA, always an MHA!

-Dr. Finger, Dr. Stabio,
Dr. Royer & Jennifer

CURRENT MHA UPDATE FROM YOUR PROGRAM LIAISON

- Dr. Norma Wagoner “retired” in May of this year, while we will miss her deeply in the anatomy lab, she is still in the suite located in her new office (right next to her old one, which is now occupied by none other than Dr. Caley Orr!) Monday & Friday 8am – 12pm.
- We recently added a new Senior Instructor to our MHA faculty, Dr. Chelsea Lohman Bonfiglio. Dr. B comes to us from A.T. Still University in Phoenix, Arizona. Dr. B has a PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences and also has an amazing clinical background in athletic training! She has interests in clinical neurodynamics, anatomical education, Matlab programming, and biomechanical analysis. We feel so fortunate to have her teaching medical gross anatomy and our own MHA anatomy in the spring! Welcome, Dr. B!
- We have a variety of new electives now offered within MHA – Noah Leppek continues to offer a course in Maya imaging and modeling, Dr. Caley Orr started a 3D Modeling and Printing for the Anatomical Sciences course, and a new MSMHA Internship course in the spring & is an off-campus elective at a non-CU organization that can provide students with practical, hands-on experience.
- We just welcomed our 8th MHA class (!) with 23 students! (See some of their friendly faces in the picture to the right). We hope our alumni have the chance to meet and network with our new current students in the future!



SYNAPTOGENESIS: FIVE TIPS FOR MAKING NEW NETWORKING CONNECTIONS FROM YOUR NETWORKING COORDINATOR

There's no denying the value of a reliable professional network. Whether it's familiar members of your alumni network or complete strangers, well-established relationships with the right people can be beneficial at every stage of your career. However, even if you're a social butterfly, sometimes networking can be a bit...awkward. Here are a few tips for making those first few networking meetings a little bit smoother:

- 1. Reach out...the right way:** Once you have identified a contact you would like to network with, the next step is to reach out. Simple, right? For establishing professional contact, e-mail is the gold standard. If the person has a professional social media page such as Twitter or LinkedIn, you can contact them through that as well. However, be conscious of the platform you use to reach out. Although you may be familiar with your contact, some people may not appreciate you sliding into their DMs on their personal Facebook or Instagram pages to discuss professional matters. Keep your message short and to the point. Briefly introduce yourself and your objectives. If you don't receive a response, feel free to send a follow-up message, maybe even a second, but beyond that you may want start considering different options. The person you're reaching out to might be too busy to be a reliable contact. Don't worry! There are plenty of other people you can network with!
- 2. Do your homework:** As Scar from the Lion King would say – “Be prepared.” Sure, his advice is for overthrowing a lion-based patriarchy, but it also applies to networking meetings. A little bit of research and preparation beforehand can help you use your emails and/or meeting time more effectively, and demonstrate your interest. Familiarize yourself with the person's work, field, career path, etc. Conversely, develop a brief “elevator pitch” that introduces your background, interests, and goals so your contact can quickly get to know you as well. Drafting a list of questions can also help you guide conversation and focus on the information or advice you would like to obtain.
- 3. Be professional:** As in any academic or career activity, be respectful and professional. Your contact is doing you a favor by lending you their time and expertise. Be mindful of the person's time – don't be late or keep the person longer than the allotted time if meeting in person. Make a positive impression by dressing appropriately, acting courteously and professionally, and showing genuine interest and engagement in the conversation. If emailing or skypeing, again, be courteous with your contact's time.
- 4. Collect your thoughts:** Take bit of time after your meeting to reflect on your discussion. What did you learn? How will you use that information? What additional information do you need? Use this time to focus your energies and plan your next steps.
- 5. Keep in touch:** After your meeting (ideally within 24 hours), send a brief thank you email to show your appreciation. Mention a few details you discussed during the meeting and share how you are going to move forward. Be sure to follow up on any open items and send along any documents or articles you promised. As with any relationship, your budding professional network needs maintenance and nurturing to stay alive. Keep in touch periodically and provide the person with updates to stay on each other's radars. No one likes getting ghosted!

10 QUESTIONS WITH OUR FEATURED ALUMNI

Each newsletter, we plan on featuring some alumni. We'll be looking for volunteers tri-annually, so keep an eye out!

10 QUESTIONS WITH: WAI SZETO, CLASS OF 2015

ANATOMIC & CLINICAL PATHOLOGY RESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO HEALTH
wszeto@ucsd.edu

1. What is your favorite memory from MHA?

Too many to choose, but I'll go with Dr. Royer's orientation presentation on e-mail etiquette in a professional setting: "i no u went over it in class but i had a VERY LONG week lol tests ha ha ha and i lost my notes "

2. What was your Capstone project?

I looked at CT scans of crocodile skulls at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science to create 3D reconstructions of the endocasts so that morphometric data could be used to determine if you could differentiate species based on morphology.

3. What was your favorite course/class you took during MHA?

Neuro and Tissue Biology & Disease Mechanisms

4. How do you use anatomy in your current career/life?

I use my anatomical training every day, from gross dissection of surgical specimens, to using microanatomy when I look at glass slides to render pathological diagnoses for patient care.

5. What do you love most about your current position/job?

I love that I get to combine my passion for medicine and the anatomical sciences daily!

6. What achievement are you most proud of?

Finishing my MD and practicing in a field that I really enjoy.

"I USE MY
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7. How closely does your current career relate to your time in MHA?

Very closely. Not only do I use my training in anatomy daily, I am also using the training I received in imaging modalities to understand current innovations in digital pathology and the utility of imaging combined with informatics to improve diagnostic accuracy.

8. What words of wisdom would you give to a current MHA student?

Keep at it, participate in experiences that are meaningful to you, and help each other.

9. Who is the most important person/people in your life that you met through MHA?

I made some great friends through the MHA that I still keep in touch with today.

10. If you could transport yourself to Denver/Aurora right now, what's the first thing you would do?

Get a Cherry Cricket burger.

10 QUESTIONS WITH: ROSSANA BLANCO, CLASS OF 2018

FIELD CLINICAL OPERATIONS SPECIALIST - NEUROMODULATION

ABBOTT - CHICAGO, IL

rossanac.blanco@gmail.com

1. What is your favorite memory from MHA? There are so many memories to choose from! One of the most special would be the opportunity to do a CNS dissection with Dr. Stabio and Jake during the summer between first and second year. I also enjoyed the many late study sessions with my amazing cohort where the focus was on what take-out items we would eat that night to help us cope with the material we needed to learn, certainly some of the best memories with amazing colleagues.

2. What was your Capstone project? I worked with Dr. Thompson in the Department of Neurosurgery to develop the use of neuroimaging software to visualize stereotactic electrodes in patients with drug-resistant epilepsy. This project allowed us to utilize pre-operative MRI and post-operative CT to create a patient-specific depiction of neuroanatomy and electrophysiology to better understand and depict seizure localization.

3. What was your favorite course/class you took during MHA? Neuroanatomy was my favorite subject! I have always had a profound admiration for the nervous system, and I enjoyed the opportunity to fully explore this interest under the guidance and mentorship of Dr. Stabio. She is an excellent lecturer, and I appreciated that her course encompassed various scientist and clinician lectures as well as multiple didactic activities, dissections, and labs.

4. How do you use anatomy in your current career/life? I use anatomy in my career every single day! I work as a liaison for Abbott in neuromodulation clinical research. I work with research sites to understand the use of Spinal Cord and Deep Brain Stimulation therapies and how they relate to our clinical studies in order to capture patient outcomes. I use anatomy to help people visualize and understand how our therapies work and why we are interested on capturing certain data for our studies.

5. What do you love most about your current position/job? I enjoy the opportunity to work with a wide variety of individuals at multiple levels in the neuromodulation industry. I work with physicians, research coordinators, device representatives, as well as corporate research directors. I mostly enjoy the versatility of my day-to-day activities. I may be in the OR helping support the enrollment of DRG-stimulator patient in our study and then travel to meet with a coordinator and educate them on new study procedures, all in the same day!



"I WOULD ENCOURAGE EVERY SINGLE STUDENT TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY SINGLE OPPORTUNITY THAT MHA AND CU HAS TO OFFER! IF YOU DON'T SEE SOMETHING THAT YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN, THEN CREATE IT!"

6. What achievement are you most proud of? I am very proud of my capstone research work and being selected as a scientific highlights poster at AAA in 2018, as well as being awarded the first place for the clinical research category in our MHA poster session.

7. How closely does your current career relate to your time in MHA? I have achieved my current role because of my experience as an MHA graduate! I am able to introduce myself and say 'my background is in functional/stereotactic neurosurgery from the University of Colorado,' and it definitely speaks volumes to the audiences that I interact with. The strong background that I have in anatomy and neurosciences has helped me earn respect, trust, and credibility with the physicians, research coordinators, and commercial representatives that I work with. This knowledge has helped translate into my capability to manage a 5-state territory in supporting the execution of 7+ ongoing neuromodulation clinical trials.

8. What words of wisdom would you give to a current MHA student? I would encourage every single student to keep an open mind and take advantage of every single opportunity that MHA and CU has to offer! If you don't see something that you may be interested in, then create it! Find a faculty that you admire, share your ideas, and make your interests and passions come to life, this is certainly the time to do it. Most importantly, I encourage students to invest time and effort in developing strong relationships with faculty, staff, and colleagues, because that will be an invaluable network as you go beyond MHA.

9. Who is the most important person/people in your life that you met through MHA? Do I have to pick one?! Dr. Wagoner, Dr. Stabio, Dr. Thompson, and Jennifer. I keep in touch with every single one of them. There are instances in my current day-to-day that remind me of a lesson, laugh, or conversation I had with each one of them. They each impacted my life in more ways that I can count, but I am thankful for every single interaction that has led me to where I am today and prepared me to continue growing in a field that I love.

10. If you could transport yourself to Denver/Aurora right now, what's the first thing you would do? I would visit the suite and storm into Jennifer's office and give her a GIANT hug 😊



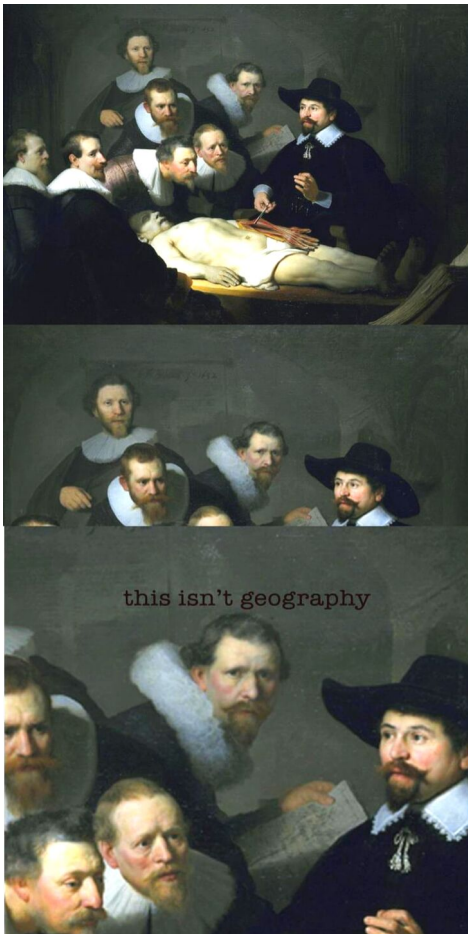
"GOOD NEWS!" SECTION

WE'RE WAITING TO HEAR YOUR GOOD NEWS...

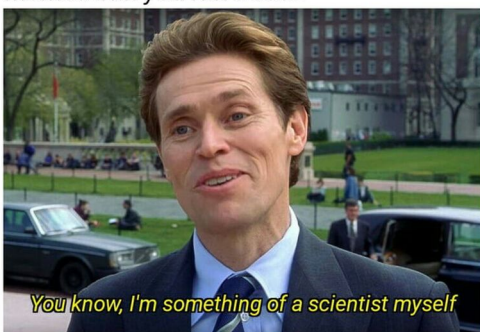
Did you recently get a promotion or start a new job? Graduate? Complete a presentation, or achieve a publication? What about get engaged or married? Move to a new home? Welcome a new family member (human or fur baby)?

We want to hear the "good news" from our alumni! Each newsletter we'll feature and try and spread some positivity. If you have good news to share, please complete the "Good News" survey in the alumni newsletter email.

"ANATO-MEMES"



When someone is talking about anatomy and you remember all the anatomy memes that you have seen



MHA AA LEADERSHIP TEAM: CURRENTLY & CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Meet the current MHA AA Leadership Team. Interested in volunteering? We have several positions open- please complete the "Leadership Team" survey in the alumni newsletter email.



ANGELIQUE DUEÑAS, CLASS OF 2018
MHA AA ALUMNI DIRECTOR

Angelique is currently a PhD student in Medical Sciences in the Health Professions Education Unit at the Hull York Medical School, United Kingdom. Her current focus is diversity issues in medical education, but she still finds time to do anatomy education projects, and incorporate anatomy into her graduate teaching role.



CHELSEA GOLDBERG, CLASS OF 2016
MHA AA PROGRAM LIAISON

Chelsea is an Instructor at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus for medical, dental, and MHA anatomy. She loves anatomical education and feels at home in the lab. When not teaching in the lab, Chelsea loves being outside in beautiful Colorado, cooking, art, and keeping up with her kitty Stella.



ANDREW CALE, CLASS OF 2018
MHA AA NETWORKING COORDINATOR & MEME FINDER

Andrew is a 1st-year Ph.D. student in Anatomy & Cell Biology (Education Track) at Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis and an aspiring professor of the anatomical sciences. When he's not buried in his academic work, he enjoys cooking, weight-lifting, puns, and looking at cute corgi pictures.



YOUR NAME, CLASS OF X
MHA AA SOCIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR/
RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR

We're looking for more alumni members for our leadership team. For details on positions open, time commitments, and how to apply, please see the "Leadership Team" form in our newsletter email, or contact Angelique.