

Current information about the CHA/PA Physician Assistant Program at the University of Colorado Denver.

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CHA/PA Newsletter

Read on to learn more about student involvement in the Silver Society, the Donor Memorial, AAPA, and much more!



Serving Children with Infectious Disease

Heather Heizer, a 2008 CHA/PA graduate, has had an interest in healthcare as long as she can remember. Her sister was diagnosed with Type I diabetes as an infant and her mother is a nurse, so she understood the importance of quality healthcare even as a young child. Before joining PA school, Heather spent several years as a lab researcher at National Jewish



The Silver Society in Action

Silver Society has had a busy year! Since last summer, Silver Society leadership planned events in both community service and diversity/recruitment. Students participated together in activities such as Children's Hospital holiday craft-making, Food Bank volunteering, speaking at local

Health working on projects associated with tuberculosis and staphylococcus. While enjoying her research experience, Heather ultimately felt drawn to a profession with more human interaction and set her sights on PA school.

Since graduation, Heather has worked at The Children's Hospital Colorado in the Department of Pediatric Infectious Diseases. She has always had a passion for microbiology so this field, coupled with her love for working with children, is a perfect fit. The patients she sees most commonly have fevers of unknown origin, osteomyelitis, brain abscesses, fever in the return traveler, post exposure prophylaxis, and a variety of other infectious etiologies. She also precepts CHA/PA students and finds that teaching keeps her current as well as strengthens her skills. "I try to teach the students to enjoy the journey, to have fun, and to make the most out of any learning experience they are in because ultimately, the experience is what you choose to make it."

The field of infectious disease also presents its challenges. Heather works with victims of sexual assault soon after the exposure. While difficult, she feels this gives her the opportunity to "offer kindness, compassion, and some hope in extremely horrible circumstances." Additionally, she sees children who are terminally ill or in a later stage of their disease. Her goal with these young patients is to provide some joy and laughter while sharing a painful journey. Heather finds that children are so resilient and uninhibited, and despite the demands, she feels honored to serve this population. Ultimately, Heather can sum up her love of

schools to educate about PAs, and serving at race events. During our meetings, we were able to hear from the President of CAPA (Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants) as well as a panel of 3rd year students offering advice for the clinical year. This Spring, Silver Society members attended the CAPA conference in Copper Mountain, CO and held a silent auction. Proceeds went to Camp Wapiyapi, a camp for children with cancer and their families. Also at the conference, Candace Bassett won the CAPA scholarship for PA students! Monthly meetings hosted a Neurosurgery PA from UCH and a panel of current practicing PAs. This year, Silver Society was given the Excellence Award for Community Service for a Student Organization from the Anschutz Senate. Most recently, Silver Society's AOR representative, Chris Whitcomb, attended the AAPA conference where he was elected Western Regional Director of SAAAPA. The organization cannot wait to welcome its new members in the coming weeks!

Lashlee Warner
Class of 2018

working with patients and their families through her favorite Emerson quote: “To laugh often and much; To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.”



CHA/PA Faculty Involvement in PAEA

The Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) is the only national organization representing PA educational programs in the US. All 200+ accredited PA programs and their faculty and staff are members. The CHAPA Program is highly respected nationally as a leader among PA programs. At present, our faculty serve their colleagues around the country in various roles within PAEA:

- Jackie Sivahop has served for several years on the Committee on Clinical Education (CCE) and has developed a national reputation as a seasoned and knowledgeable clinical educator. The CCE provides resources and other support for



Cathy Ruff accepts Associate Director Position at Rocky Vista University

Cathy Ruff has served CHA/PA as an Associate Director since 2009. She joined the faculty in 2001 and has been involved in all aspects of the program, including curriculum development, student affairs, and student assessment. She has held educational committee positions at the state and national levels. Cathy's areas of academic interest include curriculum design and student assessment. We wish her all the best in her new position!



Donor Memorial Ceremony

Every year the medical programs here at the University of Colorado–

clinical educators in PA programs around the country.

– Joyce Nieman has served on the Ethics Council for the past several years. She was one of the authors of the PAEA Code of Ethics and works with this committee to review potential ethics violations and educate programs about the Code of Ethics.

– David Eckhardt was selected this year to serve on the Assessment Council, charged with overseeing the development and implementation of student testing services (e.g. PACKRAT).

– Jonathan Bowser serves as a Director-at-Large on the Board of Directors of PAEA. The Board consists of twelve elected individuals who are charged with overseeing all activities of the Association, including administration of the financial affairs and all other business of the Association.

– Our faculty are also involved in teaching national workshops (Pando Workshops) for PAEA. These are attended by faculty from programs around the country. Jackie Sivahop and Joyce Nieman have led several workshops for clinical educators. Rebecca Maldonado has taught a workshop on remediation.



Anschutz join together to host a memorial service in honor of those who donated their bodies to the anatomy department. Speakers from all programs were given opportunities to address the crowd of family members, friends, and classmates. As the representative of the CHAPA class of 2018, I was honored to speak and share my experiences.

Anatomy is a pivotal moment in the life of the first year PA student. From reeking of formaldehyde to spending countless hours drawing and redrawing innervations, anatomy permeates the months of June, July, and August. It is a hauntingly beautiful juxtaposition: the infamous Colorado sunshine blasts the windows of the 5th floor anatomy lab, breathing life into the stainless steel humidors. I constantly found myself pausing to appreciate this unique and humbling experience.

As I walked up to the podium to speak at the memorial ceremony, I wanted nothing more than to convey my gratitude: for the lives of those who so generously donated their bodies, to the families and friends for honoring wishes they might not have chosen for themselves, and to the program who entrusted us with this delicate knowledge. The experience was extremely touching and beautiful and I rediscovered one of life's simple truths: it is in the remembrance of life and death that we find ourselves inextricably bound to one another.

Cristianna Ruple, Class of 2018

AAPA Conference

Myself along with nine other third year students were fortunate enough to be able to attend the 2016 AAPA Conference in the vibrant and historical city of San Antonio, Texas. The conference kicked off with a bang as we listened to Kevin Lacz, PA-C, former Navy SEAL, and movie consultant for American Sniper, give a motivational talk encouraging PAs to be the leaders in healthcare. The excitement for us did not end there, as we were able to attend a wide array of sessions that solidified our passions and eagerness to join the PA profession. Throughout our stay we were able to connect and network with numerous PAs who gave us wisdom and advice to help us navigate our new roles as practicing PAs. During our free time we were able to enjoy the beautiful city and experience San Antonio staples such as the River Walk, The Pearl District and of course The Alamo. This trip was a wonderful way to celebrate the end of PA school as well as solidify our love and excitement for the PA profession that we will soon be joining. We are very grateful for this wonderful opportunity and are thankful for the support of CHA/PA Faculty and the Office of Inclusion and Outreach that made this trip possible.

Megan Smith, Class of 2016



CHA/PA in the News



Learning about Hospice Care

During my 3rd year I spent 2 weeks at Collier Hospice Center where I learned a lot about pain management and how the hospice system works. I was already a hospice supporter, but now know first hand how wonderful hospice can be as a way for patients and their families to face death with comfort and love surrounding them. I feel it is so important that people have the option to spend their last days pain free and surrounded by their families and friends, either at home or in a hospice facility with loving and understanding medical staff. I found this to be a very valuable rotation for me as I plan to go into primary care, as I now understand how important it is to encourage patients to think about putting together their will and think about how they would like their final days to be spent, especially while they are still of sound mind.

Becca Brunson, Class of 2016

The Silver Society won the Excellence Award for Outstanding Community Service by a Student Organization for the 2015–2016 year.

Faculty member Kevin Bogart presented a poster, “Curriculum design to enhance PA student competence in behavioral change interviewing,” at the Annual Education Scholarship and Innovation Symposium.

Faculty member Jackie Sivahop has been accepted as a member of the Academy of Medical Educators at the Anschutz Medical Campus.

Faculty members Joyce Nieman and David Eckhardt had a poster accepted for presentation at the 2016 American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) Integrating Quality Meeting, held in June in Chicago.

Faculty member David Eckhardt presented a poster at the International Pediatric Simulation Society (IPSS) Meeting in Glasgow, Scotland in May.

Tom French, our course director for the 2nd year Pharmacology courses, received the President’s Excellence in Teaching award.



Comings and Goings

On May 26th, the 45th CHA/PA class celebrated their Convocation Ceremony. School of Medicine Dean Dr. John Reilly, Pediatric Chair Dr. Stephen Daniels, and Program Director Jonathan Bowser addressed the students during the ceremony. Dr. J. Kern Buckner was the invited speaker. Many family and friends joined the graduates to celebrate this momentous occasion.

The Class of 2019 arrived on campus June 2nd for two days of orientation. They had the opportunity to learn about all of the services available on campus as well as hear from faculty and staff. We are excited to have them join us!



A Life Spent Advocating for

the Underserved

Virgilio Licona, M.D., a CHA/PA graduate in the Class of 1978, passed away on March 29, 2016 after a lengthy battle with cancer. Colorado Governor John W. Hickenlooper announced that March 29th would be designated as Virgilio Licona Day in the state of Colorado. Dr. Virgilio worked tirelessly as a medical director in the Salud Family Health Center System for nearly twenty years. He was passionate about the underserved and served as a national speaker focusing on community health.



Fall Alumni Event

Our Fall Alumni Event will be on October 7th at the Wynkoop. More details to come!



New CHA/PA Recruitment Video

Have you seen our new video showcasing our program, faculty, and students? Check it out on [YouTube](#). It is also linked on the main page of our website. It is a wonderful recruitment tool for admissions where applicants have the opportunity to learn



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to offer.

Contact Information:

CHA/PA Program
Mail Stop F543
13001 E. 17th Place, Room E7019
Aurora, Colorado 80045

Phone: (303) 724-7963; Fax: (303) 724-1350

Email: PA-info@ucdenver.edu

Web: medschool.ucdenver.edu/paprogram

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday

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the office at PA-Info@ucdenver.edu so that we can keep in
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