

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 rotations abroad, new faculty, and much more!



### Military Service Leads to PA School

“My deployment to Afghanistan would become the best and worst experience of my life.” Jason Leehan had vast experience treating everything from minor issues as a cold to traumatic



### My Experience in Guatemala

Days at the clinic in Guatemala always began with the traditional breakfast of black beans, scrambled eggs, tortillas and plátanos. The clinic was just a

amputations while serving in the Army. As a combat and flight medic, he spent time both in the U.S. and two tours in Afghanistan caring for the needs of his platoon, foreign soldiers, and local citizens. He was commonly independently treating people in remote locations while trying to keep up with medical education. Along the way, he encountered PAs both in his military service and while working in an ER that guided his interest in the PA profession. Jason's drive to be part of something bigger and caring for the sick and injured compelled him to apply to PA school and join the CHA/PA class of 2018. Thus far, he has most enjoyed filling in his medical knowledge as a student and better understanding the application of medicine. CHA/PA students have clinical experiences in all three years of the program. Jason has found blending his didactic education with clinical experiences has enabled him to directly apply his education in the clinical setting each year of the program. Additionally, students have access to the CAPE (Center for Progressing Professional Excellence), where they interact with standardized patients and high fidelity mannequins in simulation rooms. The CAPE has increased his confidence in clinical settings.

short walk from the casita with common sightings of litters of piglets, a chicken crossing the road and children peeping through fences. Patients were usually already lined up waiting to be seen, marking the start of another busy day. Many of the diseases I encountered tied directly to living in impoverished conditions: parasitic infections, malnutrition and stunted growth. Other issues stemmed from limited healthcare access; cavities where half the tooth had eroded; a boy born with lacrimal fistulae, one scarred over, the other still leaking tears and mucus from the tiny hole. Some cases had a triumphant resolution; a señora with a pyogenic granuloma on her hand, shaved with a scalpel and cauterized with silver nitrate. We were treated at her second visit with homemade queso fresco. My rotation in Guatemala was filled with similar interesting, and at times sobering, cases, which reinforced that trust is essential to successful patient encounters in every culture. I am truly grateful for the opportunity I had to learn from the patients, visiting CU providers and Guatemalan nurses and physicians.

Claire Ramirez  
Class of 2018

Despite the challenge of balancing his education with his personal life, he finds time to golf, ski, hike, and take advantage of all Colorado has to offer. His wife is also a wonderful support to him as he pursues his dream to enter the workforce as a PA in 2018.



### A Global Health Track Student's Rotation in Tanzania

Through the Global Health Track, I rotated at St. Francis Referral Hospital in Ifakara, Tanzania at the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department. The vast majority of the patients spoke Swahili, so I focused more on improving my physical examination skills in the Labor Ward. I knew I had chosen the right department when two of the intern docs told me that by the end of the rotation, I should know how to deliver a baby. They kept their promise. By the end of the



### 2016 Fall Reception CHA/PA Fall Reception

Our fall reception for students, alumni, and preceptors will take place on October 7th from 5:30–9:30pm at the Wynkoop Brewing Company. Please be sure [to register](#) by October 6th.



### Welcoming New Faculty Members

Tanya Fernandez, MS, PA-C, IBCLC (left) graduated from the CHA/PA Program in 2005 and is excited to return to her alma mater as faculty. Tanya practiced in underserved primary care in community health centers, as well as in private practice. She has also been a regular preceptor for CHA/PA students and thoroughly enjoyed teaching students in real-life situations. She has garnered great clinical experiences in

first week, not only did they have me perform cervical checks, they had me assist a delivery!

We spent our days admitting new patients, monitoring patients in labor, delivering babies and/or attending emergency C-sections. My experience in labor & delivery was quite intense, as I had little prior exposure to the care of pregnant women. We saw a lot of women with pregnancy complications such as pre-eclampsia, pregnancy induced hypertension, HIV, malaria and anemia. Little to no machinery was used, so the doctors depended more on the history and physical exam to manage patients. Women who came to the hospital expected to deliver without anesthesia!

I highly recommend this rotation to any future Global Health students, as there is a lot of flexibility, and the staff is full of enthusiastic teachers. Tanzanians are also very hospitable people who do their best to make you feel welcome and comfortable. I look forward to returning in the 3rd year.

Aedine Prummer  
Class of 2018



*Accreditation Review Commission on Education  
for the Physician Assistant, Inc.*

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working with high-risk, resource-poor, migrant and immigrant patients and she is excited to share her experiences to help mentor future CHA/PA students.

Amy Akerman, MPAS, PA-C (right) graduated from Eastern Virginia Medical School's PA program in 2002. Amy has practiced family medicine in Kodiak, Alaska and was one of the first American PAs to work for the NHS in the UK. She also has experience in emergency medicine, otolaryngology and urgent care. Amy is married to Lee who works in Project Management and has two toddlers, Zoë and Harry, who will turn 2 in October. Her research and scholarship interests are didactic physician assistant education and international clinical education.



### Staff Member Joins Task Force

Janice Baker, Clinical Coordinator, is one of two individuals selected by the PAEA Board of Directors to represent the Physician Assistant

## Granted Continuing Accreditation Through 2026

The CHA/PA program was granted continuing accreditation by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) until 2026. The ARC-PA is the national entity responsible for accrediting all PA programs in the U.S. This accreditation was the culmination of a three-year self-study and site visit process. The CHA/PA faculty and staff dedicated considerable time and energy, working as a team to ensure continuing accreditation of the program.



### CHA/PA Student's Role in the Student Academy

I was fortunate to be nominated as the new Western Regional Director of the Student Academy. The Student Academy Board of Directors works in conjunction with the American Academy of PAs. This board is made up of 12 volunteer positions that are voted on yearly at conference. Once each

Education Association (PAEA) on a Clinical Rotations Joint Task Force with AAPA. The group was assembled following passage of an AAPA House of Delegates resolution which recommended a joint task force with PAEA to undertake research, identify policy solutions, and develop practical approaches to increase the availability and accessibility of clinical rotations for PA students.



### Medical Spanish & Immersion in Costa Rica & Nicaragua

This summer, I had the pleasure of spending four weeks learning medical Spanish in Costa Rica and Nicaragua through Common Ground International. All of our second year CU-Unite members were very excited to go on this trip—including myself, Tim Im, Valencia Peterson, and Hannah Levorsen. It's important for all of us to learn how to better communicate and develop relationships with our future Spanish-speaking patients. During

position is accepted, we are tasked with setting direction for the Student Academy for the following year. As Western Regional Director, my goal is to improve the communication between what is happening nationally in the AAPA and direct that down to the 24 programs that I oversee in the West.

Another key component to being on the Board is leading a resolution to completion. This year I get the opportunity to lead a team of 10 student volunteers who desire to improve the awareness of the PA profession in high schools nationally. While we are merely in the initial phase of rolling out a toolkit for guidance counselors and practicing PAs to use, I am very excited to harness the enthusiasm of my volunteer group to increase the awareness of our profession nationally.

Chris Whitcomb  
Class of 2018



### CHA/PA in the News

Faculty member Kevin Bogart completed the Academy of Medical

our trip, we lived with local families to help immerse us fully in the culture and customs.

Afternoons consisted of four hours of Spanish class and our mornings were filled with a variety of other activities that opened our eyes to the Costa Rican healthcare system and struggles of poverty. We visited clinics, a hospital, and spent a morning with local healthcare workers who conduct home visits. Our final week in Costa Rica, we visited at a men's rehabilitation center for addiction where we presented a talk about STDs (in Spanish of course!). While in Nicaragua, we assisted a local organization in conducting a needs assessment survey in an impoverished community. While Spanish immersion was challenging at times, my comprehension and speaking skills have certainly improved; I was even able to complete a sports physical exam in Spanish after I returned. Costa Rica and Nicaragua are beautiful countries with friendly people that made our learning experiences fantastic!

Karen Elmquist  
Class of 2018

## Educators Teaching Scholars Program.

Faculty member Claudia Luna-Asturias is a co-author on a paper accepted for publication in *Advances in Pediatrics*, which describes the Center for Human Development in Guatemala and the process and philosophy behind the creation and sustainable development of the center.

Medical Director Dr. Tai Lockspeiser was first author on a paper in the June volume of *Academic Medicine*, "In Pursuit of Meaningful Use of Learning Goals in Residency: A Qualitative Study of Pediatric Residents."

Faculty member Joyce Nieman was invited by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to be on the planning committee for the Third National Primary Care Ambulatory Patient Safety Conference on Research and Education.

Faculty member Jacqueline Sivahop was inducted into the Academy of Medical Educators.

Faculty member Kevin Bogart presented a poster "Curriculum design to enhance PA student competence in behavioral change interviewing" at the Western Consortium.



## WAPA Scholarship Recipient

Every year the Wyoming Association of Physician Assistants (WAPA) awards two scholarships to students from Wyoming who are currently attending a PA program. The scholarship was presented at the annual WAPA conference in Sheridan, where I spent a few days learning a bunch and meeting the great PAs of Wyoming. The conference featured a variety of presentations on improving practice in rural medicine and some awesome simulations on sepsis and practice placing central lines and chest tubes.

It was also nice to see a familiar face as I ran into faculty member Joyce Nieman, who was also there giving a presentation on patient safety. So all you Wyoming PAs out there, remember to apply this next spring for the one of these scholarships!

Joseph Davidson  
Class of 2018



Graduates – don't forget that you can find [job listings](#) on our website. New opportunities are listed weekly.



### Interested in precepting CHA/PA students?

Have you considered precepting CHA/PA students? Find out about the advantages of training up our next generation of PA students and find contact information on the [Preceptor section of our website](#).

#### Contact Information:

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Aurora, Colorado 80045

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

Email: [PA-info@ucdenver.edu](mailto:PA-info@ucdenver.edu)

Web: [medschool.ucdenver.edu/paprogram](http://medschool.ucdenver.edu/paprogram)

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



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