The Class of 2017 James K. Tolton Student Society has been very active, engaging in activities that promote service, advocacy, and leadership among their classmates. During the summer session, GW PA students partnered with students from the GW Physical Therapy program to help run fitness checks for Special Olympic Athletes of Northern Virginia. The event was a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with students from another discipline and to learn about the needs of, and provide care to, persons with intellectual disabilities.

PA Week 2015 events included a campus blood drive and a very successful bake sale that raised funds benefiting Miriam’s Kitchen and the DC homeless population. Students served as volunteers for the Out of the Darkness walk for suicide prevention to cap off PA Week.

Holiday activities included a canned goods drive at Thanksgiving and purchase of Christmas gifts for a family of five through the Adopt-A-Family program. This spring, plans are in the works for a clothing drive, Valentine’s Day Bake Sale fundraiser, and volunteer activities at a local senior center and VA hospital. The class is also preparing a team for the 2016 AAPA Challenge Bowl.

The GW PA students continue to be valued providers at the Healing Clinic, a volunteer clinic operated by GW’s medical, physician assistant, and public health students that improves access to healthcare for vulnerable residents of the Washington, DC area. Sandra Fulkerson-Schaeffer, a 2nd year MSHS/MPH student, and Chelsea Samo-Lipman, a 1st year MSHS student, were recognized for their volunteer efforts during a Healing Clinic Event this fall.

Our students have worked to promote the PA Profession in the area by speaking at local high schools to students interested in science and the medical field. The Tolton Society also has officers appointed liaisons who serve to represent the GW PA program with the Virginia, Maryland, and DC Physician Assistant Associations. Several students have participated in local PA association events, allowing them to network and learn from PAs practicing in the area. The GW PA students strive to demonstrate excellence in scholarship, service, and leadership and to represent the GW PA Program well. We think our alumni would be proud!
Spotlight on Class of 2017
Students Who Served

The GW PA Program has the honor of educating a number of student veterans, whose experiences enrich both the program and the PA profession at large. We thank our students for their service and for choosing to continue their educations at GW.

Teren Culbertson
I graduated in December 2006 from the University of Missouri and received my commission in the US Navy through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps program. In January 2007, I reported as Communication Officer of USS GRIDLEY (DDG 101), a guided missile destroyer in San Diego, CA. During my time there, we completed new ship sea trials and deployment to the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean, including counter-piracy and smuggling operations off the coast of Somalia. In August 2009, I transferred to the USS CHUNG-HOON (DDG 93), another guided missile destroyer in Pearl Harbor, HI, as the Training and Operations Officer. I was responsible for organizing the ship's training plan and running daily operations. We completed a deployment to the Western Pacific, participating in multinational training exercises and counter-terrorism operations. In February 2011, I reported to US Strategic Command’s Missile Warning Center in Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station for shore duty. I served as Crew Commander and Chief of Standards and Evaluations, where we provided 24/7 missile warning information to national decision makers at the Pentagon and theater commanders in the field.

In 2013, I transferred to the Naval Reserves. I am currently assigned to the Military Sealift Command Headquarters in D.C.

Victor Lopez
I joined the Army in 2007 as a Healthcare Specialist with the intention of gaining the experience that I would need to apply to PA school. After completing my training, I was stationed in Hawaii with the 25th Infantry, with whom I served through two tours in Iraq. As both a clinical and field medic, I was fortunate enough to work under some of the most talented PAs I have ever met. They have set a bar I hope to someday live up to as I grow my knowledge and skills as a PA.

Shannon Watts
I have been serving as a medic in the Army National Guard since 2008. Shortly after boot camp and medic training, I deployed to Afghanistan for a year. While in Kabul, we provided medical services to Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force personnel, as well as other coalition forces. We were also responsible for training both American and coalition forces in battlefield first aid. In addition, I participated in some humanitarian missions while stationed in Afghanistan. I continue to serve in the National Guard, which involves a commitment of about one weekend per month and two weeks in the summer. I love being in the National Guard because I am able to maintain a civilian life while still responding to both state and national emergencies and missions. The opportunities within the National Guard are unique. This past spring, I traveled to Estonia with a small team to teach casualty care and first aid. I have met some amazing people from all over the world throughout my career, and I am looking forward to commissioning as a PA in the Army National Guard after I graduate.

We would also like to recognize and thank the Class of 2016 student veterans, who were featured in our 2014 Alumni Newsletter.

Daniel Brown
Jared Castro
Evan Davies
Amanda Duffin
Samuel Grafton
Anthony Manney
James O'Hara
Matthew Zimmermann
Donning their pressed short white coats, the GW PA Class of 2017 converged on the Capitol Hill offices of congressional legislators on Thursday, November 11, 2015. Our students joined hundreds of PA faculty (including GW faculty) from across the country who were in town for the Physician Assistant Education Association 2015 Education Forum. Students and faculty divided into small delegations and visited legislators from their home states to advocate for the Physician Assistant Education Modernization Act.

The Modernization Act is actually two bills recently introduced to the House of Representatives by Congresswoman Karen Bass, a physician assistant and former PA educator. The bills are designed to enhance and improve physician assistant education for students, faculty, and PA programs. Areas addressed by the bills include:

- Increasing Stafford Loan limits for PA students to the levels of other health professional students, like those of medicine and dentistry;
- Enhancing loan repayment opportunities for PA faculty;
- Creating grants for expansion and support of rural PA programs;
- Supporting funding for technology, infrastructure and patient simulators for PA programs;
- Grant funding to increase the research capacity of PA faculty; and
- Extending appropriations to support disadvantaged students and faculty development.

For most students, this was their first time visiting with congressional legislators and/or their staff. The students were able to see firsthand the role that they can play in shaping the future of the profession. During their visits, the students discussed their personal experiences as PA students with the legislators. Expanding the borrowing limits of the low interest unsubsidized Stafford Loan was a popular subject for the students to discuss since GW is one of the more expensive PA programs to attend. The Hill Day visit also gave many of the students an opportunity to interact with PA faculty members from their home states. Back at the Educational Forum meeting, Stephane Vandermeulen, MPAS, PA-C, then PAEA President, publicly acknowledged GW PA students for their role in making PAEA’s first Hill Day a success. GW faculty were stopped throughout the conference and were told what great students we have. Our students are true ambassadors for the future of our profession.

How to Stay Involved with the GW PA Program

We want you to stay connected! This year, a record number of alumni volunteered with the program to share their clinical experiences with students, interview prospective students, connect with recent graduates in their areas, and celebrate the PA profession. Help us strengthen our GW PA community! If you are interested in getting involved as an alumni volunteer or mentor, please complete the form located at go.gwu.edu/PAOutreach or contact Sarah Klein, our alumni relations representative, at smklein@gwu.edu with any questions.

In May 2015, our GW PA community gathered for our Annual Alumni/Student Reception at AAPA in San Francisco! More than 90 alumni, students, faculty, and friends attended to reconnect and celebrate. Pictures from the reception are below.
On Friday, June 26, 2015, the GW PA Class of 2017 was welcomed into the health professional community during the Physician Assistant Convocation and White Coat Ceremony. 63 first year PA students, 67 second-year PA students, faculty, friends, and family were in attendance. Robert “Bob” McNellis, MPH, PA, a GW PA program alumnus (Class of ‘90) and Senior Advisor for Primary Care with the Agency for Healthcare Research Quality, was the keynote speaker. Bob encouraged the students to embrace the PA educational experience and all it has to offer by sharing inspirational stories from his rewarding career path. 

Class of 2016 students Emily Arcand and Erica Millett offered student reflections on the importance of leadership, service to the PA community, and maintaining a balanced life while meeting the demands of PA school. Dr. Susan LeLacheur, DrPH, PA-C shared the significance of the white coat and then the 2nd year PA students helped the Class of 2017 students don their short white coats. The ceremony concluded with the reciting of the Physician Assistant Student Pledge by students and faculty and was followed by a reception. It was a special day of welcome and celebration.
On May 15, 2015, the Program kicked off Commencement Weekend with the annual White Coat Ceremony to celebrate the accomplishments of the PA Class of 2015. Graduating PA student, Elizabeth Prevou, was selected by her class to share reflections about memorable class times. Elizabeth Hankinson, Alexander Nelson, and Kristin Ridenour received Academic Excellence Awards in recognition of their scholastic achievements and service to fellow classmates and the GW PA Program. The recipients were also inducted into the Alpha Eta Honor Society along with Clarence Chan, Zac Johnson, Tom Lorenz, Jared Ng, Shannon Opel, Nick Sever, Brittani Sizelove, Kathryn Smith, Dana Underwood, and Megan Veale. The Class selected GW faculty member, Bryan Walker, MSHS, PA-C, as the keynote speaker. Bryan, who previously received the 2014 PA Golden Apple Award, spoke on the importance of professionalism, practicing evidence-based medicine, advocating for patients, and participating in community service. The Program and students recognized Bryan with a Certificate of Appreciation for his dedication and service to the Program as he prepared to start his new position at Duke University Medical Center. Each student then donned a long white coat that had been funded by alumni of the Program. The White Coat Ceremony was followed by the Health Sciences celebration on May 16 and University Commencement on May 17, 2015. The Program faculty and staff congratulate the Class of 2015 and wish them well in their future PA careers.

**Your Chance to Support the GW PA Program**

Some ways that our alumni can support the GW PA Program as we work to educate the next generation of PAs are by volunteering to be interviewers during our admissions cycle, acting as clinical preceptors, or by contributing to the financial ways that we try to offset some of the burden that PA school in the District puts on our students. Donations to the program help to increase our contributions to student scholarships and the PA White Coat Initiative. A gift to the PA White Coat Initiative offsets the cost of the white coats for the graduating students and links them to GW PA students who came before them. It is a symbol of initiation into both the PA Profession and the GW PA Alumni Community.

Should either of these initiatives interest you, please visit [http://smhs.gwu.edu/physician-assistant/support](http://smhs.gwu.edu/physician-assistant/support) or call the SMHS Development and Alumni Relations Office at (202) 994-7511 for more information. All checks should be made out to “The George Washington University” with either “PA Program” or “PA White Coat Initiative” specified in the memo line.

We thank you for your support!
Second Annual PA Week Reception

In celebration of PA Week, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences Office of Development and Alumni Relations sponsored our second annual reception to welcome graduates and friends of the GW PA Program. This year, the event was hosted in the Milken Institute School of Public Health on the evening of October 5th and was well-attended by graduates of the program, current and former preceptors, current PA students, GW Faculty and staff. The Program took advantage of this assembly of GW PAs to recognize those who have gone above and beyond their calling to the profession. Pictures from the reception appear at the right.

GW PA Program Distinguished Public Service Award

GW PA Program graduate Michael C. Doll, MPAS, PA-C (Class of ’88) received the Distinguished Public Service Award for his considerable efforts at educating future PAs. As a preceptor, Mr. Doll has used his experience in cardiothoracic surgery, as well as his training in the Yale Surgical Residency program and a CAQ in Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery, to guide students with an interest in this field. As a mentor and educator of PA students as well as PAs, it was with great pleasure that the GW PA Program honored Mike with this award.

Dr. Jules Cahan Distinguished Teaching Award

Another graduate of the program, Michael Jacobson, MSHS, PA-C (Class of ’05) was recognized for his efforts at educating GW PA students with the Dr. Jules Cahan Distinguished Teaching Award. Mr. Jacobson has been precepting since shortly after graduating from the program and has provided countless hours of guidance and mentorship to many PA students. He and his family are leaving the DC area to pursue new job opportunities in Colorado. He and his precepting efforts will be dearly missed by the GW community. Best of luck to you, Mike!

Terrence E. Barr Memorial Scholarship

The final award delivered at the event was the Terrence E. Barr Memorial Scholarship, an annual gift established by John Colletta, PhD to be given to an outstanding GW PA student. This year’s scholarship was awarded to Emily Arcand, a second-year MSHS student and past president of the Tolton Student Society. Emily is a well-regarded member of the Class of 2016 who has made great efforts to enhance the learning experience of the GW PA Program. She is a deserving recipient of this award and will soon make the Program proud as she transitions to becoming a new member of the PA profession.

Alumni Volunteer for Multiple Mini Interviews

Each year, the GW PA Program is charged with the responsibility of selecting, evaluating and admitting the most qualified candidates to our PA Program. We seek candidates whom we believe have the potential for furthering the mission of our Program and the PA profession. To accomplish this task, we rely on faculty, students and alumni to conduct an essential component of the evaluation process, Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs), for up to 240 candidates. Over the course of four interview sessions held throughout the months of September, October and December 2015, the 29 alumni listed below dedicated their time on Saturdays to assist us with interviews. We thank them again for their commitment and service to the program!

- Christine Boyer ‘14
- Samantha Bussanich ‘15
- Leanne Carter ‘13
- Wendy Cohen ’08
- Christi Degersero ’15
- Debra Diaz ’14*
- Mable Dunn ’08
- Lani Ellis ’14
- Katie Farrar ’15
- Elise Ferre ’13*
- Russell Fleischer ’83*
- SeaSea Fuhrman ’15*
- Aziza Hull ’11
- Elizabeth Kianthantra ’89
- Aleko Kimbours ’08
- Bonnie Lekrsisawat ’15
- Timothy Lentz ’78
- Liz Lindahl ’12*
- Katie Saavedra Lindsay ’15
- Jacqueline Lloyd ’15
- Aleko Kimbours ’08
- Bonnie Lekrsisawat ’15
- Timothy Lentz ’78
- Liz Lindahl ’12*
- Katie Saavedra Lindsay ’15
- Jacqueline Lloyd ’15
- Erin McEntee ’13
- Mark McKinnon ’03
- Jared Ng ’15
- Rachael Passafaro ’15
- Elizabeth Prevou ’15
- Stephen Robie ’12
- Jennifer Tran ’15
- Irene Vangsness ’82
- Marie White ’09

* Loved the experience so much, they volunteered twice!
Alumnus Honored with Tribute at the Washington Hospital Center

During a site visit to the Washington Hospital Center, a warm reminder of one of our early graduates greeted Lisa Alexander as she prepared to meet with students completing their Inpatient Medicine rotation at the facility.

At the entrance to the hospital, a prominent tree and plaque honors one of GW's early PA alumni, Father Jack Wintermyer. Jack was a Roman Catholic priest who was accepted into the 3rd class of PA students, making him a proud member of the Class of 1977. He was a trailblazer in many ways, going on to serve as a PA at Christ House, a local infirmary for HIV positive men during the early days of the AIDS epidemic in Washington, DC, following his completion of the program. He then went on to serve as a chaplain at the Washington Hospital Center for 25 years. From 1987 until his retirement, he also served as a PA with Unity Health Care (formerly the Healthcare for the Homeless Project). In that ministry, he provided health care to the District's homeless at outreach clinic sites throughout the city. In 1998, he was honored with the Washington Hospital Center's Community Service Award for his work with the homeless. In 2001, the National Health Care for the Homeless Association presented its Clinician of the Year award to Father Wintermyer. Father Jack Wintermyer currently resides in a retirement community in the Washington metropolitan area.

Top photo: The plaque dedicating the tree to Father Jack. It reads: "This tree is to honor Father Jack Wintermyer as he retires from 25 years as a Roman Catholic Chaplain at the Washington Hospital Center. We are deeply grateful for his wonderful humor, creativity and dedicated service to the patients at WHC."
Bottom photo: Class of '16 Students, Stacy Vigue-Adair and Katie Murphy, pose front of Jack's tree

Program Faculty Updates

Hello... The PA Program has been excited to welcome three new faculty members: Nicole Mortier, PA-C, Tamara Ritsema, MPH, PA-C, and Jennifer Wall, PA-C. Each brings a host of professional expertise, adding to the strength of our program.

Nicole Mortier joins us after most recently serving as a National Hematology Consultant performing multi-center trials for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Her practice areas include pediatrics, oncology and hematology. Nicole is a PhD candidate in Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology at the University of Illinois-Chicago School of Public Health.

Tamara Ritsema is a welcomed returning colleague, joining us most recently from the University of Nebraska. She is an Assistant Professor and Research Director. With a background in neurology and emergency medicine, Tamara also brings the unique experience of helping to develop the United Kingdom Physician Associate programming, serving as an Adjunct Senior Lecturer since 2005.

Jennifer Wall joins us after serving 15 years in the areas of burn surgery, reconstruction and critical care. She will undertake the task of directing a newly offered course, Clinical Specialties, consisting of sessions focused on Surgery, Pediatric and Emergency Department. She offers global health experience as the Founder of a non-profit organization, Africa Burn Relief Program, training counterpart professionals in rural Malawi, Africa.

...and Goodbye. While the faculty and students of the GW PA Program have enjoyed the addition of our new faculty members, we have also been sad to say farewell to two faculty members who were lured south to embark on new opportunities.

Jacqueline Barnett is a GW PA graduate of the Class of ‘94 who went on to practice in primary care and infectious disease. She returned to the program to join the GW faculty in 2001. In her time as a GW faculty member, Jacqui served in a variety of roles for both the academic and clinical aspects of the curriculum, including serving as director of the clinical curriculum for many years. She has been active in the leadership of both local and national PA organizations. Students have appreciated her support, particularly in her role as faculty advisor for our nationally recognized Tolton Society. She received the prestigious Bender Teaching Award in 2014. She left GW to join the Duke PA Faculty in the role of Associate Director.

Bryan Walker completed his PA education at Quinnipiac University in 1998 and went on to become an expert in neurology. He joined the GW faculty in 2012, where he quickly became a favorite of our students for his engaging teaching style. He is a sought after speaker on the national level, presenting on multiple sclerosis, headache, and other topics in neurology and diagnostic imaging. He also serves as editor of the diagnostic imaging section for the Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants. Despite national recognition for his expertise, the “Golden Apple Award”

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The PA Program Faculty and Staff wish all a healthy and prosperous 2016!

New Clinical Affiliations
It would be impossible to provide our students with strong clinical experiences without the help and support of our preceptors.

We would like to welcome our new clinical preceptors:

Inpatient Medicine
- Medstar Franklin Square Medical Center in Baltimore, MD, Jim Kielek, PA-C
- Physicians Inpatient Care Specialists at Anne Arundel Medical Center in Bowie, MD, Dr. Tim Capstack and PA staff

Primary Care
- Belington Medical Clinic in Belington, WV, Tom Harward, PA-C (Class of ‘76)
- Gennesaret Medical Center, LLC in Laurel and Baltimore, MD, Dr. Toyin Opesanmi
- GW MFA Community Preceptors serving the Washington metropolitan area, Dr. Connie Le, Dr. Paul Rhodes, and Dr. Mahmoud Mustafa
- Internists of Central Pennsylvania in Lemoyne, PA, Dr. Peter Brier
- Shoreline Medical Associates in Madison, CT, Aimee Criscuolo, PA-C

Pediatrics
- The Village Pediatrics and Wellness Center in Rockville, MD, Dr. Monica Pourrat

Emergency Medicine
- Sentara Northern Virginia/Sentara Lake Ridge in Lake Ridge, VA, Venise Atoigue, PA-C (Class of ’12)

Behavioral Medicine
- Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, MD, Dr. Harry Gill, Dr. Suren Kandel and Clare Rohleder, PA-C

Elective
- Inova Children’s Hospital—Cardiothoracic Surgery, Mechelle Fleisher, PA-C
- Inova Fairfax Hospital—Cardiovascular Surgery, Matthew Van Tine, PA-C
- Johns Hopkins University—Cardiothoracic Surgery, Emily Kluck, PA-C
- Medstar Washington Hospital Center—Neurosurgery, Matthew Jacobs, PA-C (Class of ‘06)
- Medstar Washington Hospital Center—The Burn Center, Dr. Laura Johnson
- Washington VA Medical Center—Cardiology, Jason Morrissette, PA-C (Class of ’06)

We are looking forward to starting to work with the following new sites and preceptors this year:
- Atlantic General Medical Center in Berlin, MD—Inpatient Medicine
- Capital Women’s Care in Clinton, MD, Dr. Deborah Bushrod—Women’s Health
- Clinica Familiar De Arlington in Arlington, VA, Dr. John Molaiy—Primary Care
- Family Practice and Allergy Relief Center in Shaker Heights, OH—Dr. Elizabeth Ranasinghe—Primary Care
- Synergy Immediate Care in Vienna, VA, Dr. Stephen Chang and Colleen Kelley, PA-C—Primary Care

Additional thanks and recognition:
- Many thanks to those individuals who have opened their homes to provide housing for PA students at distant rotation sites: Mike Shoemaker, Joan Williams, and Stephanie Zoltewicz.
- Congratulations to Dr. Jessica Cannon on the birth of her son, Rex, in December 2014.
- Congratulations to Dr. Krishna Madiraju on his eldest daughter’s acceptance to VCU School of Medicine in Richmond, VA. Identifying strong clinical preceptors who are interested in teaching and mentoring students continues to be our greatest challenge. There is a strong need for Primary Care preceptors and the Clinical Team is actively pursuing clinicians who would like to work with our students. If you have interest in serving as a clinical preceptor, please contact Susan Dunphy at sdunphy@gwu.edu or 202-994-6733.

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