Dear Alumni,

This newsletter is chock full of information about the current program and educational updates, preclinical and clinical year information, student news, and alumni entries. Most importantly, it’s the last newsletter you will receive before the 50th Anniversary of PA Education at Duke on Saturday, October 3, 2015. “Celebrating 50 Years of PA Education at Duke” is your event, alums!

For the past two years, we have been planning a full day of events at the Durham Convention Center. To say that I am excited would be an understatement! I hope everyone can attend. Look for your invitation in the mail soon. And, see page 4 for more info about the October 3 schedule, speakers, photo and story contest information!

All best,

Pat Dieter, PA Division Chief

Come back to revisit, reconnect, rekindle and celebrate the 50th Anniversary of PA Education at Duke.

Join us for class lunches, continuing medical education, medical campus tours, free time with your friends, and an exciting evening gala to end the day.

Save the Date
October 3, 2015
In 2015, Duke University will celebrate a major milestone: 50 years of providing quality PA education. Serving as program director at this historic time has given me the opportunity to reflect on the select group of six esteemed program directors whose footsteps I now follow. I am indebted to Jolie Braun, our Medical Center Archivist, for her assistance in sharing historical documents that provide information about these pioneers and the impact they have had on our program’s growth and success.

Reviewing this archival material, I was excited to learn about Dr. Bob Howard and how he was selected to lead the Duke PA Program as the first full-time medical/program director. As Dr. Harvey Estes tells it in the oral history captured in 1990 for the program’s 25th anniversary, “Dr. Howard appeared on the doorstep as a family physician interested in teaching and also interested in the physician assistant movement.”

Dr. Howard is credited with initiating efforts to ensure the quality of the profession, including setting standards as well as developing a strong fiscal base for the new Duke program. Dr. Howard served as program director until 1972. When he stepped down, Dr. Estes served as interim program director until 1975, when Dr. Michael Hamilton, a pediatrician working at Lincoln Community Health Center, was recruited to fill the position.

During his 10 years as program director, Dr. Hamilton worked hard to improve clinical training. An imaginative leader, he used the newly created family medicine residency program to establish a clinic that offered...
After graduating from the Duke University Physician Assistant Program in 1989 I had no idea I would still be here in 2015. My significant other, Jeff, came to Duke as an intern 40 years ago. Our administrative assistants together have 61 years of working at Duke. One of the most frequent questions we are asked is “How have you managed to stay in one place your entire careers?” I guess we never really thought about being anywhere else but at Duke. I did have second thoughts when the Electronic Medical Record came to Duke a year ago. Saying this was a difficult transition is putting it very mildly. This totally “rocked my world.” I became unhappy with Duke until I was reminded Duke is not a network of computers but a network of people.

In a matter of a few months both my parents became ill and needed specialized care at Duke. Maybe it was the team of MDs, PAs and RNs who rapidly came to action in the ED when my Dad’s heart rate was 30, or maybe it was the thoracic surgeon who spontaneously gave me a huge hug of reassurance. Maybe it was how quickly staff offered to help me during my time of need or maybe it was the time the pulmonologist, neurologist and geriatrician spent with my parents explaining things so carefully as if they did not have another patient, yet their waiting rooms were full. I am very grateful for my network of people who make Duke great. I hope each of you have your own network surrounding you. Also, I hope each of you know you will always have the Duke PA network of faculty, staff and alumni.

Our current PA students are extending their Duke network to the surrounding communities of Durham County. On October 4, 2014 in recognition of National PA Week the students, faculty, staff and alumni participated in a Day of Service in the Duke community. The students were amazing in organizing service projects for six local organizations. Remember, in addition, they were attending class, studying for tests and on clinical rotations.

Many thanks to all of you for your continued support of the Duke Physician Assistant Program and your excellent care of patients and their families. I hope to see you at the 50th Anniversary in the fall.
Schedule of Events
Saturday, October 3, 2015

8:00 – 9:00 am  Continental breakfast
9:00 am – noon  “Return to PA School” CME featuring:
   J. Victoria (Vicki) Scott, MHS, PA-C – DSM V Update
   Peggy R. Robinson, MS, MHS, PA-C – New NCCPA Certificate Maintenance Process
   Nicholas M. Hudak, MSEd, MPA, PA-C – Neurology Update

Noon – 2:00 pm  Alumni Luncheons
2:30 – 3:45 pm  Tours of Duke PA Program
                (bus transportation available)
6:00 – 7:00 pm  Cocktail reception
7:00 – 9:00 pm  Gala Dinner

Photo Contest
We’re looking for the best 50 photos from the past 50 years!

Send us your favorite photo(s) from your time in the Duke Physician Assistant Program for a chance at one of your photos being featured on a commemorative poster celebrating 50 years of PA education at Duke.

Photos may be submitted via mail or email. In your submission, please include:

- Your name and contact information (phone number and mailing address)
- What year you graduated from the Duke PA Program
- The names of anyone else in the photo
- Where and when the photo was taken

To submit your photo via email, send your photo as a JPEG attachment to pa50thanniversary@duke.edu. Photos must be at least 300 dpi to be eligible for use on the poster.

To submit your photo via mail, send your photo to Jennifer Pennington, Duke Physician Assistant Program, DUMC 104780, Durham, NC 27710. Photos sent via mail will be returned after the contest ends.

The deadline to submit photos is May 15.

Participants may not submit more than five photos.

You may post your photo on the Duke Physician Assistant Facebook page, but that does not constitute an official entry.

By submitting a photo(s), participants understand that the photo(s) may be shared online and in print at the discretion of the Duke Physician Assistant Program.
Story Contest

Do you have a favorite memory from your time in the Duke Physician Assistant Program? Or a favorite memory as a practicing PA? We want to hear those stories.

Send us your story for a chance to have it included in a commemorative anthology of stories from Duke PA graduates.

Stories may be submitted via mail or email. In your submission, please include:

- Your name and contact information (phone number and mailing address)
- What year you graduated from the Duke PA Program

To submit your story via email, send to pa50thanniversary@duke.edu.

To submit your story via mail, send to Jennifer Pennington, Duke Physician Assistant Program, DUMC 104780, Durham, NC 27710.

The deadline to submit your story is June 12.

Stories must be 250 words or less.

You may post your story on the Duke Physician Assistant Facebook page, but that does not constitute an official entry.

By submitting a story, participants understand that the story may be shared online and in print at the discretion of the Duke Physician Assistant Program, and also that the story may be edited for space, clarity, and grammatical or spelling errors.
Ken Ferrell (’67) and his wife Claudia celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last year. They now live in Wake Forest, NC and enjoy their grandchildren and pulling for the Blue Devils.

Craig Bruno (’68) is starting his 47th year as a PA (part time now). He writes that he continues to enjoy family practice and to this day, is proud of the PA profession and what the profession stands for.

Michael Quirk (’70) semi-retired three years ago in the Florida Keys. After graduation from Duke, he went to work at the University of Alabama-Birmingham and subsequently practiced in Minnesota and Arizona. His son became a PA in 1997 and practices in the Phoenix area. Throughout his career as a PA, he was active in the state PA association, including serving as President of the Arizona State PA Association in 1978.

Corbin Peterson (’71) retired from Duke on March 1, 2015 after 38 years. During his time at Duke, he worked as a transplant coordinator (he procured the first heart for transplant at Duke), practiced in urology and, for the last 25 years, dermatology.

Richard Turner (’72) retired from Dayton Occupational Consultants at the end of 2012. He lives in Cincinnati, Ohio with his wife Joyce. His main activities are working with the American Red Cross in Disaster Services and Amateur Radio communications and visiting his sons and grandchildren in Ohio and Albuquerque, NM.

Gary W. Mallow (’74) writes that he went to medical school and completed a residency in internal medicine. Through the years he let his PA certification expire, so he took the initial exam last year and is now officially Gary W. Mallow, PA-C, MD. He felt like he owed it to his fellow grads and himself to continue to honor the PA profession.

Den Kerlee (’75) had a delightful time from 2007 to 2009 working in family medicine at a clinic in Central England. Since then, he has been working three half-days weekly in an outpatient family medicine clinic in a Seattle suburb. Both of his sons are now married, and his oldest son and his wife have a ten month old daughter – their first grandchild and the daughter they never had. He is planning an extended trip to Eastern Europe in late Summer/Fall 2015 or 2016, with England as home-base. Den’s Littman stethoscope warranty expires at the end of 2015 – he is wondering if this means retirement?

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Jo Leslie (’77) retired in June 2014 after 37 years as a PA. She married an Episcopal priest in 2012; his first career was in pathology (Duke SOM ’78). She is working on her second career now – studying for ordination as a deacon in the Episcopal Church.

Steven Meltzer (’77) retired in 2014 but is still writing and teaching. During his career he practiced family medicine for 9 years, was the director of the Eastern Washington AHEC for 20 years, and has served on the faculty at the University of Washington MEDEX PA Program for the past 9 years. Steven is married to Christy (42 years next month) and all four kids are doing well (plus several grandchildren).

Marcia Herman-Giddens (’78) is semi-retired but staying involved with medicine in her role as Scientific Adviser to the Tick-borne Infections Council of North Carolina, Inc. (www.tic-nc.org) and with follow-up papers having to do with her former research on puberty in US children. In addition to scientific writing, she is enjoying personal writing and has published two editions of a book on an easy way to make herbal teas, Sipping My Garden (www.SeedPodPress.com).

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Katherine Batts (’80) has been employed in general surgery in a private office for the past seven years. Prior to that, she worked in Seattle practicing cardiac surgery and cardiology. She started up a horse ranch outside Seattle (www.carousel-ranch.com) which she still runs, and has owned her own surgical assisting business for the past 11 years.

Scott Withers (’81) retired almost three years ago after practicing as a PA for 32 years. The last year has been difficult due to several surgeries, but he writes that he and his wife Marjorie have a lot to be thankful for, including excellent medical care and the importance of inpatient rehab after surgery. Scott plans to resume mountain climbing in Summer 2016! Marjorie plans to retire soon and their son Jeremy is a graphic design artist who lives in Providence, RI with his wife and son. Their daughter Wren lives in Portland, Maine and also has a son.

Jon Gootnick (’82) spent the month of February 2014 in rural Uganda providing health care to their undeserved medical population. He treated malaria, malnutrition, HIV and provided maternity care.

Jay Blacksher (’83) was selected Idaho PA of the Year in 2014. Jay owns and operates an emergency group in Idaho and Utah. He is married with one daughter.

Jane Jevons (’86) and husband Edwin Cowey (’86) will be celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary on July 7, 2015. They have two sons, Sam and Chris.

Elizabeth Sheehan (’89, Duke PA Alumnus of the Year 2010) celebrated the fifth year anniversary of Care 2 Communities (C2C), an organization she founded to provide high-quality, sustainable health care for families in the developing world. In the past five years, Elizabeth and her team have provided 15,000+ patient visits and 20,000+ potentially life-saving prescriptions to poor communities in Haiti and Namibia. Elizabeth looks forward to opening two additional clinics in Northern Haiti in 2015. More information about C2C can be found at www.care2communities.org.

Heather Tonga (’89) now lives in Silverton, OR with her partner Tim Cramer. She works for Providence Medical Group in Molalla, is an Epic super user, and is enjoying the team development and patient centered medical home work that they are doing. She is helping on the Oregon Society of PA’s CME committee, and considering other volunteer activities. Heather has a 21 year old son, Burl, who is a student at the University of Oregon. Her 24 year old daughter Kristen is working as a junior web developer in New Jersey.

Laurie Powers (’90) received a Certificate of Added Qualification (CAQ) in Psychiatry in 2014.

Terri Roark (’90) made a change from practicing general orthopaedics to pediatric orthopaedics three years ago.

Mary Jo Bondy (’93) took a position at the University of Maryland Baltimore Graduate School as the Director of Graduate Programs in 2014.
Rhonda Feldman (‘95) was named Program Director at the University of New England’s PA Program effective January 1, 2015. In May 2014, she was the sole recipient of the “Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching” for the graduate school.

Alexandra Palgon (Grabow ‘96) has been working in Dermatology for the past 12 years and loves it! She has been married for 13 years and has a 10 year old son. She and her family reside in Atlanta, GA.

Dixie Patterson (‘97) received the National Civilian PA of the Year award presented by the Veterans Caucus of the AAPA at their annual meeting this past year in Boston.

David Wangerin (‘97) recently earned a Certificate of Added Qualification (CAQ) in Psychiatry from the NCCPA. He currently helps run an inpatient behavioral health unit of 16 beds at their county/community hospital. David continues to work part-time at a family practice and at an outpatient behavioral health clinic. His sons, Nathan and Christopher, are both on scholarship, academic and athletic, at Gardner-Webb University. David’s wife Rebecca is training to be a Christian coach and holds a master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counselling (UK) and Theology (Emory).

Judi Seargeant-Holmes (‘98) lives in beautiful Santa Rosa, CA with her husband, Jarrod Holmes, who graduated from Duke Medical School. They have two children: Isabel and Adam. Her specialties are otolaryngology and emergency medicine.

Brian Wingrove (‘99) was recognized by the AAPA with Distinguished Fellow status in October 2014. He presently serves as President-elect of the Society for PAs in Pediatrics. He works at Georgia Pediatric Pulmonology Associates in Atlanta, GA.

Emily Talley (‘01) has been practicing fulltime in primary care for six years. She married Peter N. Coleman, RN in March 2014.

Brian Wingrove (‘99) was named PAEA/AAPA Preceptor of the Year in 2014. She was recognized by AAPA and PAEA at their annual conferences. 

Don Metzger (‘04) joined the Duke Cardiovascular Surgical team in Lumberton, NC on February 1, 2015.

Michelle Radley (Altizer ‘08) and her husband welcomed a beautiful baby boy in July 2013.

Julie Sharrer (‘08) was promoted to the rank of Captain with the Indiana Army National Guard in 2014 and was also able to complete the Army Flight Surgeon Course to become a certified Aeromedical Physician Assistant. When not working with the military, her full time position remains with Indiana University Health Cardiology.
Kim Howard (’09) was married to Christopher Klindt on September 13, 2014. In addition to her full time job in thoracic surgery at Duke, she works one day a week at the Duke PA Program assisting with the Surgery course and other PA Program activities.

Krista Jordan (’10) continues to work in vascular neurology. She coordinated the second annual Advanced Practice Providers’ meeting at the International Stroke Conference, which was held in Nashville, TN in February 2015. Krista and her husband welcomed a baby boy, Daniel Melvin Jordan, on January 10, 2015.

Joseph Keller (’10) presented an abstract entitled “ICU outcomes of physician assistants and acute care nurse practitioners compared to resident teams” at the Society of Critical Care Medicine in January 2015.

Hannah Mathews (Hill ’10) married Michael Mathews on November 22, 2014 in Asheville, NC.

Cody Jarrett (’11) and his wife Marissa welcomed baby Mason on November 18, 2014. Marissa finished nursing school and is working in behavioral medicine. Cody continues to work in Interventional Radiology at a level two trauma center in Provo, UT.

Reena Reddy (’11) is currently working as a private PA for an orthopaedic surgeon who operates at the Hospital for Special Surgery and Cornell Hospital in New York City.

Jason Sonnenschein (’11) began work in December 2014 at the Durham VA on the hospitalist team.

Samantha Kephart Thompson (’12) and her husband Brian had a baby boy, Luke, on December 3, 2014.

Rochelle L. Carson (’13) is leading the launch of a behavioral/mental health collaborative care program at Stedman-Wade Health Services, a primary care and dental CHC/FQHC, where she works full-time.

Juliana Buendia (’14) and her family welcomed baby girl Catalina Grace in 2014.

Micaela Marker (Nofsinger ’14) was married in October 2014 to Ryan Marker.
Justine Strand de Oliveira, DrPH, PA-C, DFAAPA, was honored as the 2014 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year at the Duke PA Commencement Ceremony on May 11, 2014. Dr. Strand de Oliveira graduated from the Duke University PA Program in 1981 with a Bachelor of Health Science degree. After graduation, she began her career as a PA at the Sunrise Community Health Center in Greeley, Colorado. From 1982 to 1984, Dr. Strand de Oliveira worked in Mambucaba, Brazil, where she holds permanent residency status, as a medical liaison. Upon her return to the United States in 1984, Dr. Strand de Oliveira moved to Austin, Texas, where she worked for ten years at Austin Regional Clinic treating obstetrics and gynecology patients. She moved back to Durham in 1994, where she worked as a PA and served as the Director of General Health Services at the Durham County Health Department for three years. Dr. Strand de Oliveira earned her Master of Public Health from the University of North Carolina, School of Public Health in 1998. She returned to Duke in 1997, where she was Chief of the Physician Assistant Division from 1999 to 2012, and served as program director from 2001 to 2003.

In 2008, Dr. Strand de Oliveira earned the Doctor of Public health degree from University of North Carolina, School of Public Health. Currently, she is Professor and Vice Chair for Education for the Department of Community and Family Medicine where she works collaboratively to strengthen the academic programs of the Department. Dr. Strand de Oliveira continues to practice clinically at the TROSA outpatient clinic.

Dr. Strand de Oliveira is a past president of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). She is an emerita member of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine and is a past president of the North Carolina Medical Society Foundation. Dr. Strand de Oliveira is a distinguished fellow of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (DFAAPA) and a member of Pi Alpha, the national physician assistant honor society. She was recognized as the Outstanding PA of the Year by the American Academy of Physician Assistants in 2005.
The Duke PA Program was well represented in Boston at the 2014 American Academy of Physician Assistant Conference. The conference was held May 24 – 28, 2014 at the Westin Boston Waterfront. Our alumni reception, held on May 23rd, was attended by 115 Duke PA Program alumni, students, and faculty. In addition, alums Kimberly Shultz (’13) and Adam Chenevert (’13) presented posters related to their residencies. Second-year students (now alums) Michael Gale, Dana Riker, and Megan Barrus (’14) presented a poster about their Burton Elementary School project, and Kristina Eilbacher (’14) presented a poster relating to adaptive sports for people with disabilities.

Duke PA Alumnus Liz Riley Buno (’04) received the PAEA/AAPA Preceptor of the Year award, based on a nomination from the Duke PA Clinical Team. Faculty and other guests joined Liz for a dinner in her honor during the conference.
In the last newsletter I wrote to you about the Class of 2015 as we were just beginning to intertwine our 90 diverse experiences into a unique new thread within the fabric of the Duke PA legacy. I am pleased to inform you that my classmates have only continued to prove themselves everyday heroes and heroines since that time. Life as a PA student is fast paced and leaves few opportunities to pause and reflect on experiences that are not immediately relevant academically. Over the holiday break, Class of 2015 Outreach Chair, Todd McVeigh, and I reflected back as we worked on a project summarizing the accomplishments of the Stead Society during 2014. In full disclosure, we were both a little bummed out to be doing something school related over break. At first, we may or may not have grumbled and complained like a couple of teenagers sent to do our chores before borrowing the car for the weekend, but we finally started to begrudgingly review the year.

Within thirty minutes, our attitude changed completely, as we started to see exactly how much our classmates contributed to the Duke PA Legacy and the Durham community in such a short amount of time. All of my classmates are incredible people, but working together we were able to accomplish things so much bigger than any single person could have ever dreamed of. Karen Hills refers to this phenomenon as a “Heart of Service.” I could not have described it better, as this Heart of Service is clearly the collective “superpower” of the Class of 2015. This article does not afford me enough room to provide an exhaustive list, but here are some highlights: over 500 meals provided to the hungry and homeless through Urban Ministries, thousands of diapers donated or wrapped for the NC Diaper Bank, at least four different educational projects tackling issues from hygiene to preventing childhood obesity for grade school audiences, nearly $13,000 raised for St. Baldrick’s, a PAs in Advocacy Group facilitating discussions ranging from lobbying at all levels of government through veterans issues, volunteering for the Adaptive Sports Experience and Special Olympics, a blood and bone marrow drive, and 70% attendance at the AAPA IMPACT conference in Boston. My favorite accomplishment is one shared by the Classes of 2015 and 2016, as well as the PA Program Faculty and Staff: the PA Day of Service. Collectively, we fielded
125 volunteers for 6 local organizations to provide 335 hours of community service in a single day. This list is just the tip of the iceberg. As you can see, we have been quite busy!

With that said, my class is also equally dedicated to growing as providers during clinical year and sharing our Heart of Service with our patients. It is hard to believe we will all part ways again in just a few short months, but clinical year seems to be preparing us for that. I spent only one of my first six months in my apartment as I traveled to Michigan, Virginia, and throughout North Carolina. I may have been far away from my Durham home and my classmates, but my travels helped me realize the extensive reach of the Duke PA family. I know my classmates feel the same way – we have all met amazing preceptors and inspiring patients. As clinical year goes on we are all becoming more confident and capable thanks to those individuals. They have helped us develop an insatiable hunger for clinical excellence and ensured we are always kept full by our Heart of Service. We see these qualities in the Duke PA alumni we meet, the faculty and staff, and the many friends of the program who have gone before us, so we have great faith as we follow in their footsteps. On August 7 we will all go our 90 separate ways and create our own legacies, but I am confident what we have learned at Duke will always be central to who we are and positively impact our patients, coworkers, friends, and loved ones. After all, that is what being a Duke PA is all about.

In September 2014, the Class of 2016 elected their Stead Society Officers. The following students were elected: President: Brian Yorke, Vice President: Kristen Stockfleth, Secretary: Emily Choi, Treasurer: Allison Almeida, NCAPA Student Representative: Eric Langhans, AAPA House of Delegates Representative: Jamie Ruddy, SAAAPA Alternate: Melissa Radliff, Diversity Chair: Katherine Caro, Outreach Chair: Christen Gillis, Graduate & Professional Student Representative: Allie Sterling, Honor Council: Kaitlyn Schmutz, Green Chair: Charita Montgomery, Historian: Cristina Leung. The Stead Society advisor is Associate Director, Sherrie Spear.
In August 2014, 90 people came together in a single classroom at the Duke University PA Program. We come from varied backgrounds, but share many of the same feelings. These range from excitement and exhilaration to anxiety and maybe even a hint of inadequacy. I compare the first semester to a roller coaster (think...The Intimidator). Just before take-off, we buckle in and realize that we are committed. No turning back now after months, or years, of anticipation. Before you can react, the throttle drops and you are propelled into the unknown at an alarming pace. Some of us screamed, some squirmed, some held tight with a look of stunned silence and some maintained a confident look. Fast forward to mid October, fear and trepidation have been replaced with determination and resolve. Then, before we could blink, December brought a much needed break. Now each of us can look back with pride as we reflect on the knowledge and skills we have learned. I suspect each semester will bring another roller coaster ride. Hold on tight!

In addition to rigorous academic responsibilities, the Class of 2016 has been actively involved in community service. Not only do these experiences bring reprieve from studying, but remind us why we are preparing for lives of service. For the October 4, 2014 PA Day of Service, classmates volunteered at local organizations such as Food Bank of NC, Diaper Bank of NC, Habitat for Humanity, Keep Durham Beautiful and Ronald McDonald House. Men in the class pledged to grow moustaches in “Movember” to raise money for men’s health issues, particularly prostate and testicular cancer. We participated in the “Stop Hunger Now” event by packing nearly 11,000 meals and raising over $3000.00. We participated in the “Run Against the Sun 5K” to support local families of cancer patients. Just this month, class members prepared and served a meal to residents of the Ronald McDonald House. In our second semester, we have plans to host blood drives in April and again in June. We look forward to participation in the annual Burton Elementary School project later this spring. Finally, several classmates are teaming with MD students as Med Mentors to build relationships with at-risk youth in Durham.
In addition to service of others, the Class of 2016 balances work with a little relaxation. We encourage participation in various fitness challenges to remind us that our personal health is important if we are to be an example to our patients. We have monthly, multi-cultural pot-luck luncheons and recognize birthdays with evening socals. Approximately 60 of us excitedly plan to attend the AAPA meeting in San Francisco in May. Our Quiz Bowl representatives are practicing weekly for what is sure to be a fun event.

With our first semester behind us, our class has grown in depth of friendships and knowledge. We are well on our way to being full-fledged, long-white-coat-wearing, healthcare professionals.

Part of our History
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interprofessional opportunities for residents, medical, nursing and PA students.

Dr. Reginald Carter, who had joined the faculty in 1972, became program director in 1985 when Dr. Hamilton moved to a part-time role. It was during Dr. Carter’s tenure that Patricia Dieter, then associate director, developed the proposal to establish the Master of Health Sciences degree at Duke.

Dr. Justine Strand de Oliveira was PA division chief from 2001-2012, and served in the dual role of division chief and program director from 2001-2003, when Patricia Dieter became program director. The Strand de Oliveira and Dieter years are the years I know best as they have been the leaders during my progression from new faculty member to program director. Throughout our years together, these two colleagues have been true role models, demonstrating the leadership, advocacy and attention to detail that are required to run a program — from writing groundbreaking grant proposals to navigating the move to a new building in 2009. Their collective contributions have made lasting impressions on the Duke PA Program and PA education.

Being part of PA history is an everyday occurrence at Duke. It inspires and awes me that I have the privilege of being program director during the celebration of 50 years of PA education. As I look back at the many noteworthy contributions that my predecessors have made, I am motivated to strive to achieve further improvements and innovations in the program that will position us for even more success as we head toward future anniversary celebrations.
Duke Physician Assistant Program students, faculty, staff and alumni participated in a Day of Service October 4, 2014 in the Durham community.

One hundred and twenty-five Duke PA Program volunteers – 97 first- and second-year students, 16 faculty and staff members and 12 alums – spent time with Habitat for Humanity of Durham, Keep Durham Beautiful, Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC, Diaper Bank of NC, Urban Ministries of Durham and Ronald McDonald House of Durham. The volunteers clocked 335 service hours.

The Day of Service was planned in part to mark National PA Week October 6-12, and to kick off an upcoming year of celebration for the Duke Physician Assistant Program’s 50th anniversary.

“PAs are known for their heart for service,” said Karen Hills, Duke Physician Assistant Program Director and volunteer at the Diaper Bank of NC on Saturday. “Our students embrace a variety of community service projects each year and this was a way to focus attention on the many needs our community has.”

Service projects were chosen with local organizations based on previous relationships the Duke PA Program had established, or faculty and staff members recommending an organization that was meaningful in the Durham community. Class of 2015 students Trey Levers, Stead Society president; Todd McVeigh, outreach chair; and Anna Zelov, treasurer, were instrumental in organizing and planning the event, along with PA Program Coordinator Jennifer Pennington.

“The PA profession was born out of matching resources to needs…,” said Levers. “The PA Day of Service maintains that same spirit by connecting compassionate volunteers from the Duke PA Program family with some amazing community partners.”
Projects by the **numbers**

- The PA Program held a diaper drive leading up to the October 4, 2014 event, collecting more than **1,000 diapers** for the Diaper Bank of NC. Volunteers packed **7,000 diapers** on Saturday.

- The Keep Durham Beautiful group collected **30 bags of trash**, along with some tires and other large items, at Elmira Park.

- Groups worked on two existing **Habitat for Humanity structures**.

- Volunteers purchased, prepared and served evening meals to **75 people** at Ronald McDonald House.

- The Stead Society for Class of 2015 donated about **$1,000** to fund the Ronald McDonald House and Urban Ministries projects.

- Volunteers packed **162 bagged lunches** at the Duke Physician Assistant Building Saturday then delivered them to Urban Ministries.

- A food drive was held leading up to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC service project, bringing in **121 lbs. of food**, which equals **102 meals**. October 4, the group sorted and boxed **25,200 lbs. of food**, which equals **21,211 meals** for families.
Red for Women’s Heart Health

Students wore an article of red clothing in support of women’s heart health in February 2015.

Colorectal Cancer Awareness

In March 2015, students wore blue in honor of Colorectal Cancer Awareness month.

Wear Pink Day

In October 2014, students participated in Wear Pink Day by wearing shades of pink clothing in support of Breast Cancer awareness.

Diversity Awareness

In order to appreciate the various unique cultures that make up our DPAP family, the Class of 2016, faculty, and staff participated in multicultural potluck lunches in October 2014 and March 2015. The lunches included homemade potluck dishes from all over the world!
Welcome Picnic 2014!

The Annual Welcome Picnic is always a fun time with students, faculty, staff, and families! Activities from the first week of school for the Class of 2016 culminated in an outdoor celebration in August 2014.

Awareness in November

In November 2014, students wore purple in support of Epilepsy Awareness, Pancreatic Cancer Awareness and Pulmonary Hypertension Awareness. Also, DPAP students participated with Movember – a global men’s health charity where men grow and women support the moustache during the month of November.
**Faculty & Staff in the News**

**New Faculty**

**Megan Holmes, BA**, joined the Duke PA program faculty as the anatomy course instructor in March 2014. She is currently a PhD candidate at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine where she received the majority of her training in research and anatomy instruction. Megan has 10 years of experience teaching cadaver-based human gross anatomy to learners in a variety of professional programs, including PA, PT and medical students. Megan’s research interests include evolutionary biology and how anatomical traits related to diet in primates respond to development and adaptive pressures. Megan is also interested in anatomy education research with an emphasis on how students respond to innovative teaching strategies.

**Lisa Ray, MHS, PA-C (’95)**, joined the Duke University PA program in October 2014 as the Clinical Education Faculty Development Fellow. She works primarily with the clinical year team to develop new sites and preceptors for the Underserved Community Scholars Program. She is also involved in small group teaching. Prior to the fellowship, Lisa worked in a variety of clinical settings during her 19 years of practice; the majority of her work has been in family medicine working with medically underserved or low income populations. During the past five years, she has been living and working in Kenya. While there, she served as the Medical Officer for Peace Corps Kenya and as a Health Officer in the U.S. Embassy Health Unit in Nairobi, as well as when needed in Juba, South Sudan.

**Faculty News**

**Patricia Dieter, PA Division Chief**, was the 2014 recipient of Drexel University’s Sherry L. Stolberg Alumni Award. The award is given in recognition for outstanding achievement, innovative contribution, service and dedication to the PA profession.

**Chris Everett, MPH, PhD, PA-C**, received the 2014 PAEA Article of the Year Award for the article titled “Physician Assistants and Nurse Practitioners Perform Effective Roles on Teams Caring for Medicare Patients with Diabetes,” which was published in the November 2013 issue of the journal *Health Affairs*.

**Karen Hills, MS, PA-C**, is Immediate Past President of PAEA effective January 1, 2015.

**Nick Hudak, MPA, MSEd, PA-C**, was appointed chair of the PAEA International Rotations Subcommittee in January 2014. He was appointed chair of the PAEA Committee on Clinical Education and as a member of the Curriculum Council in January 2015. Nick and Margaret Gradison, MD, MHS-CL were the recipients of a PAEA research grant for the proposal “Preceptors’ perceptions of physician assistant students’ interprofessional interactions and competencies.”

The Duke PA Program has been ranked #1 in the country again by *US News and World Report*!
Staff News

**Katie Humeniuk, MPH** joined the PA program in July 2014 as a research analyst, and works primarily with faculty members Christine Everett and Perri Morgan in the newly formed Duke Physician Assistant Research Group. A born-and-raised Minnesotan, Katie graduated from St. Olaf College with a BA in biology and psychology in 2005, and the University Of Minnesota School Of Public Health with a Masters of Public Health degree in epidemiology in 2007. Thanks to her South Carolinian/Duke alum husband, Michael, she has come to embrace the southern college sports culture and now considers herself a fully converted Duke fan.

**Amanda Blakley, MS** joined the Duke University PA program staff in February 2015 as Education Technology Specialist. She earned her BA in Elementary Education in 2006 and her MS in Instructional Technology in 2010 from the University of North Carolina – Wilmington. Prior to joining the PA staff, Amanda worked with the Duke Doctor of Physical Therapy program in a similar capacity. She will be assisting faculty in using instructional technologies in the curriculum as well as providing curricular support.

**Michael Connery** joined the PA Program in February 2015 as a Computer Technician III. He assists the students with hardware and software issues. Prior to joining the PA staff, he worked for the Duke Doctor of Physical Therapy program for six years assisting faculty in a variety of computer software and hardware related issues.

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**Perri Morgan, PhD, PA-C** is currently on the Research Council for PAEA. Morgan and **Chris Everett, PhD, MPH, PA-C**, received a $50,000 grant from PAEA to support their project, “A national and state level analysis of job openings for physician assistants.”

**April Stouder, MHS, PA-C (’00)**, was elected to the NCAPA Board of Directors as a Director-at-Large beginning January 1, 2015. She is also serving on the NCAPA Nominations Committee, the Continuing Education Committee and chairing the Education Development Panel Subcommittee which will offer a variety of CME options to members. April has just completed a three-year term on the PAEA Rotation Exam Review Committee, which is responsible for creating Family Medicine & Internal Medicine End of Rotation Examinations for national use at PA Programs. She has recently begun serving as a facilitator for PAEA’s three day Basic Clinical Coordinator Workshops offered to new faculty involved in clinical year education. Clinically, April has resumed her work in adult oncology in rural North Carolina one day per week.

**Justine Strand de Oliveira, DrPH, PA-C (’81)**, participated in an interview, “Justine Strand de Oliveira: Relationships are the most important aspect of leadership” which was posted on the Duke Divinity School’s Leadership Education website, www.faiyhandleadership.com in September 2014. The interview was part of a series on leadership development.

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Tucked into a quiet hallway of the Duke Physician Assistant Program building near downtown Durham is a group of women working on groundbreaking research that has the potential to impact physician assistant education and the types of roles that are being created for PAs in the workforce.

These women — Perri Morgan, Ph.D., PA-C; Christine Everett, Ph.D., MPH, PA-C; and Katherine Humeniuk, MPH — sift through information made available to them via publicly available data sets, electronic health record data and insurance claims data, but also are creating infrastructure to gather their own data and support more research in the physician assistant field.

“My research focus is to understand how we can design health care teams,” says Everett, assistant professor of Community and Family Medicine. “This means defining and evaluating the roles of different professions that are on those teams as well as understanding how they work together. Really to find a sustainable approach that results in the best outcomes for patients.”

Morgan, director of research at the Duke Physician Assistant Program and associate professor of Community and Family Medicine, says that research on physician assistants is a relatively new field.

“Most fields that we’re familiar with in health care have a research training track and their graduates are prepared to do research,” Morgan says. “For example, you can get a Ph.D. in nursing and that’s research oriented. The PA clinical degree is a terminal degree, so there’s no such thing as a Ph.D. in physician assistant studies. So in the past, there have been very few PAs prepared to do research.”

Morgan says that because PAs have become a large enough part of the workforce, and because of predicted provider shortfalls, research on PAs is becoming more interesting to others.

That interest has created numerous collaboration opportunities for the Duke PA research group, including a collaboration between Morgan and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs to study the roles and outcomes of nurse practitioners and physician assistants working in VA primary care. Morgan says the PA research group took the idea to the VA primary investigator who then worked with them to create a proposal.

The award amount — $902,505 — is one of the largest grants ever awarded to study PAs in primary care, according to Rod Hooker, Ph.D., MBA, PA, a retired professor of health policy who has researched the medical workforce for more than three decades.

“It’s really big news,” Hooker says. “The award recognizes the capability of Dr. Morgan as a solid and contemporary health services researcher and social scientist.”

The project has been funded for three years and will adapt methodology created by Everett for her article, “Physician Assistants and Nurse Practitioners Perform Effective Roles on Teams Caring for Medicare Patients with Diabetes.” The Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) awarded Everett the 2014 Article of the Year for that work.

Changing the course of PA research

The physician assistant profession is still very young, with its beginnings at Duke University 50 years ago. Dr. Eugene A. Stead, Jr., then chairman of the Department of Medicine at Duke University Medical Center, founded the Duke Physician Assistant Program and the profession in 1965. The program will celebrate 50 years of PA education at Duke in October.

Katherine Humeniuk (left), Christine Everett and Perri Morgan talk about their research in the Duke Medicine Pavilion.
Hooker, who is co-author of *Physician Assistants: Policy & Practice*, says that for the first quarter century of the profession, almost all research done on PAs was by non-PAs. But he says the tide has slowly shifted.

“In 2014 there were 188 papers published on some aspect of PAs,” Hooker says. “And of that 188 about 40 percent were authored by PAs. I think that’s been a substantial shift.”

Both Morgan and Everett went outside of the PA world to get doctorates in health services research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Morgan points out that there are others who have done that, but not many. And Morgan says many researchers have gotten doctorates in education to do education research, but that’s not what the PA research group does.

“We do health services research. So there needs to be a way to support that kind of research, and that’s what Justine [Strand de Oliveira] and Pat [Dieter] have created here.” Morgan says.

Justine Strand de Oliveira, DrPH, PA-C, FAAFP, professor and vice chair for education for Duke Community and Family Medicine, founded the research group in 2004 when she was division chief of the PA program. And Pat Dieter, MPA, PA-C, is current division chief of the Duke Physician Assistant Program and oversees the research group. Both Strand de Oliveira and Dieter collaborate with Morgan, Everett and Humeniuk on research projects.

Strand de Oliveira says she wanted to begin the research group because she saw a need for PAs to be researching their own profession.

“There was such an absence of health services research about PAs,” Strand de Oliveira says. “We as a profession have always been concerned with just getting in the trenches and delivering care, and we haven’t thought about research.”

“The idea was just to try to learn more,” Strand de Oliveira says. “There were certain things that we thought about PAs — we believed that PAs had great bedside manner that was really appreciated by patients in general — but there was no evidence of that. We thought that we were cost-effective. But we didn’t have that much evidence.”

**Creating a dream team**

In 2004, Strand de Oliveira recruited Morgan for a one-year research fellowship. Morgan had been teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Physician Assistant Program for 10 years and had planned to return to Wisconsin after her fellowship ended, but was recruited to a faculty position at Duke and named director of research of the Duke Physician Assistant Program, a post that she has held since 2005.

Everett, who had been teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Madison PA Program and serving as their director of research, was recruited by Strand de Oliveira and Dieter in 2013 to join the Duke PA Program.

“She was being absolutely wooed by all kinds of programs,” Strand de Oliveira says. “She just had so many strengths. Her methodology is really strong. She had years where she worked at the FDA; she has a health policy background. She’s just smart as a whip.”

The team then became complete in July with the addition of Humeniuk, a research analyst, who worked with Mayo Clinic’s biomedical ethics group before joining Duke. Humeniuk works with data analysis, database building, survey development, grant editing and literature reviews.

Everett says that Duke’s PA Program is unique to have three people doing research.

“Part of it is just the dedicated resources to it that allow us to do this, but also the synergy of all three of our minds going here,” Everett says. “It takes a shop. One person alone who’s also teaching a lot and doing admissions … you can’t do big projects. So now we’re finally able to.”

Hooker says there have been many starts and stops of research divisions within PA programs, but only a handful of programs have been able to successfully maintain a research division within a PA program. He says that the Duke Physician Assistant Program is prestigious because of the number of PAs who have authored important research in sociology, history, economics and health services research.

Hooker says that Duke’s research group is in the top tier of academic PA research groups in the country. He says that the group’s core team — Morgan, Everett and Humeniuk — is a machine that takes on complex research questions and draws on scholars around the country.

“This is a trifecta of solid first-class workforce scholars that are really setting the stage, setting a very high mark, for quality research,” Hooker says. “I’m very, very impressed by their capability and their products.”

**Supporting the future of PA research**

Dieter says she is incredibly proud of the work the research group is doing at the Duke PA Program, particularly with the creation of an education database, which will track Duke PA students long-term — beginning with

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Duke PA Research Group
continued from page 23

their admission, throughout their time in the program, then throughout their career.

“This is a model for collecting data about PAs that we think will be picked up through the country,” Dieter says. “And through using that data we can tell what PAs are truly using from their education.”

Morgan says that the database will allow answers to long-term questions, such as what kinds of students do the best work as PAs later.

“We’ll be able to hopefully link the students, the graduates, through some of the medical record data and insurance claims data that’s becoming more and more available so that we can look at educational outcomes,” Morgan says. “That’s always been a dream of education research.”

Morgan says the database will support research at Duke’s PA Program, but will also allow collaboration with others. Everett says they’re trying to build infrastructure to do more research and have data and infrastructure available to help other PAs and PA faculty get into research.

“We presented this at the national (PAEA) meeting and a lot of other programs want to build a similar database,” Morgan says. “We have the long-term dream of being able to pool our data with theirs, and they pool theirs with us, ideally, and be able to do multi-institutional long-term research on educational outcomes for PAs.”

“This has never been done before, so the possibilities are really huge and we’re quite proud of that,” Morgan says.


Everett CM, Thorpe C, Carayon P, Palta M, Gilchrist V, Smith MA. The roles of primary care PAs and NPs caring for older adults with Diabetes. JAAPA, 2014. 27 (4): 45-49


Duke PA Program and Tanzania’s Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College

On May 6, 2014, the Duke University Physician Assistant Program was honored to host faculty and staff from Tanzania’s Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College. The group had traveled to the United States from East Africa to visit Duke University and to attend the Fifth Annual Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) Conference in Washington, DC.

An Enduring Partnership
Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College and its affiliated medical center in Moshi, Tanzania, have a partnership with Duke University that spans more than 20 years. For the past five years, the Duke PA Program has been involved in this partnership through student participation in clinical rotations at the medical center and nearby Machame Lutheran Hospital. Nick Hudak, Clinical Coordinator, has been coordinating the global health elective course that offers students who are interested in international clinical education the unique opportunity to be immersed in a community in one of five developing countries located across three continents. To date, 12 students from five classes have completed this elective in the Mount Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania.

This first visit from the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College delegation was a follow-up to Nick Hudak’s visit to Moshi in March of this year. The purpose of his visit as the course coordinator was to conduct a site evaluation, which involved meetings with clinical preceptors, leadership from both the college and hospitals, and two Duke PA students who were completing their global health elective at that time.

The delegation’s itinerary for this visit to Duke included meetings with Program Director Karen Hills, Medical Director Maggie Gradison, Director of Pre-Clinical Education Annamarie Streilein, Director of Clinical Education April Stouder, and Nick Hudak. The four visitors were excited to learn about the PA profession and the Duke PA Program curriculum, as well as tour the educational facilities. Duke PA Program faculty members were equally enthusiastic to learn about the Tanzanian health care system, the country’s strategies to increase its citizens’ access to high quality health care, and their evolving models of health professions education.

Karibu!
During an engaging lunch with our visitors, various members of the faculty and student representatives discussed health care workforce shortages in each respective country, exchanged information about innovations in health professions education, shared varying approaches to the admissions process, and explored how technology is being used to enhance students’ knowledge and competency for clinical practice. Addressing the group during lunch, Nick Hudak expressed his pleasure at the opportunity to “karibu,” the Swahili term for “welcome,” the visitors and reciprocate the hospitality that had been shown to him during his visit to Tanzania.

When expressing appreciation for their visit to Duke, Mr. Ahaz Kalanga, Deputy Provost of Administration Affairs at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College, described their time at the Duke PA Program as “interactive and informative.” He said, “It was astonishing to visit your program and to see how much we share in common.”

Program Director Karen Hills summarized the visit with the Kilimanjaro Christian delegation as a “wonderful cultural exchange that illustrates the common goals and challenges that medical educators have no matter where we are.”
Commencement for the Duke Physician Assistant Class of 2014 was held on May 11, 2014 at the Washington Duke Inn in Durham. Master of Health Sciences degrees were awarded to 82 students in front of faculty, staff, and guests. Dr. Edward Buckley, Vice Dean of the School of Medicine, led the Hippocratic Oath, and Megan Barrus (‘14) gave graduate remarks. The Richard J. Scheele award was presented to Candy Chen (‘14) and the 2014 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year award was presented to Justine Strand de Oliveira, DrPH, PA-C (‘81). Ruediger W. Lehrich, MD, Moses Wilson, MD, and the Womack Army Medical Center Hospital Medicine Service were presented with Certificates of Appreciation for their dedication to the education of Duke PA students. A reception was held immediately following the ceremony.
We continue to develop and hone effective ways for our students to learn the information and practice the skills they need to be ready for the clinical year of our program. Our most recent innovation in the preclinical year of the curriculum is a series of Synthesis Sessions. These half-day sessions, spread across the first year of the curriculum, provide students with the opportunity to enhance their clinical reasoning skills and differential diagnosis development. Students are divided into teams and cooperate to work through faculty-developed clinical cases involving electronic patients who “present” with common symptoms with an initial broad differential diagnosis. Students are encouraged to consider all units of Clinical Medicine, Diagnostic Methods, and Pharmacology that they have learned to date. Throughout the Synthesis Sessions, the students can discover additional patient-specific information, including history, review of systems, physical exam findings, and the results of selected diagnostic studies. After they determine the most likely diagnosis, students practice focused physical examinations and oral presentations with each other, and provide peer evaluations. Initial student feedback has been extremely enthusiastic. We would like to give a special thanks to our faculty team who worked in the development of the synthesis sessions: Annamarie Streilein, Kenny Railey, Maggie Gradison, April Stouder, Peggy Robinson, and Jean Mesaros.
Clinical Update: **New “Bridge” Course**

This past July, the Class of 2015 participated in a new course entitled “Bridge: The Path to Patient Care.” This course is meant to aid students in their transition from didactic to clinical education, and combines elements from the previously established Transition Week and Clinical Orientation Week. Students had the opportunity for some review lectures and activities, as well as lots of hands-on practical application of skills. Students participated in ProcedurePalooza where they had the opportunity to brush up on procedural skills including joint injections, lumbar puncture, ABGs, venipuncture, and suturing. They also went through Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) training as well as Duke’s electronic health record training. Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCEs) also took place during the course. Students moved through a series of stations to complete patient cases using models and real diagnostic studies to answer exam questions. They also had the opportunity to hear from some of the graduating clinical year students who had lots of wisdom to share about how to survive life as a second year PA student. Several of our preceptors came to speak about ways in which students could be most successful while out on clinical rotations. Students also met in advising groups for an ethics case discussion on social media. Overall, it was a busy two weeks filled with lots of preparation for students to begin their journey on the wards!
New Admissions Video on Website

For many years the Duke Physician Assistant Program held a traditional open house event for prospective students, to provide insight into the PA profession and our admissions process. It has long been the program’s desire to present this information to those who are unable to visit our campus. With this in mind we created a video to highlight what makes the Duke PA Program a rich learning environment.

To view the video perspectives of our faculty, staff, and students visit our website (pa.mc.duke.edu) or join us on Facebook.

Paperless Admissions Process Reduces DPAP’s Carbon Footprint

As the interest in the physician assistant profession increases, there is of course a proportionate increase in the number of applications to the Duke PA Program. The number of applications has increased dramatically over the past ten years, from 241 in 2004 to 1342 in 2014. Historically, each application consisted of a manila folder with 15 to 25 documents for each applicant. In an effort to reduce our carbon footprint and streamline efficiency of the process, the program transitioned to a paperless, electronic system during this admissions cycle. Thanks to the creativity of the admissions team, adaptability of the faculty and staff and dedication of our IT support team, the new system has been a great success. The new paperless system has also resulted in a dramatic impact on our carbon footprint, saving roughly 30,000 sheets of paper yearly.

Duke PA Program Receives National Diversity Award

The Duke PA Program was the recipient of the PAEA Excellence through Diversity Award at the PAEA Education Forum in Philadelphia, October 2014. The award was given in recognition of the program’s long-standing commitment to diversity. More than 50 percent of Duke PA students come from underrepresented minority or disadvantaged groups, and the graduation rate among these students averages 98 percent. The program’s academic curriculum also emphasizes multiple aspects of diversity including medical Spanish, cultural competency, health literacy, and disability practice. Community commitment to diversity was another aspect of this award. For many years, the PA program has required that each PA student spend eight weeks on clinical rotations with underserved populations. And, the program’s “Underserved Community Scholar” program has achieved excellent outcomes in placing graduate PAs in communities with underserved populations.
Contributions to the **Alumni Scholarship Fund**

We thank all of our donors who have given to the PA scholarship fund and gifts at any level make a difference. Below we recognize our donors giving at the Member level and higher.

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Please send your note to:
Jennifer Pennington
Dept. of CFM - DUMC 104780
Durham, North Carolina 27710
jennifer.pennington@duke.edu

Mason Jarrett (son of Cody Jarrett ’11) is the cutest Duke football fan we have seen!

The Duke Physician Assistant Program’s mission is to educate caring, competent primary care physician assistants who practice evidence-based medicine, are leaders in the profession, dedicated to their communities, culturally sensitive, and devoted to positive transformation of the health care system.