From the Program Director

Welcome!

The Le Moyne College Physician Assistant Studies Program is celebrating the physician assistant (PA) profession’s 50th anniversary. We are grateful for the 20 years that our department has been involved in the growth and development of our profession.

I’d like to express my sincere thanks to our first medical director, Dr. James Longo ’77, who is retiring after more than 20 years of dedicated service to the College and this program. Dr. Longo recognized the value of our profession and this vision left an enduring imprint on health care in the Syracuse area. Under his guidance, we recently celebrated the graduation of our largest class ever. A total of 746 dedicated individuals earned their degrees, and eight of those students piloted the direct-entry program, wherein outstanding qualifying high school students are guaranteed admission to the program.

Of the 746 men and women who have graduated from the program, approximately 50 percent work in Central New York. However, alumni of the program can be found in nearly all 50 states, and all of these professionals are committed to providing their patients with quality, compassionate care. Our graduates practice what our College mission teaches us: cultural competence with focused attention on the socially disenfranchised, the poor and the marginalized citizens of our communities. We strive to instill in our students a deep, abiding sense of duty and altruism. That is part of what distinguishes Le Moyne alumni from their peers from other institutions.

Over the last few years, we have found that about 54 percent of our graduates choose to work in primary care practices. We attribute these higher than average numbers to our efforts to apply for, and be awarded, Health Resources and Services Administration grants that address the shortage of physicians.

Reflections of the Inaugural Direct Entry PA Class of 2017

By Elizabeth Mercer PA-C, M.P.A.S.

When these students came to Le Moyne in the fall of 2012, they didn’t know what to expect and frankly neither did we. Lindsey Cafarell, Nicholas Izzo, Allison Lurz and Aimee Raponi were the first students admitted as freshmen to Le Moyne’s direct-entry PA track. They completed a rigorous undergraduate curriculum. In their senior year, they entered the graduate level of the Physician Assistant Studies Program. They were selected based on their academic successes in high school and their motivation for a career as a PA. In addition to the rigor of their undergraduate education at Le Moyne, they also completed 750 hours of direct patient care before they entered the graduate level of the program. Below are some reflections provided by these students about their experience at Le Moyne. These students have set the bar high for direct entry students at Le Moyne. The program is grateful to their commitment to mentoring fellow students and for their professionalism and patience as this new program was launched.

“"The five years have had their up and downs, full of laughter, friendships, hardships and frowns. While the last five years have been up and down they have always had two things that were consistent; it was fun and it was hard.”

Nicholas Izzo

“I am very happy that I have chosen Le Moyne and to have become a PA. It definitely has been a commitment and we had to acknowledge its consequences, but I am happy to have chosen this path.”

Aimee Raponi

“At first I felt like we were at a disadvantage being the youngest in the class. But as the weeks went on, I felt as though I could hold my own. Now I feel like being the youngest in the class was to our advantage. We did not have to adjust to a student lifestyle. We already knew how to study effectively and in which places on campus we could focus.”

Lindsey Cafarell

“To be 23 with my Master’s and a great job at a University hospital is incredible and has opened up many opportunities for me. I do feel like we had to mature a lot faster than our Le Moyne peers but that will only prepare us for what lies ahead in taking care of patients.”

Allison Lurz
First of its kind Bridge Program for Veterans

By Jacki Boulter, assistant coordinator for veteran services, and Beth Mercer, PA-C.

In the summer of 2015, Le Moyne College received a $1.25 million grant to support several initiatives to enhance the practice of primary care. One of the components of the grant is to focus on strategies to increase the number of veterans in physician assistant training programs. To that end, Le Moyne recently unveiled a groundbreaking program that provides a direct entry option to Le Moyne’s Physician Assistant Studies Program in which veteran students leverage their military medical training and experience into academic and clinical success in the classroom.

The Veteran – PA Bridge Program allows student veterans to choose from three different missions, depending on where they are on their academic journeys. Whether students are just beginning college, have some college or already have a degree, there is an appropriate mission at Le Moyne College. Each student accepted into the Veteran – PA Bridge Program is guaranteed a seat in a future PA cohort as long as he or she continues to meet the contract stipulations, including academic requirements, professional standards and patient contact experience.

The program removes barriers that may limit entry into competitive PA programs. Those students who have shown recent and consistent academic success will be considered for entry into the Veteran – PA Bridge Program. We value the experiences of our military veterans bring to our program, whether as students, faculty or staff. There are veteran students in each PA class, and there are veteran faculty and staff in the department who understand what the transition to civilian life is like. Le Moyne College recognizes that within our military lies the experienced personnel to fulfill today’s need for PAs.

Sincerely,
Mary Springston
M.S.Ed ’08, PA-C
Director, Physician Assistant Studies Program

An Education on the Heights is Equal Parts Passion and Compassion

By Anthony Vinciquerra, M.D.

As we commence another academic year, we begin anew with 75 very smart, talented young men and women physician assistant studies students, culled from over 1,000 qualified applicants. In getting to know them, I was surprised by how many made their final selection about which school to attend based, in part, on our unique Medical Humanities: The Art of Medicine course. Our course is rapidly growing and evolving to meet the needs of our students and our patients in an ever-changing and sometimes volatile society.

Medical Humanities is an interdisciplinary series of lectures, practicums and dialogues designed to engage our students in thinking critically about multiple issues that transcend bioscience alone. We include a variety of perspectives via guest speakers and actual patients. We discuss social contexts, consider equity

A Window into the Medical Humanities

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and justice, medicine and law, and prepare our students to begin off-campus activities that foster self-reflection and increased self-awareness.

Our content focuses on the diversity of the human experience. Students learn to recognize their own values, feelings, privileges and biases, and in the process, become more introspective. Our course is taught within the overarching values of our College mission statement. In cura personalis – care for the whole person – we pay special attention to the medically underserved, the marginalized, and the socially disenfranchised citizens who are our brothers and sisters.

Within this framework, we include an Interviewing Skills Lab so that everything the students learned in medicine, medical humanities, anatomy and physiology, and pharmacology, can come together in clinical practice with simulated patients (professional actors). This year, we are introducing a visual analysis component that is both interdisciplinary and interprofessional. Based on a Yale University program that enhances diagnostic assessments, we will encourage students to build a habit of thorough visual inspection of each patient they see. The approach is fun and unique: We will combine the talents of a professional artist, museum curator, dermatologist and psychiatrist in order to “study” various paintings in small groups of students off-campus. Back in the classroom, we will substitute the paintings with photos of patients who have various, perhaps subtle, maladies or conditions.

A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that students who took the Yale Med-Art course were 10 percent better at recognizing symptoms in photographs of patients than those who did not take it. In a later study of a similar nine-week Harvard University program published in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, graduates of the Med-Art course made 38 percent more accurate visual observations of patients than a control group that prepared with only lecture material.

In May of 2017 Diana Rameriz ’18 was offered the opportunity to attend the Jesuit University Humanitarian Action Network (JUHAN) Conference at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass. Rameriz was recommended by program faculty based on her work with underserved and marginalized populations. She accompanied a team that represented many different disciplines at Le Moyne. These are her reflections from the conference:

My time at the Jesuit University Humanitarian Action Network Conference gave me the opportunity to learn about the current global refugee crisis. During large lectures and small group sessions, we discussed efforts to fight stereotypes regarding refugees and the social and legal challenges that face displaced persons and resettlement agencies today. I found it especially appropriate as a PA student to listen to a presentation about unique health disparities refugees face, including language barriers and cultural differences.

When I asked a researcher what advice she would give to new practitioners, she immediately answered “to be patient.” We must take the extra time and effort to incorporate refugees into the fabric of our communities. It is part of the Jesuit institutional identity to reach out to people who are marginalized, and this conference was aimed at transforming unjust structures through advocacy. I returned to Le Moyne with the continued notion that as Jesuit-trained health care professionals, we must defend the right of human dignity and challenge social injustice.

Rameriz has served as a leader in the PA Student Society and has been involved in many community activities since moving to Syracuse a year ago with her husband. She recently received notice that she was awarded the 2017 PA Foundation, American Academy of Physician Assistants Past Presidents Scholarship. Rameriz was one of 368 applicants for 18 competitive scholarships through the national professional organization.
New tradition at Le Moyne: Transition White Coat Ceremony

By Elizabeth Mercer PA-C

In the spring of 2016 the department, with the support of the Arnold P. Gold Foundation, hosted its first Transitional White Coat Ceremony and in 2017 we continued the new tradition.

During the ceremony a second-year student mentor places the short white training coat on a first-year student as he or she prepares to enter the clinical training year. Our program has always celebrated the accomplishments of our graduating PAs with a coating ceremony, but we felt this ceremony was particularly important as the first-year students transitioned into the clinical phase of their training. The coat serves as a symbol of our belief in the ability of the student to carry on the noble traditions of our profession.

As part of the ceremony, the Gold Foundation provided our students with the gift of a Humanism in Medicine lapel pin for their white coats. The pin serves as a daily reminder of their White Coat Ceremony and their pledge to serve their patients with compassion.

The Arnold P. Gold Foundation’s overarching goal is to create the gold standard in health care – compassionate, collaborative and scientifically excellent care – to support clinicians throughout their careers so the humanistic passion that motivates them at the beginning of their education is sustained throughout their practice.

This year’s ceremony featured comments by the vice president of the second-year class, Rachael McCormick, and vice president of the junior class, Diana Rameriz. Additionally, Rosalyn Carroll, the administrative professional for the second-year team, offered some reflections and presented a poem by John Stone, M.D., a cardiologist, teacher and poet.

Dr. Stone believed, “Most patients are ambiguities, living and breathing ones. The patient is ambiguous because the patient is his own art ... like art, the patient does not tell all that he has to say at the first sitting. The more we look [and listen] ... the more there is to see and hear.”

We want our students to enter their clinical-training year with their eyes and ears wide open. Our hope is that they come to understand the privilege of caring for patients and the responsibility of their role on the health care team.

What Makes Le Moyne Different

By Dr. Anthony Vinciquerra

Beyond medical knowledge and clinical skills, physician assistant curricula must include instruction in collaborative, interprofessional, patient-centered, evidence-based practice. Development and implementation of interprofessional education is a challenge, but our PA program has been augmenting the curriculum this year with opportunities for first-year students to engage and network with other disciplines outside the classroom.

Recently we have been working with our colleagues in the Department of Nursing in discussing shared opportunities for both programs. We would like to extend this eventually to include all the health care programs at the College. For example, over the summer, nursing faculty met with us to discuss future plans on conjoint OSCE simulations. In addition, we have been sharing news about special events, lectures and educational activities we can attend together.

Dr. Anthony Vinciquerra, Director of Medical Humanities; Laurie Militello, Program director for the Rochester Academy of Medicine; and Mary Springer PA-C, Program Director for the Le Moyne College PA Program

Continues...
One such example: On Tuesday, Sept. 26, all 75 PA students accompanied me to the Rochester Academy of Medicine to hear a CME program on “Clinician Burnout: System and Personal Interventions.” Our keynote speaker was Michael Privitera, M.D., chief of psychiatry at the University of Rochester. A panel of four experts from diverse fields - including social work, psychology, nursing and forensics - joined Dr. Privitera.

Their candor and compassion was remarkable as they reminded us of the importance of caring for ourselves before we can care for others. Early signs and symptoms of burn-out were discussed, along with a life lesson on caring for each other if we notice a colleague struggling.

The dialogue was thought-provoking, and our students wrote about their experiences afterward. But just as meaningful, our students were part of an audience of over 160 people representing seven distinct health care specialties listening and working together toward a common goal.

Following the presentation, our students were able to network with their peers and counterparts. The academy was gracious in giving all of us a very warm welcome and making us feel at home. The following day, I received multiple emails and inquiries about our PA program, our Medical Humanities course, and questions as to how one might become more involved with our students – perhaps as preceptors.

As a life fellow of the Academy, I was appreciative and proud of the way our students participated, their professional comportment, interest and motivation. They were truly ambassadors for Le Moyne throughout the evening. It is that kind of mutual good will, combined with interprofessional and interdisciplinary collaborative work, that will shape our health care delivery system in the future!

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the PA profession. If you are interested to learn more, check out these videos that remind us of our roots.

- vimeo.com/78256193
- youtube.com search: History of the PA Profession

Scholarship, Leadership and Service at Le Moyne

By Beth Mercer PA-C

In May 11 students from the Class of 2017 were inducted into Pi Alpha, the national Physician Assistant honor society. This recognition signifies the inductees’ significant academic achievement and honors them for their leadership, research, community and professional service, and other related activities. The society also encourages a high standard of character and conduct among students and graduates.

The inductees were: Siobhan Arey, Eric Chow, Elise Heick, Olivia Langevin, Rachael McCormick, Kathryn McIntosh, Alexandra Peters, Molly Prybylowski, Timothy Richardson, Matthew Sherwood and Malysa Williams.

In addition to the student inductions, two notable PA faculty members were also named to the national society.

Edward Wolfe, PA-C, has been a faculty member at Le Moyne for nine years. Wolfe continues to work clinically several days a week and serves as a strong role model for our students. He has been a sponsor for many student research projects and has recently had a project accepted for presentation this fall at our state conference. He is a proud veteran who served in the U.S. Army and is still active in the veteran community.

Rebecca Brown, PA-C, MPAS has been a faculty member at Le Moyne for nine years. Brown currently serves as the academic coordinator and teaches Anatomy and Physiology. She was selected for her service to the program and her many student-faculty research projects that have received recognition on the state and national level.

The motto of Pi Alpha is “Scholarship, Service, Leadership.” The organization is committed to lifelong learning and participation in intellectual life.

Congratulations to the students and faculty for their commitment to the PA profession.
You are our most valuable asset!

Le Moyne College is proud to train highly skilled, compassionate PAs who are ready to contribute their talents to this dynamic health care environment. We count on your support to help the program as we continually strive to provide the highest quality training experience for our students.

There are many ways to support the program:

**BECOME A PRECEPTOR**

Though precepting a student can be challenging and add to the demands of your professional life, it can also be one of the most gratifying and rewarding experiences for a clinician. Please contact our Clinical Coordinator Edward Wolfe, PA-C, wolfeeg@lemoyne.edu, about this opportunity.

**HELP WITH ESTABLISHING AN ALUMNI NETWORK**

Our program is now 20 years old with over 700 PA graduates. We would love to connect alumni both personally and professionally. If you are interested in discussing ways to connect our alumni, please contact Beth Mercer PA-C, MPAS at mercerew@lemoyne.edu.

**BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR DPAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

We meet once a year and can provide opportunities for you to connect remotely. The advisory committee helps the department to plan for the future. We are planning our next meeting for the Spring of 2018. If you are interested please contact the Program Director Mary Springston, PA-C, M.S. Ed at springme@lemoyne.edu.

**HELP WITH SITE DEVELOPMENT AND SITE VISITS IN YOUR AREA.**

We are working hard to place students in medically underserved communities across the country. If you have ideas about ideal training sites, please let us know about them. We now have students attending Le Moyne from across the country. We would like to use our alumni to help with vetting quality training sites and perhaps doing some clinical site visits in their area. If you are interested in this opportunity please contact: Assistant Clinical Coordinator Katie Compagni, PA-C, MPAS at compagkh@lemoyne.edu.

Check out the Le Moyne PA Program website and Le Moyne Physician Assistant Program Alumni Facebook page.