

# PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

# NEWSLETTER

Fall 2023  
Vol. 5, No. 1



## FROM THE CHAIR

Happy Summer from the UND PA Program! It is the time of year for family reunions and reconnecting with the great outdoors. I hope you and your family have found some time for outside play this season.

We have much to celebrate this year! We are happy to be back to our “pre-COVID” curricular delivery, which is such a blessing. Students in the Class of 2024 received their white coats in January of this year. Currently, this class is finishing up its summer session of the primary care clinical curriculum and is enjoying everything the clinical preceptorships offer. We are forever indebted to our preceptors, who give their knowledge, time, and expertise for the next generation of PAs. We are exceedingly grateful and would not be able to graduate students without you!

The Class of 2023 celebrated the completion of its program with a Hooding Ceremony at the historic Empire Arts Center in downtown Grand Forks in May. After two years of intense study and clinical experiences, the former students have successfully crossed the stage! Most have already passed their national board exam and are credentialing for employment. Stay tuned for updated workforce information, available on our website in the fall, and congratulations to the Class of 2023!

As time marches on, the Class of 2025 began in May. The first week of class was filled with getting to know one another, orienting students to the PA Program and the School, and experiencing a solid start to new coursework. As a department, we look forward to working with these well-equipped students for the next two years as they prepare to become extraordinary PAs!

Congratulations to the students who received research awards, induction into the Pi Alpha Honor Society, and student scholarships. Your achievements, moral character, and future aspirations to lead successful careers in rural primary care are commendable. Great work!

A special recognition is in order to Kayla Olson, PA-C, and Coal Country Community Health Center for their awards of excellence

in the clinical education of our students. Read ahead for exciting details (spoiler alert)! We are truly grateful for your dedication and commitment to student learning.

There are so many alumni of the program who are involved in really wonderful things – accomplishments and awards. It is great to be able to share in the celebration, so please be sure to send these things our way so we can include notations in our future newsletters.

It’s hard to believe that we are nearing summers’ end already. As you prepare for the fall season, best wishes to you and your family. Enjoy each day and stay in touch! Give us a call or send us a quick note sometime – we love to hear from you!

Jeanie McHugo, Ph.D., PA-C  
Chair  
Department of Physician Assistant Studies



# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Michelle Murphy grew up in East Moline, a small town on the Illinois side of the Iowa-Illinois border. She earned a bachelor's degree in physiology and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction, both from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. While in college, Michelle participated in Air Force -ROTC and upon graduation was commissioned as an Air Force officer and stationed in Minot, N.D. While stationed at Minot she met and married her husband Jeff, and the pair saw the birth of their sons Matt and Brian. Michelle also started her North Dakota teaching career in Minot, teaching nights and weekends at Minot State University. Upon leaving the Air Force, she moved with her family to Grand Forks and completed her master's degree in physiology at UND. She then worked in pharmaceutical research for several years, while also continuing to teach, both for Lake Region State College and UND. In 2003, Jeff was transferred to Scott AFB in southern Illinois so Michelle converted her LRSC courses to fully online instruction and moved back to Illinois. In 2017, she returned to North Dakota to teach the Human Physiology I & II courses for the DPAS. She loves teaching PA students, noting how "they are always so eager to learn – especially about the kidneys!!" Michelle completed her Ph.D. in instructional design at UND in 2022. Always eager to learn more about physiology, she is starting a second Ph.D. at UND, this one in biomedical sciences, this fall. A lifelong swimmer, Michelle enjoys spending as much time as possible in and near water.

## PI ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY

Pi Alpha is the national physician assistant honor society organized for the promotion and recognition of both PA students and graduates. Membership signifies inductees' significant academic achievement and honors them for their leadership, research, community/professional service, and other related activities. The society also encourages a high standard of character and conduct among students and graduates. With this in mind, we are pleased to announce that the following SMHS Physician Assistant Studies students and two faculty were inducted into the Pi Alpha Honor Society this year. Congratulations!

- Matthew Davis – Fargo, N.D.
- Anthony Douthit – Carrollton, Texas
- David Franta – Winnebago, Minn.
- Alexie Harms – Crosby, N.D.
- Rodney Palmer – Lovell, Wyo.

# ADOPT-A-PA-STUDENT

Adopt-A-PA-Student Program can provide professional white coats for second-year physician assistant students who are about to begin their clinical experiences.

The white coats are formally presented to students during a ceremony. Similar to the Adopt-A-Med-Student Program, we also encourage donors to write letters to the students to be included in their coat pockets. Our goal is to provide a lasting, supportive connection between students and donors.

### Gifts of \$100 per student can be:

1. Mailed to the UND Alumni Association & Foundation, 3501 University Ave., Stop 8157, Grand Forks, ND, 58202. Please include "PA White Coat" in the check's memo line. Or
2. Submitted through [UNDalumni.org/smhs](http://UNDalumni.org/smhs). Under Comments, please put "PA White Coat."

Letters to students can be included in Option 1 above or emailed to [kristen.peterson@UND.edu](mailto:kristen.peterson@UND.edu).

Thank you to our 2023 Adopt-A-PA Student Sponsors:

- **Jennifer Alexander**, Galatia, Ill.
- **Dwight Birkley**, Sioux City, Iowa
- **Travis Booke**, Dickinson, N.D.
- **Dr. Janine Carson** and **Dr. Paul Carson**, Fargo, N.D.
- **Dakota Dermatology, Ltd.**, Sioux Falls, S.D.
- **Carl Eastep**, Ozark, Mo.
- **Bonita Gawel**, Hillman, Mich.
- **Dominic Giallombardo**, Petoskey, Mich.
- **Vicki L.** and **Dean Gorder**, Grand Forks N.D.
- **Paul R. Hamann**, Edina, Minn.
- **Annette C. Larson**, Fargo, N.D.
- **Kate Larson**, Garrison, N.D.
- **Leonard Linde**, Mobridge S.D.
- **Chukwuka Nnoli**, Grand Forks, N.D.
- **Deborah Okerson**, Dickinson, N.D.
- **Laura Parsons**, Sturgis, S.D.
- **Donald Person**, San Antonio, Texas
- **Beverly Russell**, Marshall, Mich.
- **Matthew Ryba**, Eau Claire, Wis.
- **Manpreet Sheabat**, Ripon, Calif.
- **Siblings of Molly Zak**, Thompson, N.D.
- **Michael J. Trimble**, Mount Juliet, Tenn.
- **Terrie Wold**, Moorhead, Minn.
- **Dr. Joshua Wynne** and **Dr. Susan Farkas**, Fargo, N.D.

# CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2023



The Hooding Ceremony for the PA Class of 2023 was held on May 12 at the Empire Arts Center in Grand Forks. We are proud of the students' accomplishment and dedication. A special thank you to all the preceptors for helping to prepare these students for their future as health care providers.

Brittany Almquist  
Morgan Bernhardt  
Ashley Black  
Samantha Braaten  
McKenzie Burke  
Chelsey Clark

Matthew Davis  
Cody DeWitt  
Anthony Douthit  
Kristopher Flynt  
David Franta

Timothy Fresonke  
Victoria Gingrey  
Heather Greenwood  
Alexie Harms  
Jenni Hetletved  
Sasha Hopfaut

Melanie Hulm  
Monica Hurst  
Kaylina Kelley  
Daniele Krouse  
Alexandra Laber

Brittany McPherson  
Jared Mouw  
Allison Obritsch  
Rodney Palmer  
Katie Prochnow  
Molly Ruebke

Mandy Stenehjerm  
Mary Weisberg  
Tyson Williams  
Jenna Zaeske  
Joshua Zetocha

# CLASS OF 2024



The following students progressed to the clinical phase of their PA education on January 20, 2023:

Kayli Anderson  
Steven Bateman  
Katja Berge  
Bailee Blickensderfer  
Justis Caldwell  
Maren Carlson  
Zachary Carlson  
Stephany Dimoulas  
Brianna Droessler-Aschliman  
Shelby Gawarecki  
Jessica Haugen Frenkel  
Mackenzie Holland  
Matthew Kalonick  
Rachel Kisse  
Isaac Knutson  
Cayla Mahrer

JoAnna McClelland  
Madison Nitschke  
Andrea Rieder  
Alexis Roth  
Chelsea Scheil  
Tania Schnepf  
Kelsey Sederquest  
Rachel Skoglund  
Valerie Snelling  
Lauren Staton  
Allison Stoeffler  
Karina Van Slyke  
Robert White  
Emily Yenter  
Molly Zak  
Lacey Zeiszler

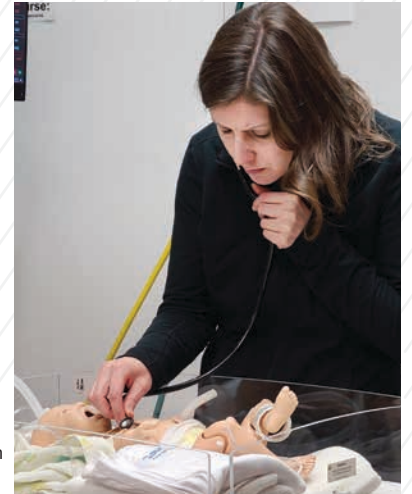


# ALUMNI WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Where are you practicing now? Any big accomplishments to announce? Great memories from PA school to share? We'd love to print your news and photos in a future newsletter. Contact us at [UND.med.paprogram@UND.edu](mailto:UND.med.paprogram@UND.edu)

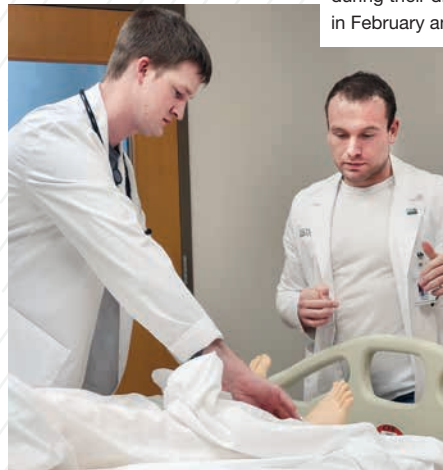
## SCOLARLY PROJECTS

Scholarly Projects were presented by the Class of 2023 on Wednesday, May 3, 2023



## DIDACTIC SESSIONS

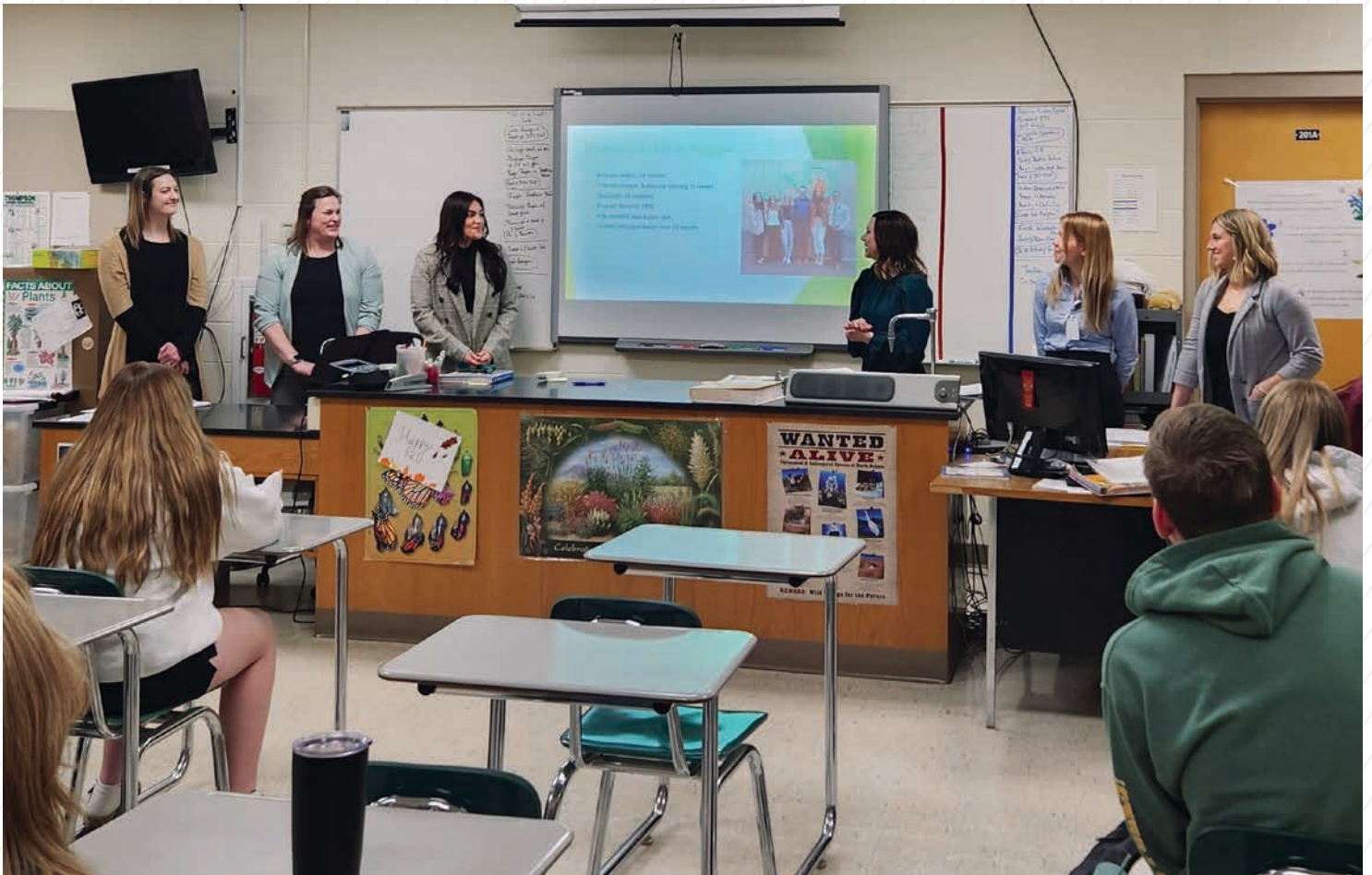
PA Class of 2024 learn through various labs and simulations during their didactic sessions in February and April





### FIRST WEEK

A busy week in May for the PA Class of 2025 during their first week in the program with orientation, team building activities and classroom learning.



### TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL

Valerie Snelling, Shelby Gawarecki, Molly Zak, Tania Schnepf, Stephany Dimoulas and Lauren Staton present to a local high school anatomy class.



### MENTORING PROGRAM

Faculty members Vicki Andvik and Kristen Carr completed the Alice T. Clark Scholars Mentoring Program during the academic year 2022-2023. Supported by the UND Foundation, the program serves to assist faculty in developing professional and personal networks, increases faculty awareness of campus culture and resources, and supports the professional development of faculty as teachers and scholars. The program is named in honor of retired Vice President for Academic Affairs Alice T. Clark. It is administered through the Teaching Transformation and Development Academy (TTaDA).

### COMMENCEMENT

Michelle Murphy, Mary Weisberg, Brittany Almquist, Sasha Hopfauf, Heather Greenwood, Mandy Stenehjelm, Daniele Krouse, Brittany McPherson, Kayliina Kelley and Russ Kauffman gather before the commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 13, 2023



## HRSA GERIATRICS WORKFORCE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The UND PA Program has partnered with Dakota Geriatrics, a Health Resources Service Administration Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP), to strengthen geriatrics knowledge among health professionals and improve the care of older adults in primary care. Here are a few ways you can get involved!

Social Media for Geriatric Education: Social media as an educational tool for health care learning has untapped potential. Benefits of social media include peer-to-peer engagement, active learning and interprofessional training. Dakota Geriatrics is exploring social media platforms as a vehicle to deliver short, pithy clinical pearls from evidence-based, peer-reviewed manuscripts

Instagram        @Age\_friendly  
 Twitter            @Dakota\_GWEP  
 Facebook         @DakotaGeriatrics

Other Educational Opportunities: Find age-friendly educational presentations and webinars (recorded and live), a free online geriatric curriculum for health professionals, and many other resources, on the Dakota Geriatrics Website: <https://www.dakotageriatrics.org/>



### WELCOME TO CAMPUS

The UND PA Class of 2025 assembles near the SMHS stairs

# AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

**Research Awards** were presented to the following graduates of the Class of 2023 on May 12 during the Hooding Ceremony at the Empire Arts Center in Grand Forks.

- Outstanding Scholarly Project, Faculty Choice: David Franta of Winnebago, Minn., for his project “Associations Between Screen Use and Depression in the Youth Population”
- Outstanding Scholarly Project, Student Choice: Tim Fresonke of Perham, Minn., for his project “Home-Based Cardiac Rehab vs. Center-Based Cardiac Rehab in Rural Areas”

**Kayla Olson, PA-C**, was awarded Preceptor of the Year and Coal Country Community Health Center received Clinical Site of the Year. These awards were presented at the UND Department of Physician Assistant Studies Hooding Ceremony on May 12. Allison Obritsch, PA-C '23, who completed her clinical rotations with Olson and Coal Country Community Health Center, accepted the awards on the Center's behalf. Allison shared how welcoming the facility was to students to help them learn, grow, and prepare students for future practice. “Providers went out of their way to include me in a patient's care which is all one can hope for in a clinical site placement,” Obritsch said. She continued to express her gratitude to Olson, who served as her primary preceptor, for all that she had done by pushing and challenging her in the best way possible and leading by example.

**Class of 2024 Mickey Knutson Scholarship:** Allison Stoeffler of La Crescent, Minn.

The Knutson endowment provides scholarships to UND students, allowing them the opportunity to complete their studies and pursue careers in the health field. The Knutson endowment is awarded to a graduate who will be working in primary care in a rural or underserved area.

**Class of 2024 Katherine Maryann Rasmussen Scholarship:** Stephany Dimoulas of Grand Forks, N.D., and Brianna Droessler-Aschliman of Missoula, Mont.

The Rasmussen endowment provides scholarships to one or more high-achieving and qualified students enrolled within the Physician Assistant Program at the UND School of Medicine & Health Sciences. Recipients shall be of high moral character and demonstrate the potential to lead successful lives and careers.

**Class of 2024 Kathy Ohly Memorial Scholarship through the North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants:** Cayla Mahrer of Forman, N.D., and Lacey Zeiszler of Jamestown, N.D.

The Kathy Ohly Memorial Scholarship was established in 1994 in loving memory of Kathy Ohly, a very active member of NDAPA. Ohly graduated from the University of North Dakota Nurse Practitioner/Physician Assistant Program in 1976 and was the president of the NDAPA from 1982-1984, where she chaired the Public Education Committee from 1987 to 1991 and the Bylaws Committee.

Kathy Ohly served on the Continuing Medical Education Committee from 1985 to 1987. Ohly served as one of the North Dakota representatives to the American Association of Physician Assistants House of Delegates during many national conventions. She organized and traveled with an orthopedic surgical team to Brazil to provide care for Brazilian children suffering from various orthopedic conditions. Her work in Brazil earned her the AAPA Humanitarian Award in 1987. She passed away on August 15, 1993, after a long and courageous battle with breast cancer.

**Class of 2024 Daryl A. Sieg Memorial Scholarship through the North Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants:** Chelsea Scheil of Faribault, Minn.

Daryl Sieg, assistant professor in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies, passed away suddenly on May 5, 2021. He joined the department in 2016 where he enjoyed teaching and sharing his knowledge with students. Daryl will be remembered for his many contributions to the Department, School, and University. The Daryl A. Sieg Scholarship Fund was established by the UND PA Class of 2022.

## ALUMNI NEWS AND UPDATES

- Chuka Nnoli, '19, was recognized by his employer Altru Health System in the Caring for One Another Spotlight. Chuka was nominated by a co-worker for his selflessness, positive attitude, and compassion. He is a PA-C at Altru Clinic in East Grand Forks, Minn.
- Jordan Wiedmann, '20, was nominated for the 2023 YWCA of Cass Clay Women of the Year. This event honors women from Cass and Clay counties whose lives, talents, and passion shape the community. Jordan is the founding Director of the Young Women's Specialty Clinic and a provider for the Pediatric Specialty Clinic at Saint Sophie's in Fargo, N.D.
- Casey Myklebust, '20, has joined Grand Forks Clinic in Grand Forks, N.D.
- Danielle Tretbar, '22, has joined the family medicine department at Sanford Health in Park Rapids, Minn.

**Department of Physician Assistant Studies**

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# WELCOME CLASS OF 2025



There was much excitement as the UND PA Class of 2025 were welcomed for their first week to campus on May 15, 2023.

- |                  |                |                  |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Jase Bakker      | Grace Grani    | Shawn McClaughry |
| Jozie Benzie     | Kim Hinkel     | Cassidy Mindeman |
| Dillon Boen      | Ben Hinkle     | Abi Oliver       |
| Kendra Bohm      | Sarah Jacobson | Brianna Peterson |
| Ellie Brandt     | Mary Janke     | Evie Reynolds    |
| Alayne Brekke    | Klay Johnson   | Jordan Saxerud   |
| Rachel Brothers  | Maddie Kennedy | McKenna Taylor   |
| Megan Bryn       | Alex Lange     | Mackenzie Weis   |
| Clara Burkman    | Miah Lee       | Hannah Wiersma   |
| Paige Fritz      | Todd Marchant  | Nathan Young     |
| Carly Gilbertson | Jackie Mattson | Debbie Zabel     |