

# WFUBMC Nurse Anesthesia Program

## Creating *Excellence* in Nurse Anesthesia

Fall, 2008 newsletter

Nurse Anesthesia Program (336) 716-1411

(336) 716-1411 Fax:  
(336) 716-1412  
Email:  
NAPinfo@wfubmc.edu

[www1.wfubmc.edu/  
nurse\\_anesthesia](http://www1.wfubmc.edu/nurse_anesthesia)



## Director's Message

A new academic year is underway, and the nurse anesthesia program continues to grow in the quality of resources and services offered. This past year, we saw four students published, three students participate in international clinical experiences, a new clinical rotation added, and we participated in another campaign to support a student's run for the national student representative position. Students continue to gain valuable real-world experience through our service learning program, and a current student project is serving to help our anesthesia technicians achieve national certification. We are also honored to have student Stacy Mitchell serving on the Council on Public Interest in Anesthesia. Our students are living up to our vision of *Excellence* in nurse anesthesia. I am very thankful for the support of NC Baptist Hospital, our clinical sites,

and our faculty who are all providing good encouragement and role-modeling to our students. It is only through our own positive example that we can expect students to embody these values. To that end, I have been serving our profession as a member of the Council on Certification of Nurse Anesthetists and a member of the Certification Exam Committee. Among the three administrative faculty of the program, we have all been involved in writing for professional publications, in serving our state professional association, and in active clinical practice where we are providing clinical instruction to our students firsthand. I feel very fortunate for the support of our Medical Center (you can read about facilities updates below), a hard-working faculty, and an excellent cadre of clinical instructors. The program is well-supported to continue providing an outstanding education to our future colleagues.

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## New CEO Named

Dr. John McConnell addressed Medical Center Leadership on November 5. In the position of CEO of the Medical Center, Dr. McConnell will improve efficiency and cooperation among many complimentary

departments throughout the Medical Center. We are excited about the merger under a single CEO, and the prospects for new collaborations between our program and others in the institution.

## Facilities Update

This past year, we have made a number of updates to our facilities to better serve our students. We have found great success in our clinical skills laboratory, which was assembled last year. This lab provides a space for students to learn and practice technical skills including the machine check, airway management, spinal and epidural administration, central line placement, and others. The only disadvantage of the skills lab was that its physical space was a bit cramped for us to do large group work, such as to include the entire class. This year, we were able to move our skills lab to a larger space, also in our building. We have moved the lab to a space that is approximately twice the size, and which provides a punch-key access so that students can access the lab for individual work at their convenience. In our typical skills lab work of groups of 12, this new lab will provide ample room, but we will also be well-accommodated there when we bring in the entire class of 24 for large group work.

At the same time as we are expanding our clinical skills lab, the simulation lab has experienced some rapid growth. Thanks to a cooperative agreement with Winston-Salem State University, we have seen the inception of the "Virtual Hospital" just downstairs from the nurse anesthesia program. This multi-room simulation suite houses a large classroom and multiple

rooms holding adult and pediatric simulation mannequins. The Virtual Hospital is an extension of the Center for Applied Learning project, and we are excited about the prospects this project has for simulation-based learning throughout the institution. At the time the virtual hospital was installed, we also took the opportunity to have the simulation training expert work with our faculty to update them on technical and theoretical aspects of simulation-based teaching.

In other areas of facility growth, we have also been working on outfitting our nurse anesthesia program library. This room provides students with a quiet place to study, perform group work, or conduct research via the internet. Class of 2008 graduates found the library very useful as a private meeting spot to work on group capstone projects and to use our computer-based board review tool. The library has also been found useful for graduate assistant work, for our summer volunteer, and for students to perform make-up testing and other assignments. We will continue to build the functionality of the library, and hopefully add some additional computer terminals, board review materials, updated reference

books, and other useful resources for students. The Helen Vos Library fund has provided us support in building this library facility. We also updated our computer access to include wireless internet access in the library, as well as throughout the classroom and office suite. This access will make it easier for students to retrieve course materials, work on assignments, download reference materials, and perform other useful functions, from any location around the nurse anesthesia program.

The final facilities project we undertook this past summer was to give our program a cosmetic update. The carpet in the classroom and office suite was replaced, and we are about to update the countertops in the kitchen. These updates provide a more modern and warm atmosphere for our students.



Students practice invasive techniques in the airways skills lab.

## Faculty Expands

After serving as interim Assistant Program Director for a year, Paul Welty accepted the offer to assume the Assistant Director position permanently this past summer. Paul provides an excellent mix of clinical and administrative duties, and he has been very active in expanding our



Courtney Brown, CRNA, MSN  
Clinical Education Coordinator

simulation-based education. As he takes on additional roles in program evaluation and accreditation management, he will continue to provide clinical and laboratory instruction.

Shortage of nurse anesthesia program faculty is a problem that plagues programs nationwide. To find faculty members who are qualified, motivated, and ambitious to take on the increased workload is a challenge. That is why our program is very fortunate to have hired back one of our own stellar alumni, Courtney Brown, to serve as our Clinical Education Coordinator. Courtney was an outstanding student in the program, and her academic achievement was recognized by her being awarded both the Dean's Recognition award by the School of Nursing, and Chal Maree

Award of Excellence from the anesthesia program upon her graduation. Courtney has had a long-standing interest in education, and has been involved in teaching in the CNOR course for our surgical nurses, as well as acting as a clinical and didactic instructor for our program. Having expertise in the pathogenesis of pain, Courtney was invited to deliver a lecture on pain pathways and the prevention of chronic pain at the AANA national meeting this past August. Courtney is responsible for the clinical education aspect of our program, including developing and managing clinical rotations, assessment of student clinical performance, and clinical correlation conferences. She also provides clinical instruction to students in our inpatient, outpatient, and pediatric surgery departments. A Ph.D. student, herself, Courtney will be an excellent asset to our faculty, as we anticipate making the transition to a DNP program in the future.

## Program Publications

2008 saw students published four times; Mark Youens, Kelly Tonkin, and Mercie Payne had articles published in the *International Student Journal of Nurse Anesthesia*, and recent graduate Stephanie Lindsey had a case report published in the *AANA Journal*. Scientific writing continues to be an important aspect

of students' professional development, with all students preparing manuscripts and gaining insight into the publication process. The program itself also supports professional publications, with Dr. Rieker serving on the editorial board of the *International Student Journal*, and having four book chapters in various

states of production. Courtney Brown also provided a chapter update for the American Society of Peri-Anesthetic Nurses' *Core Curriculum*. Finally, we look forward to the future publication of a new pharmacology book by clinical affiliate instructors, Joe Joyce and Richard Ouellette.

## Program Welcomes the Class of 2010

Our new class is on board and rapidly filling their brains with anesthesia knowledge, as they began their clinical practica in November. The class of 2010 consists of: Tabatha Berry



(Madison, NC), Kim Brady (Rosedale, MD), Aaron Crowther (Owing Mills, MD), Spencer Davis (Lexington, NC), Kris Foard (Lexington, NC), Ariel Garl (Tucson, AZ), Kim Hayes (Greensboro, NC), Carri Hicks (Olive Hill, KY), Kelly Holt (Snow Camp, NC), Daria Lewis (Chapel Hill, NC), Kimberley McCall (Greensboro, NC), Sarah Messenger (Clemmons, NC), Sara Miller (Greensboro, NC), Emily Moorefield (Danbury,

NC), Martha Ortiz (Cleburne, TX), Heather Penland (Winston-Salem, NC), Melanie Robbins (Lewisville, NC), Jennifer Rock (Greensboro, NC), Marilee Runge (Winston-Salem, NC), Heather Smith (Lexington, NC), Luke Stafford (Durham, NC), Kelly Welch (Morrisville, NC), Jennifer Williard (Belews Creek, NC), and Sarah Williams (Mebane, NC). Aaron Crowther and Carri Hicks are serving as Research Assistants, and Sara Miller was elected by her class to serve as the class representative.

## Technological Advances Aid Students

We have implemented a few new technological advancements to benefit our students. The first is a transition in the way we perform clinical evaluations of student performance. Students' clinical evaluations are now completed and submitted immediately, through a hand-held electronic device or a computer

terminal. This system eliminates the potential for evaluations to be lost or delayed. This new format is also designed to facilitate better direct communication between student and instructor. We have also converted much of our testing to a computerized format for many of the university courses. This provides students

with practice taking their exams in the same format as their board exam will be (computerized, and one question at a time, without backtracking). The computerized exams provide students with instantaneous feedback on their performance, as soon as they complete their exam.

## Class of 2011 Selection Underway

As this newsletter is published, we are in the midst of conducting interviews for the class of 2011. We continue to be blessed with a very strong applicant pool. Those candidates offered an interview have an average GPA of 3.6, GRE of 1100 (verbal + quantitative), ICU ex-

perience of 3.1 years, and RN experience of 4.75 years. The candidates interviewed thus far have been outstanding, and we look forward to assembling the class which will begin next August.



Students take an exam in our computer lab.

## Student Achievement

We were very proud of Katie Pehan and her campaign team last summer as she made her bid for the student representative position to the AANA Education Committee. The experience is always a great way for students to learn about campaigning for an elected position. Katie and her classmates represented our program very well as they campaigned at the AANA annual meeting. They were very recognizable in their lime green shirts bearing the logo, “Don’t hesitate... Vote for Kate”. While Ka-

tie was not elected to the position, the experience was enjoyable for all involved, and we were at least glad to see a fellow North Carolinian elected to serve as student representative. Another exciting event at the AANA meeting was supporting Alicia Sechrist as she competed in the college bowl competition. Alicia’s team took second place in the contest.

We also owe one more note of congratulations to Adree Williams. At the May Special Exercises of the School of Nurs-

ing graduation, Adree received the School of Nursing Alumni Association award for leadership, based on her many accomplishments in the program. We strive to create exemplary graduates, and are always proud when the excellence displayed by our students is also recognized by other parties. Adree is currently serving as a clinical affiliate instructor, and she is taking a lead role in developing our new orientation course for prospective students.

## Lifespan Development; Program Funded

This year saw the second offering of our groundbreaking orientation course, “Surviving the Bubble”. Coordinator Jennifer Ferguson, CRNA welcomed back team-building experts Kat Vanden Heuvel, and Aimee Jones to provide new students with a valuable day of teamwork exercises and practical work on planning for their success in the program. Our goal through these activities is not for students to only endure, but rather to *flourish* in the program. As a special guest this year, High Point police officer Ken Leonard gave a moving presentation about his injury in Iraq which left him a double amputee, and his inspirational fight to pass the *Police Officers Physical Abilities Test*.

Ken is one of an extremely small number of individuals to be certified as a police officer, while walking on two prosthetic legs. Ken’s story was an inspiration to new students who will be facing their own challenges over the next two years.

Participants in the *Bubble* orientation continue to enjoy this program to help them prepare to embark upon their program of study. The next phase of our Lifespan Development initiative leads us to offer an introductory course to prepare *prospective* students for the SRNA role. This course is based upon research performed here last year, which surveyed nurse anesthesia students nationally to determine priority curriculum items for an

introductory course. The course will provide participants with exposure to the SRNA role, and it will instruct in some subjects which are deemed critical to the success of new students. Participants will also enjoy hands-on instruction in advanced skills using simulated models and real anatomical specimens. Teaching materials and course development are being subsidized by over \$10,000 in grant funding provided by the United States Department of Labor. This program has been developed with partnerships from the University of North Carolina and the Wake Forest School of Medicine, which will both provide important resources for participants.



Courtney Brown teaches a student in our patient simulation laboratory.

*"Very strong, competent CRNA. Able to handle all types of cases."*

Comment from 2006 employer survey



The class of 2008 gathers after presentation of their capstone projects

Nurse Anesthesia Program  
Wake Forest University  
Baptist Medical Center  
Medical Center Boulevard Winston-Salem, NC  
27157

