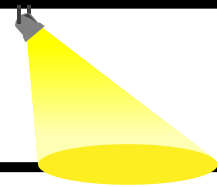




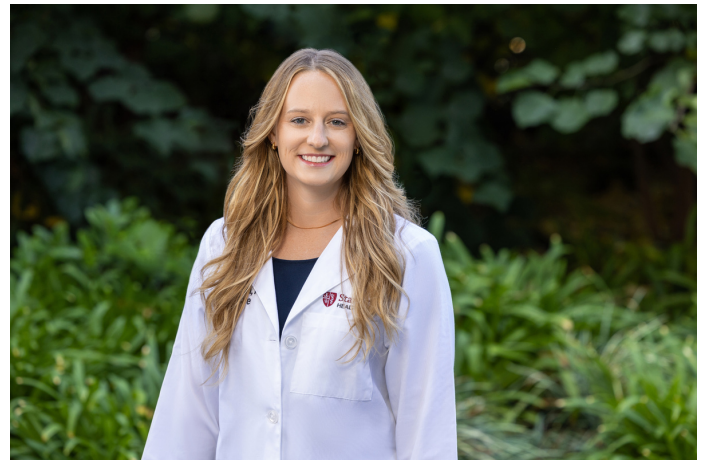
CWRU PA Program

<https://case.edu/medicine/physician-assistant/>

Alumni Spotlight



PA Amber Beserra started her education at Case Western Reserve University with a B.A. in Nutritional Biochemistry and Metabolism. She was initially drawn to CWRU for its' focus on sciences and holistic approach to education. Fortunately, she was able to continue her education at CWRU when accepted to the inaugural cohort for the Master of Physician Assistant Studies program. Upon graduating in 2018, she started her PA career at Cleveland Clinic in the Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU) where she had completed a rotation as a PA student.



Amber Bessara, PA-C

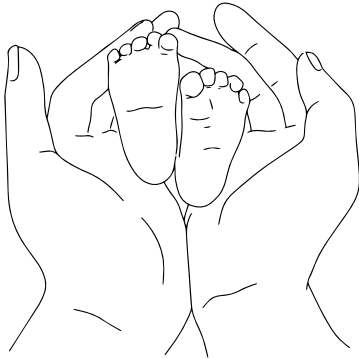
During her tenure at Cleveland Clinic, she quickly found a niche in simulation education largely due to her positive exposure to simulation during CWRU's PA program.

Amber later accepted a position with a developing Advanced Practice Provider (APP) team in the MICU at Stanford Healthcare. At Stanford, she quickly grew into leadership and ultimately stepped into the Lead APP position for the MICU team where she now leads a team of 14 critical care APPs. Beyond the MICU, Beserra is the 2023 co-chair for Stanford Healthcare's APP Shared Leadership Council to help APPs across the enterprise grow as providers and leaders. She was recently nominated for APP of the Year 2022 and received a Stanford SHINE scholarship to build a simulation workshop on ultrasound guided needle tip visualization in critical care procedures.

With only four years of clinical practice under her belt, Amber has already fostered a strong appreciation for the Physician Assistant career. Within her interdisciplinary MICU team, Beserra has practiced at the top of her license through managing critically ill patients including direct patient management, independently performing critical care procedures, leading codes, and being a companion and "medical-translator" for families. As a PA-C, she not only leads the care of critically ill patients, but she also has roles in establishing hospital policies and unit workflows, physician and APP education, quality improvement, and enterprise-wide APP initiatives. Beserra has found purpose and drive in her PA career as a provider, educator, and leader.

Baby News!

Kristen Carey (CO'21) and husband Spencer welcomed their first child Cameron in February! They are living in Columbus, Ohio. Kristen is working in Orthopedic Trauma at Grant Medical Center.



Alex Ockerse (CO'20) and wife Carolyn welcomed baby Evie June in February! Alex is local to Cleveland and working in the MICU at the Cleveland Clinic.



CONGRATULATIONS

Houser Duncan (CO'22) and wife Macie welcomed baby boy Briggs in March!



Alumni Resources

Job Postings



Alumni Opportunities

Stay involved with the CWRU PA program! We have opportunities:

- precepting Experiential Learning/Community Service events
- precepting in a clinical rotation
- helping with simulations
- lecturing
- application review

Contact Jen (jennifer.capretta@case.edu) to let us know you are interested!



Friday, August 18, 2023: 5-7pm- Alumni Happy Hour (Join the graduating PA class and the PA faculty/staff in the HEC for cocktails and snacks!)

Saturday, August 19, 2023: 11am - PA Class of 2023 Graduation Ceremony (Join us for the ceremony at Maltz Performing Arts Center) - More to come

More alumni events are in the planning stages for this weekend! Stay tuned for details but please plan to join us!



What's New with the Faculty?

- **We are growing!** CWRU PA program will welcome alumni **Bianca Placucci** (CO'20) to our core faculty group on May 1. She will assist with the didactic year.
- **They are involved in iSCTL!** iSCTL is the Interprofessional Scholars Collaboration in Teaching & Learning. Two of the PA faculty have been selected to serve as Faculty Scholars this year.
 - PA student Zachary Lichter and **Professor Kate Kunstel** will be working on a project to develop a curriculum for psychological safety in medical education. Psychological safety is the underpinning of effective teams; it leverages diverse teams and sets the foundation for interpersonal trust, all of which is essential for interprofessional teamwork and providing excellent patient care.
 - Medical student Landry Cowley and **Professor Jereme Mellenthin** will be working on teaching a modified concept map technique aimed at helping medical and PA students to quickly learn the key features or sign and symptom clusters of diseases. Knowing the key features of various diseases is a fundamental skill that some students struggle to master. Our method will give students another way to learn and can be used as a building block to help them connect the pathophysiology of disease to the symptoms, work up, and treatment.
- **They are recognized for research!** **Professor Desiree Palumbo** and Aaron Harvey (CO'22) were invited to present their research with a poster at the IAMSE (International Association of Medical Science Educators) conference in Cancun in June.



What's New with the Students?

We are happily preparing to welcome 40 new students in mid-May! Remember apartment shopping, moving to Cleveland, and the anticipation of a whole new chapter? These students are excited, nervous, and motivated by your success stories.

If you would like to participate a new project to encourage the newbies, please email Jen. We are looking for alumni to write handwritten (& sealed) notes of encouragement that will help them get over the hurdles. We know there will be times they will doubt themselves or want to quit. We are hoping that your success stories can help them focus on the goal and stay the course. Let Jen know if you can help. We need 40 letters!

Faculty Spotlight

Kate Kunstel, MBA, MMSc, PA-C
Assistant Professor



What do you do when not working as a PA/PA educator?

I love to research and try different vegan recipes. I try to make a new dish every weekend. I love being outside in nature and walking or hiking with my dog, Warren, trail running, and doing nature photography. I also love reading fiction.

What is your take on wellness/resilience in healthcare providers, and what do you do to promote your own wellness in what can be a stressful profession?

This topic now seems to be getting much needed attention. A key concept I learned about in business school is psychological safety - essentially a culture where it's okay to ask for help, it's okay to speak candidly, it's okay to admit mistakes. I think if we could shift the culture of medicine to be a psychologically safe space to learn and work, that would be a huge step forward in promoting wellness and resilience.

What is your advice for new PAs? My advice for new PAs is to keep an open mind, never stop learning, and ask for help when you need it. Never hesitate to show empathy, consider other perspectives, and put yourself in the shoes of your patients and their loved ones.

What is your favorite Cleveland activity (park, festival, concert, etc)?

I grew up on the East side of Cleveland and then moved away for almost twenty years before moving back here, and I've always said that the Metroparks park system is the true gem of Cleveland. I basically grew up at the North Chagrin reservation and now enjoy going to the various parks to walk my dog, Warren, or to run on the trails.

What specialty were you most drawn to before starting PA school/in which specialty do you practice now? Did it change, and if so, what drew you to your current specialty?

I was a dietitian before I became a PA and as a dietitian, I worked on the bone marrow transplant service. I learned so much about malignant hematology and caring for this specific population of patients and I knew this is what I wanted to pursue as a PA. I did keep my mind open as I went through my clinical rotations and I really enjoyed rotating through several other specialties, but it always came back to inpatient malignant hematology for me. I have been a hem/onc PA for 13 years now.

What is your most memorable moment from PA school?

During the first semester of our program is when we took Anatomy and human cadaver lab. When we were learning about the anatomy of the hand, I took the lead with the dissection of our cadaver's hand. I was not prepared for how emotional that experience would be for me. I remember thinking, "This person worked with these hands, loved with these hands, created with these hands", and it was one of many, many reminders that caring for patients involves so much more than making a diagnosis.

What is something you are passionate about (a cause, a sports team, a hobby, etc.)?

I am very passionate about animal rights and the environment. I have been vegan for over five years, both for the animals and for the planet. The learning curve was steep at first but I maintain that going vegan was the easiest decision I have ever made.

Faculty Spotlight

Sara Kraus, MMS, PA-C
Assistant Professor
Director of Didactic Curriculum

What brought you to PA education?

I just love teaching. I always have. I think it is really special to help student hold on to the empathy and compassion that they have at the beginning of their training. That is why I choose PA education over any other—that compassion is so important!

What do you do when not working as a PA/PA educator?

I work in the ER—but really I just run around after 2 children and never stop moving until bedtime. I love to garden, and I am very happy that my 4-year-old is getting old enough to help pull weeds! We also have a lot of dance parties.

What is your advice for new PAs?

If you can, take some time for yourself before you get too embedded in your career. Enjoy being young, healthy, and able. You have a lot to learn, and it will come with time. (And work hard when you do work!)

Favorite...

Restaurant: Luna Bakery

Cleveland activity: Talking walks in our neighborhood or at Lakeview Cemetery

Fiction book:

Clinical rotation:

ICU medicine with Joe Keller tied with Emergency Medicine with Nathan Astaneh...tied with surgery at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center

Are you a spender or a saver?

I love projects. Right now I am working on stripping the paint off my 100 year old back door to see if I can restore the beautiful solid wood. So...this is a fancy way of saying that I am a spender—I like to buy tools and plants. I love new clothes, too, but I'll wear the same outfit for a week if it meant I could get a new garden tool!

Are you a dreamer or a realist?

I am the definition of a dreamer. I love planning, imagining, playing. I think being a dreamer helps with facing reality, sometimes! Knowing that there is something beyond the space I am in right now can help through the hard times. If I don't listen to my imagination, I often find myself ignoring really good advice.

What three things might we find you doing over a summer weekend in Cleveland?

Three things...garden garden garden? We're hopeful to get some more pool time in this summer. The girls are in swim lessons now and will hopefully feel more empowered to swim in the big pool than they have in the past. If I am not in the garden or at the pool, you'll probably be able to find us at Mitchells.



Rosie & Emmy