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Fall 2016

University of North Carolina-Greensboro Genetic Counseling Program



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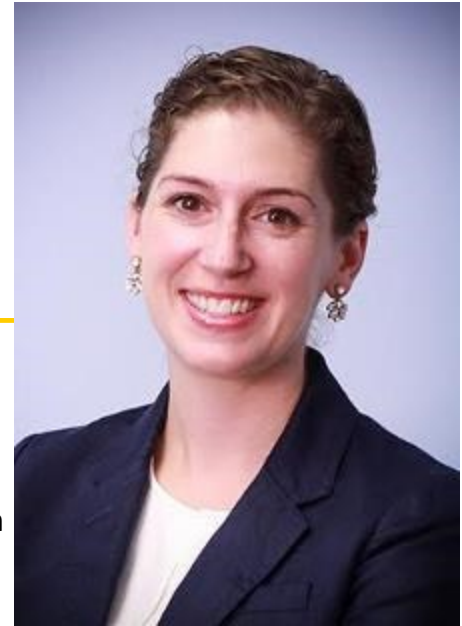
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From The Director's Desk:

Lauren Doyle, MGC, CGC



Why, hello! It is with great honor that I write the first installment of "From the Director's Desk" from our little "home" on Spring Garden Street. For those of you whom I have not yet met, let me provide you with a brief introduction. I came to UNCG by way of Syracuse, New York, a small city right in the heart of "Upstate" New York. I completed my undergraduate work in Biochemistry at the State University of New York College at Geneseo, and had the opportunity to work there for a few years before heading back to graduate school. I completed my Masters of Genetic Counseling through the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and had the privilege of working at the University of Maryland Medical Center for several years in both clinical and educational roles. As you can tell, public education is a passion of mine, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work with the leadership and students at UNCG. I have been thoroughly impressed by the deep sense of community demonstrated by the program alumni, as well as the continued dedication over countless hours and miles of our supervisors, advising mentors, and lecturers. UNCG is proud to house North Carolina's training program; it is a shining star in the UNC system. Undoubtedly, the program continues to be an incredible success thanks to you. I am here to serve every member of the UNCG Genetic counseling family, and am looking forward to meeting each and every one of you in the years to come.



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

Congratulations Class of 2016!



Class of 2016 Capstone Projects: All abstracts accepted for poster presentation at NSGC Annual Conference in Seattle, WA!

Boggs, K., LeRoy, B., McConnell, T. and Callanan, N. Relatives and Risk-Reporting: An Updated Assessment of Genetic Counselors' Perspectives.

Burden, C., Stewart, R., Koty, P., and Reitnauer, P. Genotype-Phenotype Correlation of Individuals With Chromosome 8p23 Duplication or Deletion Syndromes.

Cousins, E., Helm, M., Callanan, N. and Carrere, A. Interest In and Attitudes Toward Genetic Assessment of Venous Thromboembolism Risk Among Direct-To-Consumer Personal Genomic Testing Consumers.

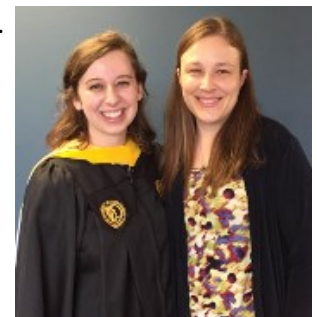
Ensinger, M., Haga, S., Callanan, N. and Mills, R. Development And Assessment Of An Educational Video About Pharmacogenetic Testing.

Garbarini, M., Powell, K., Magrinat, G., Vogelsinger, M., and Stewart, R. A Needs Assessment for the Development of a Hereditary Breast Cancer Support Group in Greensboro, North Carolina.

LeShay, R., Dix, J., East, K., Lee, K. and Stewart, R. Impact of an Educational Intervention on Undergraduate Students' Interest in Pursuing a Career in Genetic Counseling.

Roth, V., Heise, E., Foreman, K. and Callanan, N. An Examination Of The Factors Contributing To The Expansion Of Subspecialty Genetic Counseling

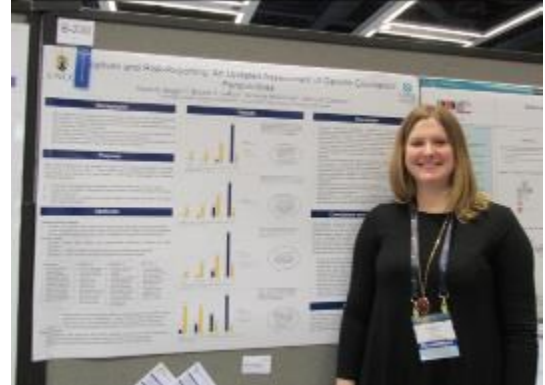
Veazey, R., Henshaw, A., Littlejohn, R. and Stewart, R. Genetic Counselors' Perspective on the Impact of Spanish-Speaking Interpreter-Mediated Sessions.



UNCG Alumni & Students in Seattle, WA 2016 NSGC Annual Education Conference



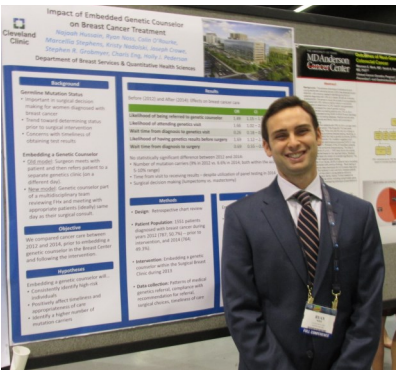
2016 UNCG Genetic Counseling Program Alumni Reunion.



Above: Kayla Boggs (Class of 2016) presenting her poster.



Above: Kristy Lee (2002), Vanessa Rangel (2004) and Ashley Simpson (2003)



Above: Ryan Noss (Class of 2012)



Above: Kristin Cornell and Kelly East (Class of 2010)



Lauren Masso and Aimee Brown on top of the Space Needle.



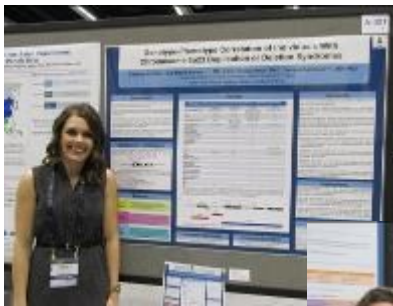
Class of 2014 having fun at the Seattle Aquarium!



Left: More fun at program alumni reunion!



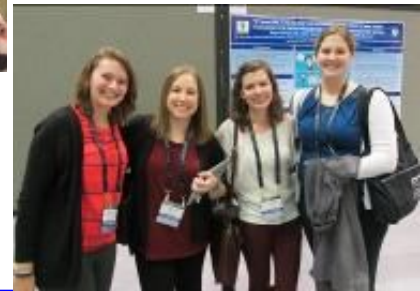
Right: Program Director Lauren Doyle enjoyed meeting program graduates.



New graduates Chelsey Burden (above) and Victoria Roth (right).



Above: Katie Garbarini (Class of 2016).



Class of 2014 (above) and Class of 2016 (left).

Genetic Counseling featured at 2016 UNCG Homecoming

Each fall UNCG welcomes alumni, current students, families and the greater community to campus for a variety of Homecoming festivities. Our Genetic Counseling Program is housed in the School of Health and Human Sciences (HHS) which has afforded us many opportunities. The HHS Alumni Association showcases different departments and programs at our Homecoming tent each year and Genetic Counseling was selected to feature in fall 2016 (lower left)! Our program graduate assistants represented us well in discussing the importance of knowing family health history



with visitors and raising awareness of our program and profession. They also challenged attendees to a game of genetics jeopardy...it turns out chocolate is a powerful incentive! We also participated in the Homecoming parade (see above) and our very own Dean Celia Hooper was crowned Ms. Homecoming Queen (right)! The Genetic Counseling Program continues to appreciate its inclusion in the School of HHS and we invite you to join us next year for Homecoming 2017!



2016 HHS Alumni Association Pacesetter Award: Rachel Mills, MS, CGC

The UNCG School of Health and Human Sciences presents the Pacesetter Award to an outstanding alumna who has received local, state, or regional recognition by showing a dedication to scholarship, leadership or service either in their career or through civic involvement. We are pleased to announce that the 2016 School of HHS Pacesetter Award for the Genetic Counseling Program is Ms. Rachel Mills.



Ms. Mills received her BS in Biology, Cum laude, from Presbyterian College in 2006 and her MS in Genetic Counseling from UNCG in 2008. During her time at UNCG, Rachel completed a Capstone Project entitled “Methods of Educating Physicians about Uncommon Genetic Disorders: The Stickler Syndrome Awareness Project.” She also worked as a Graduate Assistant for the National Coordinating and Evaluation Center for Sickle Cell Newborn Screening. Rachel made significant contributions to help meet the project goals to evaluate and create educational materials for parents of infants that are identified with sickle cell disease or trait by newborn screening. Through this work, Rachel developed skills in health literacy and developing educational materials.

After graduation Rachel elected to apply her genetic counseling training in research-oriented positions, first as a Health Educator in the Risk Communication Laboratory of Duke Health Systems from 2008-2010. Mills shared “To be completely honest, I actually stumbled into my job as a research genetic counselor. But once there, I realized I really love it because I am constantly learning new things and I’m contributing to scientific knowledge that encourages other people to learn new things. The flexibility and variety of projects I work on keeps my work exciting.”

In 2010 she joined the Duke Institute of Genome Sciences and Policy as a Clinical Research Coordinator I, and was promoted to Clinical Research Coordinator II in the Duke Center for Applied Genomics and Precision Medicine in 2012. Her recent work has focused on issues related to pharmacogenetic testing from the perspectives of consumers as well as pharmacists and other healthcare providers. “I’ve been very lucky to work with research investigator, Dr. Haga, who has served as a mentor and has taught me much about genetics research” says Mills. “She has supported me and encouraged me to follow my own interests and take on my own projects. Through our work, I’ve found a niche in pharmacogenetics and been able to become a leader among genetic counselors.” She has 20 publications in peer reviewed journals in the past three years and is first author for six of these. She has also done eight poster presentations at national meetings including the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC), American College of Medical Genetics and American Public Health Association.

Students in our MS Genetic Counseling program complete a Capstone Research Project under the guidance of a Capstone Project Committee. Rachel has served as Chair of Capstone Project Committees for four of our students in the past six years. Rachel describes her approach to student mentoring as “I try to be the committee member that I would like to have if I was a student again. I try to be supportive and open, while also taking a no-nonsense approach and being very clear on my expectations. I try to make research feel fun and interesting for them.” She also conducts a seminar about literature review and citation for our second year genetic counseling students. Rachel has been an excellent role model and mentor for our students, and her loyalty to the program is much appreciated.

Rachel is also actively engaged in genetic counseling professional organizations and in community and professional education. As a member of the NSGC Education committee she contributed to planning the 2016 Annual Education Conference and is an active member of the NSGC Membership Committee. She has done presentations on cutting edge topics for healthcare providers at Duke, as well as more general presentations about genetic counseling as a career for audiences ranging from middle school to undergraduate students. “Many of my professional goals involve

Continued on Page 7

Pacesetter Award (continued)

education, and my work and training as a genetic counselor has provided a number of teaching and mentoring opportunities,” shared Mills.

In the ten years since her graduation from the MS Genetic Counseling program Rachel has grown professionally and has established herself as an expert in cutting edge research that addresses issues in the implementation of genomic science to clinical practice. She has been a loyal supporter of the MS Genetic counseling program, sharing her enthusiasm and expertise as a research mentor. Rachel reflects upon her time in the program, “ I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to attend UNCG’s GC program. And my appreciation extends beyond the professional preparation. I have the most amazing classmates who became and still are a very important part of my life. I felt like I had great support when I was in the program, and that support has continues since. Nancy Callahan is an amazing mentor and I appreciate her beyond words. I have valued Randi’s and Lauren’s openness in allowing me to remain connected to the program via Capstone committees and guest lectures. I’m so so proud to be a graduate of the UNCG GC program!” Rachel is truly a pacesetter in our field and we look forward to having a front row seat as she continues to develop professionally and make significant contributions to the field of genetic counseling.



SUPERVISOR SPOTLIGHTS

Laura Kline, MS, CGC



Nominated By: Rebecca LeShay, Class of 2016

“Laura was such a wonderful supervisor, she not only motivated me during my rotation, but also served as an advocate for me to help me accomplish my rotation goals and complete my rotation project. She was a great mentor, and exemplified all of the qualifications we hope for in a supervisor, and I think she deserves to be recognized for the awesome work she is doing with our program’s students!”



When I was a student, I looked to my supervisors as a source of not only knowledge, but support in navigating the real world after graduation. My goal with students is to share my experiences with them as I supervise them, and to provide support to build their confidence. I think the lab is especially suited for rotations since it is outside the realm of the “classical clinical rotation” but provides dynamic real world scenarios and allows students to see how genetic testing is performed and what the results can mean for a family searching for a diagnosis. In terms of the newest technologies and testing options, the lab is really at the forefront for learning about these new testing tools and teaching the clinical field about new products, as well as benefits and limitations to new technologies. The science nerd in my really enjoys the intellectual stimulation my job provides me. Supervising allows for a good amount of transparency, for students to see that none of us is perfect or knows everything. In doing so, I see students relax and focus more intently on the learning process, and I get to observe them as colleagues-in-training. Supervising is year another opportunity to step outside of the comfort zone of daily work. I am accountable not only to myself, but also to my students that put their trust in me to guide them.



Karen Cornelliussen, MS



Nominated By: Victoria Roth, Class of 2016

“Wake Forest was my 3rd rotation and where I felt I truly became comfortable with my own style. Karen really helped me with that and was always so supportive of me trying new things and saying things in a different way. It is those things that I really appreciate in a supervisor. I really like that I didn’t feel like I had to fit a mold when I was at that rotation! “

I am very honored to be nominated for the Supervisor Spotlight! I remember how instrumental clinical rotations and experiences with clinical supervisors were during my training as a student. The UNCG program has a wonderful network of strong clinical rotation sites for students. I have enjoyed the opportunity to be part of this network and work with students from the program since becoming a genetic counselor. It is certainly not a one-way street though, as being a supervisor has helped me in my own professional development. While we are there to help guide and contribute to students’ training, I have also benefitted from my involvement with students. Working with students has helped me in my approach with patients, and it is not uncommon to investigate and learn things together with students, as each person brings their own unique perspective to various cases. It is very rewarding to have the opportunity to be involved in the training of students and to then have those students as wonderful colleagues in our profession.



Ginger Hocutt, MS, CGC



Nominated by: Rachel Veazey, Class of 2016

“Ginger was the counselor who introduced me to genetic counseling four years ago, and one of the best supervisors who shaped me to be the counselor I am today. Her supportive example, applicable feedback, and comic relief helped me continue to learn during my rotation at UNC, and grow into a professional counselor. She always took the time to answer my endless list of questions, show me the silver-lining of tough sessions, and encourage me to push outside of my comfort zone. I have so much gratitude for Ginger, and I am so honored to have had the opportunity to learn from her.”



I had the fortunate opportunity to teach genetics in my first master’s program at NC State before attending genetic counseling school. During that time, I found myself captivated with teaching a subject that I was so passionate about and learning different methods of teaching to cater to a variety of different learners. Throughout my genetic counseling master’s program, I was extremely fortunate to have a wonderful diversity of supervisors from different backgrounds. Under their advisement I was able to develop my own unique counseling style. Having the opportunity to be a supervisor for future genetic counselors is a dream come true for me. It combines my love for teaching and allows me to be a continual part of the genetic counseling future. My main strategy when supervising students is to help them find and develop their own unique counseling style. I believe that we all have different aspects of our counseling that makes us successful and I love helping students find their unique spark that helps them turn into thriving genetic counselors. I also love that I am constantly learning from the students I supervise. They bring a fresh perspective to counseling session every time I work with them, and teach me new ways to better communicate with patients. I am so grateful for this honor and so thankful to have the opportunity to be a part of this program.





GENETIC COUNSELING ABROAD

By: Kim Skellington (Class of 2018)

Every summer, genetic counseling students from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro dip their toes into the professional world at their first clinical rotation or internship experience. This past summer students did so at the Hudson Alpha Institute of Biotechnology, Mayo Clinic, and Myriad Genetics Laboratory among others. Two students in particular, however, traveled abroad for their first clinical experiences. Lillian Howard and Mariah Gleason took the plunge at St. George's Hospital in London and The University of British Columbia in Vancouver, respectively.

Both Howard and Gleason took initiative to gain experience that she deemed imperative for her education and experiences that were highly unique. Lilli had always wanted to travel abroad and Mariah "dreamed about having an opportunity to learn from Jehannine Austin's group in Vancouver". The program at UNCG allows for students to provide input into rotation preferences and helps and supports students' endeavors. Both Lilli and Mariah commented how supportive Nancy and Randi were during the process.

Mariah was competitively selected for the UBC Psychiatric Genetics summer internship experience. She describes her rotation experience as amazing. She worked with The Translational Psychiatric Genetics Group and The Adapt Clinic in Vancouver and learned how genetic counseling can "help reduce shame and guilt and empower our clients to promote their own mental health". Mariah was encouraged to take on counseling roles throughout the rotation and she now feels more confident in counseling families who experience mental health like her own family. In addition to a wonderful clinical experience, Mariah also enjoyed sight-seeing in Vancouver. She reports that the city is beautiful, environmental, and welcoming, and recommends visiting whether for personal or professional reasons.

Lilli commented positively about her experience at St. George's in London as well. She appreciated the opportunity to learn from genetic counselors from various geographic regions such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States. She gained a new perspective on the profession and was able to learn about a different health care system. Lilli highly recommends a clinical experience abroad, especially because of the program support she received.

Adding Facebook to your Toolbox

Heather Rocha, MS, CGC



When I graduated two and a half years ago, I felt confident about the tools I'd collected for my own toolbox. I left UNCG with my head full of counseling tips and tricks, a pile of visual aids, and strategies for identifying patient-friendly resources. What I didn't know was that I'd be adding one more very important thing to my resource list: Facebook.

Working at Geisinger Health System as a coordinator for the Simons VIP Connect research study and online community, I've been tasked with recruitment and engagement of research participants. Rather than simply *recruiting* families for a study, I wanted to build a supportive community surrounding the consent and participation. Enter Facebook.

The idea for developing Facebook communities to discuss participation and consent came from the simple question that we ask ourselves all the time: "Where find any other families who have a rare genetic diagnosis?" And just as Matt Might has taught us: If you are a parent who has a child with a rare diagnosis, you're going to need to search the globe to find other people like you. The easiest and fastest way to shrink the globe is to get on Facebook, with nearly 1.8 billion other users.

In UNCG's former director, Nancy Callanan's classes, we'd had discussions about what consent should look like. Consent is a process; it's understanding what you're contributing to, supporting, and agreeing to share. Consent is not just completing a form. With that in mind, consent can feel difficult to accomplish in one conversation, or even online, as we do with Simons VIP Connect. As a genetic counselor with this ethical question in the back on my mind, I kept wondering, "How can I make this better? How can I build on this conversation?"


A Facebook group is a great place to host a closed conversation between members because people can choose how often or frequently to participate. I consulted our Ethics team about sharing PHI in this context and developed a short phrase to remind families about the purpose of the group and who might see their posts.

The organic discussions that happen about consent and research participation are helpful to get families talking about research as a way to cope with a lack of information. I am able to use a time-trusted tool, like building a support community in a new way by hosting it through a service where people already have a level of understanding and trust. Families trust each other. They can ask each other questions, openly, and feel confident that the response they're getting is unbiased.

It's been an interesting experience to say the least— I never thought I'd be using Facebook at my job—to actually *do* my job. Adding Facebook to my toolbox has allowed the rare disease community to bring conversations about genetic diagnoses to a place where people are *already talking*.

Just like many other genetic counselors, I wear multiple hats. While I am involved with an autism research study, I also spend half of my time at Geisinger working with the Cancer Genetics clinic, which includes two other UNCG alumni: Juliann Koenig and Adam Buchanan. I primarily see adult patients, and recently developed a monthly clinic with one of our geneticists to evaluate and follow pediatric patients who have been diagnosed with cancer and/ or polyps. In this new clinic, we follow several patients with polyposis syndromes, and other patients with early-onset

Continued on Page 11



Adding Facebook to your Toolbox (continued)

cancers and rare tumors. This clinic was designed to streamline care for patients being evaluated for rare hereditary cancer syndromes, to ensure a provider with cancer genetics expertise is part of the management team for these patients. It's helpful that our geneticist is able to order the appropriate baseline imaging and labs, and we are able to divide interests and labor between clinical counselors. Geisinger's leadership has been very supportive of allowing me to pursue my clinical and research interests.

My advice to you? Use the skills we learned in school, and build on them. I was tasked with a job that hadn't been done before, and I used my creativity and counseling skills to reduce barriers to communication and support.

With that, I owe a "thank you" to Nancy Callanan and Randi Culp Stewart for teaching me the importance of using a shared language and meeting patients where they are at. My training at UNCG helped shaped me into a thoughtful, compassionate, and caring counselor who continues to find new tools for her toolbox.



Student Enrichment Fund

Support of our students has never been more important than it is right now! With the incredible workforce demand and numerous genetic counseling training programs in development, it is imperative that our program is able to provide the financial support that our students need and deserve....support that our program alumni have been fortunate enough to benefit from in past years.


I am not sure that alumni, program supporters and potential donors realize what a big difference any donation will make. If everyone reading this newsletter could donate just \$20, the impact would be overwhelming! All gifts are appreciated regardless of the amount. We carefully consider the nature and magnitude of each student's financial need and use money from the Enrichment Fund judiciously to further students' professional development.

The UNCG Student Enrichment Fund is a valuable resource used to provide financial support for student Capstone research projects or student travel to the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) annual meetings. Again, your gift will make such an impact on students during a financially challenging time of their lives. We would also encourage you to explore the possibility of approaching your institution to see if there is corporate support of an employee match program. What a great way to support the program and double the impact of your gift!

Thank you so much in advance for your gift to our program on behalf of our current and future students!

You may make a tax deductible contribution to the Student Enrichment Fund online at <http://gen.wp.uncg.edu/make-gift/> or by mailing a check payable to the "MS Genetic Counseling Program Student Enrichment Fund." If you donate online, please select the "Other" designation and enter "UNCG MS Genetic Counseling Program Student Enrichment Fund". Checks should be mailed directly to:

UNCG Genetic Counseling Program
Attn: Marcia Griffin
996 Spring Garden Street
Greensboro, NC 27412



Expansion of Genetic Counseling Fieldwork Experiences

By Melissa Bebernes and Katie Woodworth (Class of 2018)



As part of UNCG’s Genetic Counseling program, students have many opportunities to learn from professionals in the field of genetic counseling and in other healthcare professions and to interact with members of the community who are impacted by genetic conditions. These experiences help students to develop skills, gain insight into the profession, stay up-to-date with current technology, and gain a more complete understanding of individuals’ experiences with genetic diseases, the healthcare system, and support resources. Students benefit from learning from experts in different fields who are involved with a number of different healthcare systems, allowing them to gain exposure to diverse topics and perspectives.

In recent years, student fieldwork experiences have expanded to increase exposure to emerging technologies. Some experiences that students have in their first year include an interactive lecture series about whole exome sequencing (WES) at UNC Chapel Hill, presentations from multiple laboratories performing noninvasive prenatal screening (NIPS) about their technology and the role of genetic counselors in these settings, interactions with families affected by genetic diseases. In addition, students participate in lab tours and lectures at LabCorp, the North Carolina State Newborn Screening lab, and the Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory at UNC Chapel Hill. First year students also observe genetic counseling sessions in multiple specialties; various specialty clinics including Hemophilia, Turner Syndrome and Muscular Dystrophy; the Child Developmental Services Agency (CDSA); and local support groups.

As new technologies and testing options become available, roles and opportunities for genetic counselors in the workplace continue to grow. Adult and research genetic counselor Kristy Lee (Class of 2002) helped to create and now coordinates the UNC-Chapel Hill WES Workshop for our students. Kristy shared that “with the increasing use of the exome sequencing and next generation sequencing panels in the clinic, it is vital for genetic counseling students to have a good foundation in how these assays work and their limitations, the optimal time and appropriate use of these tests and how to

interpret their results.” Students “should also understand the types of results available, the ethical issues, and pros and cons of ordering these tests as well as be able to provide thorough informed consent for their patients.” The combined approach of didactic coursework coupled with hands-on exercises of variant interpretation with leading experts in the field is critical to mastery of this material.

After their first year, students begin clinical rotations. Three years ago UNCG added the option of a rotation at LabCorp for students interested in exploring laboratory genetic counseling in more detail. Many students have taken advantage of rotations at LabCorp including current second year student Courtney Heckman.

Courtney described her LabCorp rotation saying that she “had experience in the cytogenetics, genomics/ cancer and molecular labs at LabCorp.” Her LabCorp rotation “helped her to gain a greater understanding of how important it is to have lab genetic counselors checking test order requisitions to make sure the correct test is being ordered [for patients].” Courtney also appreciated the value of laboratory genetic counselors in “calling clinics that do not have much experience with genetics to explain abnormal results” and she “gained a better understanding of genetic testing including the limitations [of testing] and the processes involved.” Students in the program have expressed that their fieldwork and rotation opportunities have helped them to obtain up-to-date knowledge about the ever-changing genetics technology.

Through these experiences, students discover new ways to apply their transferable skill set and gain exposure to genetic counselors in different specialties and settings which will be useful in their future careers and may impact career choices.

We recognize that students work with UNCG program alumni in many fieldwork experiences. We are appreciative of their support, expertise, and enthusiasm as well as the contributions of countless other program supporters!



ALUMNI UPDATES

CLASS OF 2016

Rebecca LeShay: I have been enjoying working for Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale New Haven since I started in June. I also recently passed the boards this summer, so I am now officially an LCGC, which is pretty exciting!

Victoria Roth: I am currently working at Baylor Scott & White Healthcare in Temple, Texas in a multidisciplinary clinic. I have recently (somewhat) formally split the case load with the other genetic counselor I work with. I am now the primary adult genetic counselor and see mostly cancer clients with a fair amount of cardiovascular, neurogenetics, and prenatal thrown in. I am enjoying being back in Texas, but missing my classmates like crazy!



Chelsey Burden: I am all settled back in Dallas, Texas and am really enjoying the working world so far! I love my job as a cancer genetic counselor at Baylor Scott & White Health; there is truly never a dull day on the job. I have also been enjoying and taking full advantage of all of my free time now that I'm no longer in School. However, I definitely miss the cooler North Carolina weather (and trees!) and, of course, all of my wonderful classmates and supervisors.

CLASS OF 2015

Lauren Marie Baldwin: I still find it hard to believe that I graduated from the UNCG program less than two years ago! I continue to enjoy my role as a Pediatric Genetic Counselor at Wake Forest in Winston-Salem, NC and appreciate the many opportunities for growth and education that my work environment provides. First and foremost, in February I breathed a huge sigh of relief and officially added "CGC" to my name! I have subsequently worked more with the GC students and have greatly enjoyed the opportunity to serve as a student supervisor. In the Spring I helped to coordinate a multi-disciplinary Genetics Case Conference that continues to meet on a monthly basis and includes Genetics providers from cancer, pediatric/adult, prenatal and lab specialties. Cardiac Genetics has also become a recent interest of mine and I have started seeing a large portion of the adult cardiac patients in our Genetic Counseling-Only Clinic. On a personal note, I have been fortunate enough to attend the marriages of three UNCG-GC "sisters" this past year and look forward to those to come. Tommy continues to impress me with his vegan cooking skills and Buddy the cat now has a new feline friend, Penelope.

CLASS OF 2015

Taylor Zuck: I am currently working at Sanford Health in Sioux Falls, SD as a pediatric genetic counselor in the Sanford Children's Specialty Clinic. At Sanford Children's my job involves seeing patients in our genetic clinic primarily but also other specialty clinics (neurology, developmental pediatrics, etc.) and multidisciplinary clinics. Additionally, I am involved in the new Augustana-Stanford Genetic Counseling Graduate Program as a supervisor for clinical rotations and as the instructor for metabolic and newborn screening genetics course. Outside of work I have enjoyed continuing to volunteer with Sibshops and Special Olympics and I recently got an Australian puppy named Theo who occupies lots of my time.

Bri (Lubben) Benjamin: I am currently a prenatal genetic counselor at Swedish Maternal and Fetal Specialty Center in Seattle. This was my first position out of school, and recently I accepted a promotion to be the lead genetic counselor at one of our team's satellite clinics. This has been a new and exciting challenge, and has helped me reach for those professional leadership skills that I developed during the program. This year I worked with Leah Williams to produce a webinar for NSGC that discussed genetic counselors in management positions and involved the research from my capstone project. My current professional project is expanding our prenatal genetics program into 2 more satellite clinics, and eventually, our goal is to work with the cancer genetic counseling department at our facility to expand our genetic counseling department into the cardiology and neurology specialties. This year also was an exciting year of personal changes. The class of 2015 was able to attend my wedding held in Asheville, NC last April. It was a treasure to celebrate with my classmates, as we have stayed great friends. Otherwise, just enjoying the opportunities that moving to the Seattle area has afforded me: traveling, camping, hiking, and having new adventures.



Juliann Savatt (Koenig): I am currently employed at Geisinger Health System in Danville, PA. I have a split research/clinical position in Cancer Genetics Clinic and working on the Clinical Genome Resource (ClinGen) project funded by the NIH. Specifically, I coordinate the patient registry GenomeConnect that aims to allow patients to share their genetic and health data and connect with researchers, laboratories, clinicians, and one another. As part of the research project I work on, I have been able to present a number of poster presentations (ASHG, NSGC, ACMG) and a platform presentation (Stanford Medicine X). On a personal note, I got married this past May!

Caitlin Troyer: I am still working at UVA in beautiful Charlottesville, VA as a pediatric genetic counselor! I also see adult patients and the occasional hereditary cancer referral at our satellite clinics. I officially became a board certified GC in February which was so exciting! I've also begun working with our comprehensive Hemophilia Treatment Center here and am helping to enroll patients in the My Life Our Future research study. I feel grateful to have such wonderful GC colleagues to work with (there's 12 of us in Charlottesville!) The class of 2015 has had three weddings this year, so we've had so many fun occasions to travel and get to catch up with each other. I've also really enjoyed living much closer to the mountains, and have even gotten into some outdoor rock climbing this past year.

CLASS OF 2014

Heather Rocha: I continue to enjoy my work at Geisinger. Me and my husband recently took up rock climbing. I also continue to remain thankful for having incredible classmates! See “Adding Facebook To Your Toolbox”!

Aimee Brown: I continue to work at UAB as a cancer and general genetic counselor. I am working on beginning a cardiogenomics clinic and increasing referrals from ophthalmology. I have a cat and am enjoying Birmingham a lot!

Becca Loman: This past year my job changed quite a bit after accepting the position of assistant program director of the Augustana Sanford Genetic counseling program. Since starting in July I have been learning this role and getting to enjoy our first class of eight students. In addition to my responsibilities with the program I continue to work at Sanford Children’s Hospital part-time. I love all the new and interesting cases, but more importantly working with the families. My husband and I still live in Sioux Falls, SD. We are enjoying being homeowners and continue to find lots of new projects to work on at home.

Lauren Masso: I am still working as a prenatal counselor at CMC in Charlotte. I recently enjoyed reuniting with some of my classmates at NSGC and encourage everyone to come back to NC to visit! Me and my husband recently brought our first home and are currently in the middle of extensive renovations. That invitations to come visit is particularly extended to anyone who has experience with power tools...

Sarah Hart: I continue to work at Duke Pediatrics in the Down syndrome clinic, and in the past year my clinical role expanded to also include our 22q deletion syndrome clinic. I’m also excited that my capstone project on communication of psychiatric risk in 22q deletion syndrome was also published this past year in the Journal of Genetic Counseling. I continue to work in research in Down Syndrome, and our study team published results this past year from a clinical trial for an intervention for cognitive function in Down syndrome. In personal

news my daughter Elle turned five this past summer and started transitional kindergarten at a new school, and Audrey will turn two in February. The girls continue to keep our family very busy.



CLASS OF 2013

Ledare Finley: I joined University of Genetics at University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville in May of 2016, working with geneticist Dr. Ilse Anderson in general genetics. University Genetics serves adult and pediatric patients—I see patients with Dr. Anderson and have consultations on my own for hereditary cancer, cardiology and other hereditary syndromes that do not require a physical examination. It's been a learning experience after being focused on cancer genetics for the past 3 years, and I spend a lot of time thinking about whole exome results now. On the personal front, I am still doing yoga and have joined an art class to get back into painting again. I am happy to be closer to my elderly parents in Middle Tennessee, as my dad and stepmom are needing a lot more help these days. And it's been wonderful to reconnect with my old friends in the Knoxville area—great to be home again!



Class of 2012

Brittney Goetsch: I recently celebrated 3 years as an Oncology Genetic Counselor for Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers in Denver. I am lucky enough to be able to work with a team of 4 other counselors and in collaboration with 6 Medical Oncologists. It has been an awesome experience to see the high level of care that can be provided when you have collaboration between disciplines. Recently, I was able to headline a patient event that included a panel discussion with myself, a medical oncologist, breast surgeon, gynecological oncologist, and radiologist. Brain and I also saw our family grow this year. Braxton Richard Goetsch was born on April 23rd, 2016. He is an easy going but happy and active baby and is certainly keeping us on our toes!

CLASS OF 2012

Ryan Noss: I am a cancer genetic counselor at the Cleveland Clinic. I specialize in breast cancer with the majority of my patients being seen in a multidisciplinary clinic at the time of their diagnosis. I am involved with clinical referral for Dr. Narod's "Risk Factor Analysis of Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer" and the study coordinator for "Exome sequencing in children and adolescent young adult patients with malignancies". I participate within the NSGC and the Ohio Cancer Genetics Network. In addition, I am the Primary Clinical Supervisor for the 1st and 2nd year students at Case Western Reserve University's Genetic Counseling Program and an Advisory Board Member. I implemented telegenetic services for 2 Cleveland Clinic satellite locations, am a faculty member of the Cleveland Clinic's Surgical Breast fellowship and participate in the Cleveland Clinic's Breast Program Leadership Team. Publications in the last year include:

- Heald, B, Rybicki, L, Clements, D, Marquard, J, Mester, J, Noss, R, Nardini, M, Polk, J, Psensky, P, Rigelsky, C, Schreiber, A, Shealy, A, Smith, M & Eng. C. Assessment of clinical workload for general and specialty genetic counselors at an academic medical center: a tool for evaluating counseling services. (2016). *NPJ Genomic Medicine*
- Noss, R, Hussain, N, Pederson, H, Grobmyer, S & Eng. C. Improved uptake and efficiency of genetic counseling services via an embedded genetic counselor in a multidisciplinary breast cancer clinic. National Society of Genetic Counselors Annual Education Conference. Seattle, WA, September 2016 (Abstract)
- Hussain, N, Ross, R, Pederson, H, Grobmyer, S & Eng, C. Improved uptake and efficiency of genetic counseling services via an embedded genetic counselor in a multidisciplinary breast cancer clinic. BRCA Symposium. Montreal, Canada. May 2016 (Abstract)

As far as personal news goes, my wife Kara and I are excited to announce we are expecting our first child! Due date is 4/26/17.



CLASS OF 2011

Melanie Hardy: I'm working for JScreen, a non-profit within Emory University that provides an online portal for patients to access expanded carrier testing at a low price. I work from home (which is AMAZING!) and see patients by phone and video. We are currently working on a study to re-classify the most common VUSs in the HEXA gene (Tay Sachs variants). We are hoping to publish in the next few years. I am still pretty active with NSGC (Mentor Program Chair, Membership Committee, CEU Review Committee, etc.) I continue to be active in the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Richmond. I am currently working on an article for publication for Nancy (Current Genetic Medicine Reports journal) regarding telegenetics and collaborated with classmate, Mallory Sdano, on a poster for NSGC this year. This year was a tough one in that we lost both of our babies –Rio and Savvy– within a month of one another. They were like children and loved beyond words.



CLASS OF 2010:

● **Whitney (Cogswell) Dobek:** I am still working at the University of South Carolina with their genetic counseling program. Over the last year, my job has become solely cancer genetic in the clinic, and I have taken on the responsibility of teaching the Medical Genetics course in addition to the Cancer Genetics course I was already coordinating. I am very busy, but it has been a good challenge in my career. In personal news, we are expecting our second baby girl in March!



The class of 2010 held their annual reunion at a cabin at Hocking Hills State Park, Ohio

Kristen Cornell: Kristen has accepted a new job with Eastern Virginia Medical School as a prenatal genetic counselor and will be moving to Newport News, VA in early December. This will definitely be a big change after spending the past 6 1/2 years as a pediatric genetic counselor at Emory in Atlanta but she and her cat, Aly, are excited about this new adventure!

Alexis Carere: Alexis and her husband John welcomed their son, George Elliot Alexander, on August 17th, 2016. George has been a great travel companion, accompanying mom to conferences in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. Alexis is looking forward to taking George to Cold Spring Harbour in November, where she has been invited to participate in a meeting entitled "Genetic Counseling for Psychiatric Disorders: Challenges in the Genomic Era."

CLASS OF 2009

Kate Foreman: My husband Noah and I are expecting our first child. I am due 11/13! The NCGENES project had a publication earlier this year that I was involved in. It could be found here: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26270767>. Kristy Lee, a 2002 alumnae, is also a co-author.



Class of 2008

Emily Rettner: After 7.5 years at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland (formerly Children's Hospital and Research Center Oakland), I am now working for Kaiser Permanente, Oakland in the Genetics Department. I joined a team of 18 genetic counselors (quite a change from being the only genetic counselor for a hospital) in April 2016, and provide genetic counseling in a variety of areas—cancer, pediatrics, and prenatal. It is a challenging and exciting position, and I am learning more each day. Additionally, all three of the prospective genetic counseling students that shadowed me recently were accepted to gc programs this year! I am proud of them, and hope they have as good an experience as I did at UNCG.

Tanya Lehfelddt: I am at Providence Maternal Fetal Medicine in Spokane, WA. I am enjoying prenatal genetic counseling and have an almost 2 year old son, Anders. He keeps me extra busy!

Beth Hudson: I have returned to UNC to work in Cancer and Adult Genetics after a brief "sabbatical" at Duke Cancer. In the meantime my family added a puppy named Spencer. My 18 year old cat, Sydney has not approved the dog but is coming to terms with the new addition.

Jackie Powers: I continue to work at University of Pennsylvania in adult cancer. I work closely with the Bassett Center for BRCA and remains interested in the follow up of men with genetic susceptibility to cancer. I married my adventurous husband, Michael, in June 2015. We enjoy travel and were able to spend two weeks backpacking in Patagonia this past winter!



Rachel Mills: I'm still working as a researcher in Duke's Center for Applied Genomics and Precision Medicine and continuing my work in precision medicine. This year I became more active in NSGC as part of the AEC planning committee and the membership committee. I got married in September and was so happy that my classmates Jackie, Leah and Beth could join me to celebrate. My husband Justin and I just bought a house in Durham and the two of us and our dog Beau have been settling into our new home.

CLASS of 2007

Larisa Rippel: I am working at University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center primarily as a prenatal genetic counselor, with some involvement in hematology. I am also one of the co-chairs for the Ohio Department of Health Birth Defects Prevention Group as part of the Ohio Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality. Our current initiatives include birth defects surveillance and tracking in Ohio, monitoring the newly instituted newborn screening for congenital heart defects in the state of Ohio, and creating an education lesson plan for middle school students about health life planning. Husband Brian and I got married on Hilton Head Island July 2014, purchased a new build home in November 2015, and are expecting a baby boy November 27, 2016!



Class of 2006



Class of 2005

CLASS OF 2005

Shannon Morrill-Cornelius: 2016 has been a busy year for the Morrill-Cornelius family! I accepted a Senior Genetic Counselor position at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in the spring and Brad is now nursing in the SICU there as well. We've moved back to Vermont and we are now living right next door to Shannon's family. Sawyer (8) and Cooper (3) are loving having their grandparents so close. At DHMC, I am working on the MATCH trial in addition to seeing patients. The new job is going great!

Class of 2004

CLASS OF 2003

Jennifer Dickerson: Professional Update— After 2 years of working from home as a lab GC, I’ve returned to clinical practice with the same group I worked with 9 years ago! Returning to prenatal has been a good move and I enjoy seeing my co-workers face-to-face again.

Personal Update-Daniel is almost 4 years and keeps me on my toes! He’s a great helper and asks about 10,000 questions every day. We enjoyed going to the pumpkin patch this fall and he regularly asks when the Christmas tree is going up because that means his electric train will be running again :)



Class of 2002

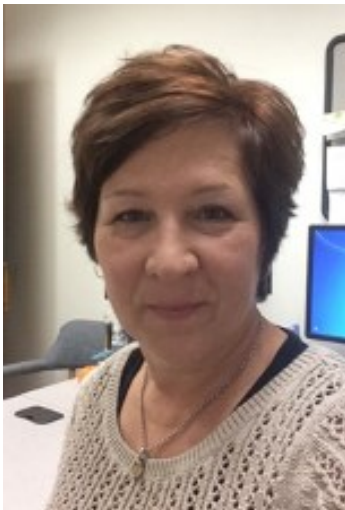
Randi Culp Stewart: See “Faculty Updates”

Faculty and Staff Updates

Sonja (Eubanks) Higgins

Hello everyone from Murrells Inlet, SC. I find it hard to believe it has been five years since I left the program. While life here is good, I do think fondly of my days at UNCG. I do miss using my "genetics brain" more often but instead now I spend my time working on reading with my almost three year old son (who can actually sound out some words) and singing silly songs and playing peek a boo with my 17 month old daughter. I suppose there is a season for everything, as different as this one is from the previous one at UNCG. I did get to think about genetics this year to accomplish re-certification and I

am working on a couple of projects, but mostly my time is spent with my amazing little ones. I am thankful to enjoy this time with them and my husband and step daughters. Life is busy around here with teenagers and babies at home. I really do appreciate those of you who have kept in touch in one way or another and I look forward to seeing you at future educational meetings.

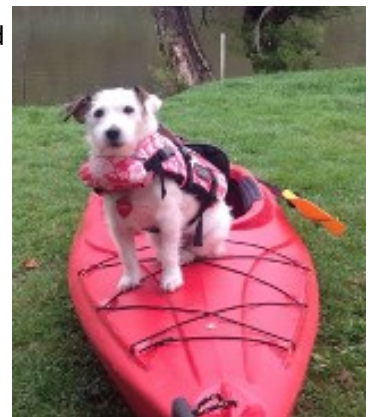


Marcia Griffin

January 4th will mark my one-year anniversary with UNCG Genetic Counseling program. The year has been filled with learning so many new things. Prior to coming to UNCG I was a second grade teacher. I returned to college (UNCG) in 2007 at the age of ...forty-something...to make a career change from 20+ years in personnel/bookkeeping. After 7 years in public education I made the decision to return to my old career. I feel very fortunate to have been offered the opportunity to be a part of this program. I enjoy everything about it, especially getting to know the students and see them succeed in their

career goals. When I am not working I enjoy spending time with my family. We like camping, kayaking, hiking, skiing, and other outdoor activities. Please be sure to send me an email with your updated contact information!

<mmgriffi@uncg.edu>



Nancy Callanan

Greetings to current students and UNCG MS Genetic Counseling program graduates! I have been enjoying my retirement so far. It has become very clear to me that while I am enjoying a slower pace and reduced stress, what I really miss is teaching and mentoring students. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work with so many outstanding students during my time at UNCG. I missed seeing many of you at the NSGC meeting, but hope to remain active in our professional organizations.

I have been keeping busy working part time for the professional organization for genetic metabolic dieticians, a group of healthcare professionals that has a lot in common with genetic counselors. I have also been collaborating with colleagues on some writing projects.

Roger and I have made a few short trips and look forward to more travel in 2017. The photo is our first attempt at a "selfie" taken as we were getting ready to leave for a trip in June. My sun glasses, and the selfie stick were gifts from the Class of 2017. I appreciated all the gifts and good wishes I received from students and graduates upon my retirement. The memory book is a very special treasure.

My best wishes to all of you this holiday season. Please stay in touch. It has been very nice to hear from some of you over these past months. My UNCG address is still the best way to reach me— npcallan@uncg.edu



Dr. Pam Reitnauer

I am honored in my role as medical director of the UNCG genetic counseling program. It was a privilege to have the opportunity to work with Nancy in the development of the program. The partnership with the program has been one of the highlights of my career. Despite my many duties in the Cone Health Pediatric Teaching Program and practice of community pediatric genetics, I truly enjoy the teaching and mentoring of the genetic counseling students. I look forward to the continuing collaboration with Lauren and Randi. It is such a pleasure to read and hear about the accomplishments of our grads!



“Genetic Counseling (GC) and Me”

Dr. Rob Cannon

Professor Emeritus

As the Genetic Counseling program was just getting started, I attended a session with the candidates who were being interviewed for the position of Director. So, I met Nancy Callanan before she was hired for the position. Although my recollections are a bit vague, I believe that Nancy invited me to join the Admissions Committee for the GC program for its second class. The Admissions Committee consisted of Nancy, Sonja Eubanks (Assistant Director), and Terry McConnell (Philosophy), and me, and then after Sonja left the program, we were joined by Randi Culp Stewart (Assistant Director).

In addition to serving on the Admissions Committee, I had a number of GC students take my Immunology course, and I also served on a number of Capstone Committees. Also, I occasionally asked a GC student to come to my BIO 111 class to talk about genetic counseling. When I served as President of Health Professions Advisors of NC, I made sure that we included Nancy on a panel discussion of health careers. My earliest experience with Genetic counseling goes back 40 years ago. Nancy Adams, who went on to become a genetic counselor in NC, was a graduate student in the Biology Department when I was an Assistant Professor.

Now, back to Admissions where I had my most extensive involvement with the GC Program. The Admissions Committee was one of the most fun and most collegial committees that I have served on during my time as a faculty member at UNCG. Despite reviewing applications individually, it was amazing to me how congruent our opinions were as to who would be the top candidates who we would invite for interviews. During the interview process, we each had our own set of questions to ask prospective students. Since I am not a genetic counselor and did not teach in the program like Terry, I got to have some fun with my questions. One year I asked “What is your favorite Genetic Disease?”. I learned a lot about a number of genetic disease I had never heard of. Another question was “Who is a role model for you”. More interesting answers especially after I told appli-

cations that they could not use family members. “What makes you proud?” was another one of my questions. When I asked applicants what they liked to read, this opened the door for me to suggest a book for them. My book of choice for future GC students was always “The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down” by Ann Fadiman. I was always pleased when an applicant told me that they had already read it. I always enjoyed the cupcakes that we had for lunch during the interview weekends— another great skill of GC students. At our final Admissions Committee meeting of each year where we would rank order the folks who we had interviewed, we were usually in remarkable agreement in the ranking process. I already mentioned cupcakes, but Nancy often brought delicious scones for our final meetings.

One other interesting connection that I had with the GC program involved a particular student, Michael Osborne. Michael and his mother Sherrie came to see me before he even applied to the program. I encouraged him to apply, which he did, and we accepted him. The interesting connection was that I had taught Michael’s mother Microbiology when she was a UNCG Biology major back in the 1970’s.

When I first joined the GC Admissions Committee, I had some concerns about using “GC” to describe the program. For a microbiologist, “GC” is usually used to refer to the gonococcus, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, the bacterium that causes gonorrhea. I adapted fairly quickly. Now, when I hear “GC”, I think Genetic Counseling and not a sexually transmitted disease.

As I moved in Phased Retirement and now full retirement at UNCG, I recognized that it was time to retire from the Genetic Counseling Admissions Committee. However, when late fall rolls around, I often think about how interesting it was to review GC applications, and then in early spring, I often fondly remember our two busy weekends interviewing enthusiastic future genetic counselors.



Randi Culp Stewart

This year has been quite the year of transition. We wished Nancy and Sally well in their retirement and then welcomed Program Director Lauren Doyle and Administrative Support Marcia Griffin. We have a great team and enjoy working together to train our students and serve the program. Including the Class of 2016, our program has graduated 120 graduates from 15 classes to date. We are so proud of all of you and the many wonderful ways that you are contributing to our profession!

On a personal note, my daughter Ryleigh is now 7 and Dylan is 2. It is difficult to get Ry's nose out of a book...she wants to be a teacher and write children's books when she grows up. Hurricane Dylan is taking on the world by storm. He is obsessed with sports, construction equipment and dinosaurs...and surprisingly sneaky, fast and strong which is not such a good combination for parents. Will and I have taken them on several camping and hiking adventures in the past year. They especially liked having a campfire (ie. s'mores) in our backyard this year at the program holiday party!

Please remember to email us with your updated personal and professional contact information. We always love hearing from alumni so thanks to so many of you for staying in touch! Also, don't forget to include us when sending out your holiday cards, birth or wedding announcements. We will proudly display them on our alumni board at the new "house"!

Many thanks to graduate assistant Kim Skellington for her efforts on this newsletter this semester. Thank you also to graduate assistants Melissa Bebernes and Katie Woodworth for their contributions.

Peace and happiness to you all in 2017. Stay in touch!

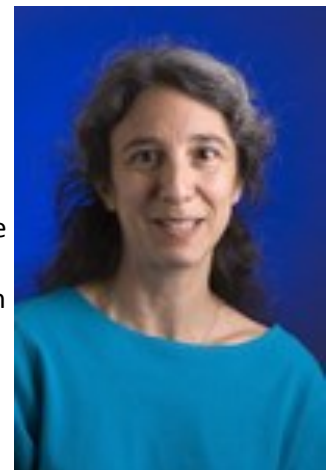
Randi.Stewart@uncg.edu



Hanging out in Annapolis before the Military Bowl game (Wake Forest vs. Temple).

Dr. Heather Gert

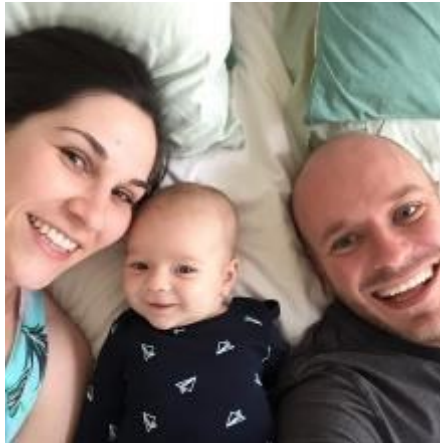
I have taught Medical Ethics for the Philosophy Department at UNCG since my arrival from Texas A&M, twelve years ago. I began teaching Genetics and Ethics to second year genetic counseling students this past spring. I am also a long time member of the Ethics Committee for the Cone Hospital System. And from time to time I have the opportunity to teach in the Graduate Program in Bioethics at Wake Forest University. My primary interests in medical ethics center on issues of informed consent. I am also fascinated by the questions about crime and punishment I discuss with students in Philosophy of Law courses. And my first philosophical love is Ludwig Wittgenstein's writings about what turns the sounds and marks we make into meaningful language.



Personal Updates



Sarah Hart's girls, Elle and Audrey



Alexis Carere, husband John and son, George Elliot Alexander

Left:
Beth
Hudson
and her
new
pup,
Spencer



Above: Braxton Richard Goetsch, born April 23rd, 2016;



Above middle: Brittney, Brian, and Braxton



Above: Jennifer Dickerson and her son, Daniel



Left:
Jackie
Powers
and
husband
Michael.
June 2015



Left:
The
Morrill-
Cornelius
family!



Personal Updates



Amanda Noyes and husband celebrating 10 year anniversary at honeymoon spot on Bald Head Island, NC



Class of 2007: Amanda Padro with daughter Abby, Amanda (Gordon) Noyes with son Wyatt, and Rebecca (Crimian) Spillmann and daughter Hazel



Above: Jules Koenig and husband Tim



Dr. Pam Reitnauer's daughter, Sofia



Class of 2008 classmates Jackie Powers, Beth Hudson and Leah Williams at Rachel Mills' wedding in September 2016.

Right: Melanie Hardy (Class of 2011): This year was a tough one in that we lost both of our babies –Rio and Savvy– within a month of one another. They were like children and loved beyond words.



Personal Updates

Randi Culp Stewart's daughter Ryleigh (right) and son Dylan (far right) hiking at Pilot Mountain, NC



Right: Lauren Loffredo and Gretchen Rosso (Class of 2018) at the 2016 DSNNG Buddy Walk



Above, right and below: Having fun at the 2016 program holiday party!



Anna (Wessler) Villa's son Bennett

