



**UNC GREENSBORO**

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**University of North Carolina Greensboro  
Genetic Counseling Program**

**Program Newsletter**

**Volume 11, Issue 1—Fall 2019**

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## From the Director's Desk

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As the year winds down and we begin to take stock of all that we have seen, experienced and done, I am feeling incredibly privileged. Privileged to work at an institution that has such broad-reaching support for not just the genetic counseling program, but a willingness to invest in the future of the field as well as health and wellness; in a city that is growing rapidly and investing in culture, in partnerships and seeking to create a space that is welcoming, rooted in values and looking to an expansive future. Privileged to be in a state in which genetic and genomic medicine has been identified as a priority in public health, and in which providers from all institutions and affiliations can come together to learn from each other, develop new programs and build collaborations. It sounds lofty and ideal written in this way, and while at times the daily requirements and tasks can feel overwhelming, there is still a sense and knowing that it is all for the greatest good. I am privileged to be a part of it.

The program has been incredibly busy over the past fourteen months – preparing for reaccreditation, bringing together presenters from across the country to host the first meeting of the North Carolina Medical Genetics Association (NCMGA) in Greensboro (ever!), obtaining a new faculty line and hiring the program's first-ever full-time faculty member beyond the program leadership (and we got a great one!), overhauling the website, navigating our largest applicant pool to date, submitting reaccreditation, hosting our site visitors, and working with state and local organizations to expand our partnerships to meet the growing needs of the field and general public. We have leaned on the generous support of our alumni network, supervisors and colleagues, and have been humbled by their investment in our students and success.

On an individual level, I consider myself privileged every time I sit in the classroom with our students, watch a presentation, witness growth and choosing vulnerability, engage in academic discussion, or receive an email or an excited wave from an alumnus. It is an honor to be able to do what we do, individually and collectively, and I remain incredibly grateful for the opportunity. Thank you for your part – we wouldn't be who we are without you.

Best wishes to you and yours over the holidays and in the year ahead!

Lauren Doyle



## Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Student Enrichment Fund

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This time of the year is always one for gratitude and giving back. This year, we are asking you to consider contributing to the Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Student Enrichment Fund. Your donations directly impact students, and the Fund contributes to student Capstone research, travel to NSGC, and other opportunities for personal and academic growth.

Graduate school is an exciting time of development for our students as they become stronger researchers, counselors, and grow into competent genetics professionals. The dedication and empathy needed to reach genetic counseling graduate school, integrate the skills and knowledge required to be a counselor, and the work-ethic required to carry out significant research is inspiring. We are proud of our students and alumni, and recognize the significant impact of having a resource for our current students that can help them to grow into amazing alumni like those featured in our newsletter this year.

Your generosity in donating to the Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Enrichment Fund will make a difference in the life of a student. That student will then become a genetic counselor who will be able to apply their genetic counseling skill set in various ways and make a difference in the lives of individuals with genetic conditions, healthcare providers, and the community at large. We are truly thankful for our alumni and all of your contributions, and we need your help to continue to provide the same support to current and future student in our program. Thank you for your generosity in considering us during this season of giving!

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Enrichment Fund, you may do so online at <http://gen.wp.uncg.edu/make-gift/>. If you donate online, please select the "Other" designation and enter "Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Enrichment Fund". You may also mail a check payable to the "Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Enrichment Fund directly to the program at:

UNCG Genetic Counseling Program

Attn: Marcia Griffin

996 Spring Garden Street

Greensboro, NC 27412

Thank you in advance for your donation of any amount!



## Growing the Program Family—Welcoming Back Rachel Mills

I joined the genetic counseling program faculty as an assistant professor and the Research and Capstone Coordinator in August this year, and it feels so wonderful to “come home” to UNCG. In this role, I am responsible for course instruction, particularly the research-related courses, and I serve as coordinator of all research efforts in the program, including the students’ capstones. This position is a perfect blend of three of my professional passions: research, mentorship, and genetics education.

I am an alumna of the genetic counseling program at UNCG, receiving my M.S. in 2008. Prior to joining the UNCG faculty, I worked in clinical research at Duke University as a clinical research coordinator and research project manager for studies exploring the implementation of genomics. Through that work, I developed a specialization and interest in precision medicine, pharmacogenetics, ethical, legal and social issues in genetics, and genetics education. I also had the opportunity to initiate my own research projects and serve as committee member for many genetic counseling student capstones. I aim to use the expertise acquired during my eleven years at Duke in my new position. Already, it is proving useful as I help second year students develop their study surveys, navigate IRB submissions, recruit collaborators, and apply for funding. I expect that having a devoted faculty member to assist with the capstone process will improve the quality of research as well as the students’ experience. I hope that my love for genetic counseling research will be contagious and that our graduates will leave with the confidence that they can engage in research in any setting.

As I embark on this new role in my professional life, I’m also starting a new adventure in my personal life. My husband, Justin and I welcomed our son Rhett in June of this year. He is a great kid and I am so lucky to have a good-natured baby who loves to sleep! It makes it possible for me to excel in this new role while balancing other activities like volunteering with NSGC and pursuing my doctorate in Adult Education at NC State.

I am so appreciative of Lauren, Randi and the rest of the UNCG genetic counseling family for welcoming me [back] into the fold. I look forward to having a hand in training future generations of counselors, and the opportunity to support genetic counseling graduate students in their research endeavors. If you ever have an idea for a student project or need a hand with your own research, please reach out – mentoring students has been such a rewarding activity for me, and I would love to share that experience with you!

Rachel Mills



## Congratulations to the Class of 2019!



### Capstone Projects:

**Evelyn Cabon:** An Updated Assessment of Genetic Counselor Perspectives and Practices Regarding the Advancements of Expanded Carrier Screening

**Ryan Hartman:** Genetic Testing and Athletics: Does a Cardiogenetic Result Impact Participation

**Margaret Hill:** Theoretical Effectiveness of Next-Generation Sequencing Panels for Inherited Retinal Dystrophies

**Clayton Mann:** Vitamin A Supplementation in Individuals with Retinal Dystrophies Based on Genetic Variants

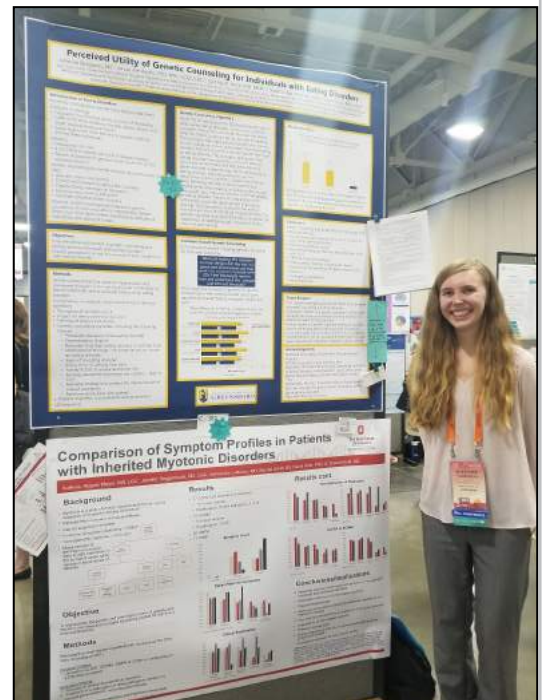
**Sam Miller:** Identifying Ethnicity-Associated Differences in Genetic Testing Results for Patients with Suspected Inherited Retinal Degeneration\*

**Julianne Streukens (pictured):** Perceived Utility of Genetic Counseling for Individuals with Eating Disorders\*

**Stacey Wallen:** Attitudes of Genetic Counselors Regarding Affective Forecasting and Patient Decision-Making\*

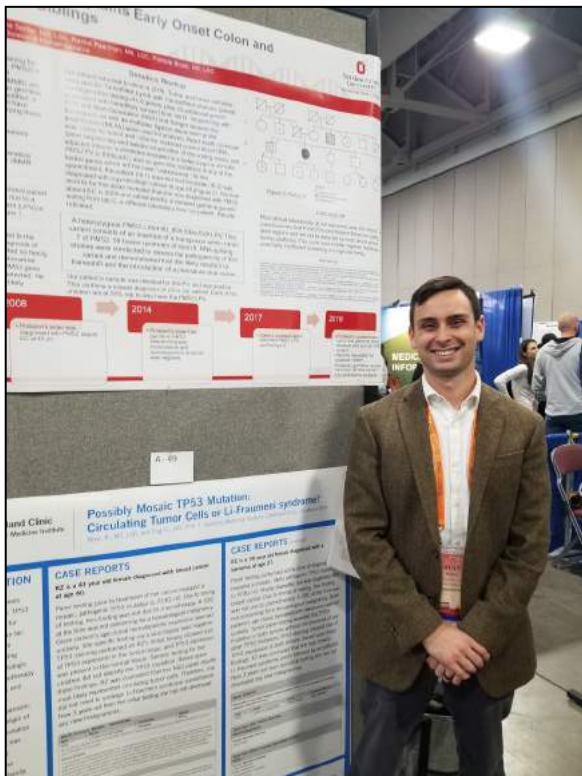
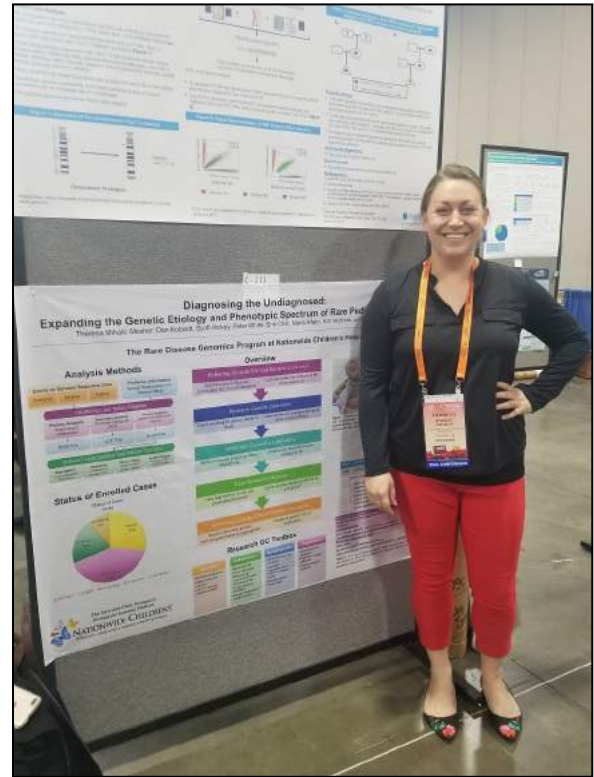
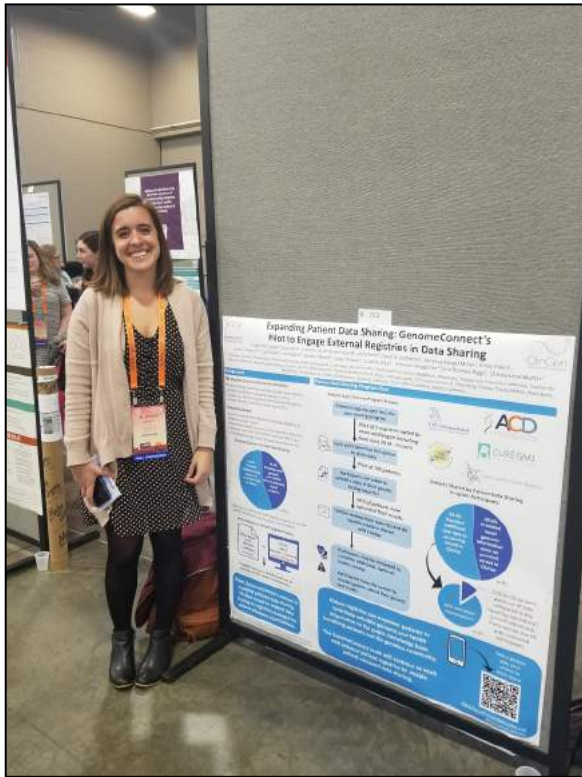
**Mercedes Zoeteman:** Investigating the Potential Impact of Gene Therapy on Identity in Individuals with Hemophilia\*

\*Designates poster presentation at the 2019 NSGC Annual Conference



# UNCG Alumni Research

## 2019 NSGC Annual Conference, Salt Lake City, UT



Top Left: Juliann Savatt - “Expanding Patient Data Sharing: GenomeConnect's Pilot to Engage External Registries in Data Sharing”

Top Right: Theresa Mosher - “Diagnosing the Undiagnosed: Expanding the Genetic Etiology and Phenotypic Spectrum of Rare Pediatric Conditions”

Lower Left: Ryan Noss - “Possibly Mosaic TP53 Mutation: Circulating Tumor Cells or Li-Fraumeni syndrome?”

# 2019 NSGC Annual Education Conference

Salt Lake City, UT



Class of 2020



2nd year students Christina Pool, Aimee Durrett, Sarah Burzynski, and Haley Fischman at the RARE Bear Stuff-and-Sew



## Class of 2020

Dan Serber, Haley Hill, Laura Bulmer  
Aimee Durrett, Sarah Burzynski, Haley Fischman



2nd year students Aimee Durrett and Sarah Burzynski and their RARE Bears



Lillian Howard (2016), Courtney Heckman (2016), Haley Fischman (2020), Aimee Durrett (2020), Julianne Streukens (2019), Jules Savatt (2014), Dan Serber (2020)



## 2019 NSGC Annual Education Conference Salt Lake City, UT



Left: Brittney Goetsch (2012), Megan Ensinger (2016), Chelsey Burden (2016) and Ledare Finley (2014) hanging out at the alumni reunion and talking about all of our exciting new program swag! Brittney is a cancer genetic counselor at Rocky Mountain Cancer Center; her team plans to supervise one of our students in summer 2020!

Right: Rachel Mills (2008), Claire Healy (2008), Tomi Toler (2009). Claire is practicing cancer genetics at Yale and Tomi is a pediatric genetic counselor at Washington University in Saint Louis where she will be involved in program leadership with the genetic counseling developing training program.



Left: Adam Buchanan (2004), Kacey Platky (2007), Program Director Lauren Doyle, Monica Zarb (2004) and Shelly Galasinski (2004). Monica is now Business Development Manager at GeneMatters. Adam is the President-Elect of the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC)!

Thank you to all who came to the annual UNCG Genetic Counseling Program alumni reunion. It was great to reconnect with everyone!

## 2019 HHS Alumni Association Pacesetter Award

Dr. Alexis Carere, ScD, MSc, CGC

The HHS Pacesetter Award honors outstanding alumni who have attained local, state or regional recognition through their achievements in scholarship, leadership or service, during their career or through civic involvement. This year we are proud to announce Dr. Alexis Carere as the 2019 UNC Greensboro School of Health and Human Sciences Pacesetter Awardee!

Alexis Carere was born a Pacesetter. Even before she heard of genetic counseling, she wanted to become an epidemiologist. Alexis loved thinking about ethical issues in genetics in her philosophy courses, but realized that she wanted more data and real-life experience. She envisioned the perfect blend of her strengths and interests and ultimately obtained her undergraduate degree in genetics, continued to study philosophy where she was introduced to genetic counseling and crafted a way to combine genetics, ethics and epidemiology.

Alexis graduated from the UNCG MS Genetic Counseling Program in the Class of 2010, and speaks fondly of the community fostered here, saying “I love my Class of 2010 classmates, and almost 10 years later, we’re still having annual reunions that no one is allowed to miss!” Upon her graduation, she practiced as a clinical cancer genetic counselor in St. John’s, Newfoundland. Fifteen months later, she was studying epidemiology at Harvard where she conducted exciting research on direct-to-consumer genetic testing and whole genome sequencing. She also spoke at conferences across North America while amplifying her voice and the voices of the general population as patients and consumers. Alexis brought a unique patient-centered perspective to study design, results interpretation, and science communication while surrounded by physicians, epidemiologists, statisticians, economists and social scientists. She helped to educate the scientific community about genetic counseling and genomic medicine. Advocating for the value, experience, and expertise that genetic counselors can bring to research, clinical care, and laboratory genetics is Alexis’ passion, and it is reflected in her professional career and volunteering.



After completing her doctorate degree in epidemiology in 2017, Alexis accepted a position as a postdoctoral fellow at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, where she researched genetic determinants of dementia and saw patients in a lipid genetics clinic. She still made time to provide active service in our professional national organizations including the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) and Canadian Association of Genetic Counselors (CAGC), she has served as chair of a UNCG genetic counseling student’s Capstone Committee and she has worked to build a career that combines genetic counseling and genetic epidemiology in a meaningful and productive way.

*See next page*

## 2019 HHS Alumni Association Pacesetter Award (cont.)

After she finished her post-doc in genetic epidemiology, Dr. Carere began working as a Clinical Genetics Analysis Specialist at London Health Sciences Centre. She was responsible for variant assessment for her lab's next-generation sequencing panels and whole exome sequencing in both clinical testing and research projects. Alexis has recently started a new position as a Clinical Analyst with the GeneDx Clinical Genomics program. She is also working towards starting a genetic counseling program in London, Ontario. Alexis is also the current President of the Canadian Association of Genetic Counseling (CAGC), and describes her work with the CAGC representing Canadian genetic counselors as some of the most important in her career, stating "my membership with this organization has become more critical to my professional life –both because the profession is growing in Canada, and because I have increasingly become aware of the practice differences in Canadian, and the importance of maintaining professional and personal relationships with local colleagues."

Alexis thinks of herself as a genetic counselor first despite "leaving" the profession for a while to become an epidemiologist which included pursuing a doctorate degree, joining industry, and making a move into government and health policy. No matter which role she's taking on, she declares that "I am proud to identify myself as a genetic counsellor, even when I have on my 'epidemiologist' or 'analyst' hats!" She stepped outside the traditional parameters of the genetic counseling profession in order to create a new path for herself which ultimately shaped her to be a fierce advocate for genetic counselors in clinic, in academia and in research. Alexis continues to contribute to the genetic counseling profession through her professional and volunteer work. She writes certification exam items for the ABGC, and as part of the first ABGC research committee helped to create the ABGC Research Grant for funding genetic counseling research.

Alexis is the true definition of a Pacesetter. She is a loyal program graduate and represents our program, institution and profession in amazing and admirable ways. The UNCG MS Genetic Counseling Program is honored to present Dr. Alexis Carere as our 2019 HHS Alumni Pacesetter Awardee!



## 2019 AGCPD Outstanding Clinical Supervisor Award

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In 2018, the Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors (AGCPD) created a mechanism to recognize the invaluable contributions that supervisors make to genetic counseling student training. Graduating students submit award nominations to programs highlighting how and to what extent the nominated supervisor demonstrated published genetic counseling supervision competencies. Programs then select one award winner to submit to AGCPD. Awardees are recognized at the NSGC annual meeting and on the AGCPD website among other program-specific platforms.

### UNCG's 2019 Awardee: Christy Stanley, MS, CGC (Wake Forest Prenatal)

Christy Stanley has been nominated multiple times as an excellent supervisor for our program. Students have described Christy as supportive, encouraging and a role model for what genetic counseling should look like. She challenges students to push themselves and goes out of her way to make sure they succeed. Christy empowers students to feel confident exploring challenging issues with patients and provides a safe environment for them to do so. She has been a strong research mentor for several students on their Capstone projects and a valuable supporter of our program. One student described her as a great counselor and an equally superior supervisor. Another shared that she invested a lot of energy and effort into making sure that they were learning as much as possible in their rotation. Christy demonstrates the standard that our students aspire to and has our program's wholehearted support as our Outstanding Supervisor!

*"It is a privilege to be a genetic counseling clinical supervisor. I am honored to have been chosen as UNCG's Outstanding Supervisor for 2019. Over the years, I have learned that students enter into rotations with a variety of different experiences, interests, and goals. I strive to get to know each student, to understand their specific needs, and to help them develop their own unique style and approach to counseling. I love watching students attain their goals, build confidence, and fall in love with the profession. Their "aha moments" encourage me and renew my excitement for the field of genetic counseling. I am so proud to be involved in the training of the future members of our profession." -Christy*



## Supervisor Spotlight

Jennifer Mathews, MS, CGC

UNC Division of Pediatric Genetics and Metabolism

Nominated by: Evelyn Cabon, Class of 2019

*"There are a few great supervisors who have been influential in my process. In selecting the supervisor who had the greatest impact on my development to becoming a genetic counselor, it is Jennifer Mathews. Jennifer worked closely with me to ensure I had enough experiences to incorporate feedback and demonstrate skill progression. Every week, Jennifer was mindful of selecting a variety of cases for me to prep and lead in session. Jennifer was always timely and thorough with her feedback. She incorporated role plays and assignments into my rotation to build my critical thinking skills and knowledge base. Jennifer went above and beyond as a supervisor to support my professional growth as a genetic counselor."* -Evelyn

"I consider myself fortunate that I had wonderful supervisors and mentors who guided me as a student and helped set my professional path. In turn, I hope to share a fraction of my experiences and knowledge gained with the UNCG genetic counseling students. I believe each student is unique and there is no cookie cutter approach to their rotation with pediatric genetics. I attempt to design homework assignments, role plays, and patient selection to suit the needs and interests of the student. It is unrealistic for any individual to know everything about pediatric genetics, so my ultimate goal is to teach students to learn how to think through the complexities of pediatrics. Over the course of the rotation, we work on building a skill set to approach each case. This includes recognizing the common and unique aspects of the medical intake based on indication, emerging patient themes, major characteristics of genetic conditions, creating a specific differential diagnosis, choosing effective visual aids and finally working on the student's unique language and counseling style. Although student supervision has been my way of contributing to the profession, honestly I am the one who has learned the most because of each of the students. The UNCG students' passion for genetic counseling, determination, and thoughtful insights have left an indelible mark on me as a person and the healthcare professional I have become. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this program and the nomination for Supervisor Spotlight!" -Jennifer



## Supervisor Spotlight

Elysia Davis, MGC, CGC

UNC Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology—Maternal-Fetal Medicine

Nominated by: Julianne Streukens, Class of 2019

*"It is so hard to pick a single supervisor who has facilitated my growth since I feel as though each of them played an important role in defining what kind of counselor I will be. Elysia Davis sticks out to me though. On my very first day in clinic with Elysia she spent some time getting to know me as a person as well as what my experience has been like in clinic thus far to determine what it was that I needed from her at this point in my rotations. She directly asked me what my preferred supervisor style was and shared how she typically approaches supervision given a student in their final rotation. She continually challenged me to push myself outside of my comfort zone in meeting the patient where they are at while also providing the support and encouragement needed for me to take those steps. She knew I was at a point in my rotations where I felt comfortable with the information, so she really focused on developing my psychosocial skills with patients, which was my main goal of the rotation. At first, we just processed the feelings that were in the session afterwards. Then as we progressed, she would ask why I didn't push further into those emotions given I had picked up on them and wanted to help process them. She brainstormed with me and modeled for me how to do that in a sensitive way, but also reminded me that if I have a question or thought the patient will feel so cared for and I will feel so much better if I just let it out. Once I started letting those things out I was able to start tailoring and manipulating what I was saying to be more sensitive and meet my patient where they are. She believed I could do it and wouldn't accept me 'being safe'." -Julianne*

"I am quite humbled to be nominated as an outstanding supervisor. Supervising is one of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of my job, and I can only hope that I am performing this duty at a consistently high quality. I can appreciate the lasting effect that a supervisor has on a student, as I still recall the guidance of each of my own supervisors during my program. In my job search, I strongly desired to work at an institution that was an established rotation site. I have enjoyed a number of leadership and volunteer opportunities with prospective and new genetic counselors. Supervising is a wonderful way to continue this passion. Teaching and supervising rising genetic counselors is a dynamic and reciprocal role. I am constantly learning from our students because the student population is evolving. Young genetic counselors have a unique voice that is important in our ever-expanding world of genetics and genomics. I hope to grow with our students to meet their changing needs. I also hope to challenge each student I meet, pushing them outside of their comfort zones and expecting brilliance. If my students arrive with an open mind and a strong work ethic, I will meet them with warmth and encouragement. Thank you for the nomination!" -Elysia



## Current Events—What We've Been Up To in 2019

### Program Re-accreditation

The UNCG Genetic Counseling Program last went through the re-accreditation process eight years ago. 2019 was our year! Our application to ACGC was submitted in July with a site visit occurring in late October. We are so grateful for the unwavering support received from UNCG and the School of Health and Human Sciences, program supervisors and alumni, our External Advisory Committee, and current students. Our program has benefitted from this process and we are looking forward to receiving final feedback from the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling in early 2020.

In reflecting back upon the past eight years, it is amazing to think about the changes and accomplishments! The program was moved from being housed in The Graduate School to the School of Health and Human Sciences. We moved from our old program “house” at 119 McIver Street to our current location at 996 Spring Garden Street which has been recently updated and is looking good! Program Director Lauren Doyle was hired following the retirement of Program Director Nancy Callanan. Administrative support Marcia Griffin was hired following Sally Sprague’s retirement. In fall 2019, Rachel Mills was hired to head up the student Capstone process. Throughout the history of this program, we have found ways to grow stronger through each transition, deepen our sense of community and provide the best possible student training experience. Thank you to every one of you that has contributed in any way to our dynamic program, especially over the past eight years and during re-accreditation season in 2019!

### Spring 2019 Policy Workshop

For the first time ever, UNCG hosted the North Carolina Medical Genetics Association (NCMGA) On March 22, 2019, UNCG hosted a statewide policy workshop

Three UNCG program graduate assistants presented during the Spring NCMGA conference to orient NC genetics providers to the current landscape of policy and programs that impact practice in the state of NC. They provided information on government structure and how genetics health professionals can advocate for legislation changes for genetic health services and access. This provided context for a legislative panel with NC representatives, where the government officials described what would motivate them to endorse a bill, and their interest in genetics initiatives.

Christina Pool shared, “The policy workshop really focused on orienting NC genetics providers to the current landscape of policy and programs that impact practice in the state of NC. The morning focused on the current state programs in place (e.g., NC Sickle Cell Syndrome program and NC Advisory Council on Rare Disease) and the afternoon focused heavily on licensure - the current state of licensure in NC and the country, payor perspectives, and we had a legislative panel with NC representatives to discuss what would motivate them to support out initiative and what they looked for in a bill when deciding to endorse. The three of us presented on government structure to give context for the afternoon talks, and we put together a call-to-action presentation on how genetic counselors and other genetics health professionals can advocate for change in legislation as it relates to genetics health services and access.”



## Current Events—What We've Been Up To in 2019

### Volunteering at the Duke Pompe Disease Meeting

Four first year genetic counseling students volunteered before the 2019 academic year began to provide respite support care for children while their parents attended the Pompe Foundation Meeting. The children ranged in age and disease status, so they benefited from interacting with individuals with a variety of perspectives. Katherine DeLap shared, "We learned a little about the hardships of Pompe, and a lot about the beauty and resilience of families impacted by Pompe." Amy felt similarly, stating "It was great to see a space where these kids, in various stages of lives lived in the shadow of Pompe, could make friends and be perfectly accepted by their peers." All four student volunteers described the experience as a wonderful way to kick off their first year of genetic counseling training.



### DSNNGG Buddy Walk

Every year, the first-year students volunteer at the Buddy Walk for the Down Syndrome Network of Greater Greensboro. Students help set up, man the game stations, and serve food. First year Amy Knight set up early in the day and was impressed with "the sheer size of the event, as well as the prolific number of businesses and restaurants donating time, food, and resources to the Buddy Walk as a demonstration of the willingness of the greater community to support people with special needs." She was so struck that she came back later with her two young children, and was very appreciative of how inclusive and positive a space it was for kids of all abilities. Another genetic counseling student, Cari Koerner, was blown away by the energy at the event, and the details that went into every aspect. "There were signs along the trail celebrating individuals with Down syndrome at the walk. Each sign described an individual's journey, personality, and favorite things. This personal touch made the walk really special." The

Buddy Walk is a great way for students to engage with the robust different abilities community in Greensboro, and to give back to the city they will be living in for the next two years.

### UNCG Wonderwoman 5k Run

Haley Fischman (right) and Daniela DeCristo (left) participated in UNCG's WonderWoman 5k run in October 2019. Both are avid runners, and describe running as a way to spend time with friends and to be inspired by other people in the community. Haley values the time and space to spend time on activities that she loves, and sees running as a stress reducer which is essential in graduate school, especially as she transitions toward more responsibilities in clinic. Daniela loves the unifying aspect of running, saying "I have met so many people with diverse backgrounds, different interests, and unique stories, yet we have fun together doing something that only requires a pair of tennis shoes."





## Current Events—What We've Been Up To in 2019

### Support for LGBTQ+ Community

**Disclaimer:** The views and opinions expressed in the following article are solely those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the university or genetic counseling program.

As a first year student and member of the LGBTQ+ community, I have felt welcomed and included in every aspect of my experience at the UNCG GC program. I feel at home here, and that perception was reinforced when four other members of my cohort joined me at a counter-protest of a demonstration on public property off-campus to show their support and allyship. This was truly reflective of not only the strong bond in our cohort, but the commitment to fostering an environment of inclusivity and respect for all that I have seen during my time here. I am grateful for my classmates and the overall community for their response, and am excited to continue to grow together as genetic counseling professionals dedicated to the NSGC principles of diversity and inclusion.

Rozalia Valentine



### UNCG Science Everywhere!



Each spring the UNCG campus features Science Everywhere for children in Greensboro and surrounding communities, hosted by UNCG's Research and Instruction in STEM Education (RISE) Network and the School of Education. Hands-on learning activities such as making a DNA necklace, coding robots, exploring reptiles and amphibians as well as the virtual human anatomy lab aim to stimulate young minds and open their eyes to the world around and inside of us. Our graduate assistants have done a wonderful job representing our program at this festival. Pictured here are Haley Hill and Laura Bulmer along with their colorful pasta game teaching dominant versus recessive inheritance.

### Togetherness



Students in the Classes of 2020 and 2021 enjoy spending time with each other and exploring the beautiful outdoors in North Carolina (right) and Salt Lake City, Utah (left). Fostering a noncompetitive learning environment and providing a safe space for sharing is a critical foundation for personal and professional growth. This also

provides fertile soil for the seeds of togetherness and cohesion within and between cohorts to blossom.



## Alumni and Student Accolades



### National Hemophilia Foundation's Genetic Counselor of the Year

The UNCG Genetic Counseling Program wishes program alumna **Kristy Lee, MS, CGC**, congratulations on being awarded "Genetic Counselor of the Year" by the National Hemophilia Foundation. Kristy's dedication and passion for the care of people with hemophilia is evident in all the work and advocacy that she does, and we are proud that she has been recognized on the national level. Go Kristy!

### NSGC's 2019 Outstanding Volunteer Award

The UNCG Genetic Counseling Program wishes program alumna **Melanie Hardy, MS, LCGC**, congratulations on being awarded the 2019 Outstanding Volunteer Award by the National Society of Genetic Counselors, an award recognizing exceptional contribution and volunteerism.

After being awarded the 2018 UNCG School of Health and Human Sciences Pacesetter award, Melanie has shown no sign of slowing down, now being recognized for her efforts by the NSGC. We're proud to see her recognized on the national level for her service and dedication to the field. Go Melanie!



### Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions Scholarship of Excellence Award

Congratulations to second-year genetic counseling student **Christina Pool**, who recently received the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions Scholarship of Excellence Award!

*"I was very much excited when I found out that I had gotten the ASAHP scholarship just for the sheer fact that it was a scholarship and, let's be honest, every bit helps when you are in grad school. It wasn't until Lauren explained the entire selection process to me that I understood what made this scholarship unique: my entry, my essay, had been selected by the Deans at UNC Greensboro HHS to then go on to compete nationally for one of twelve scholarships. Knowing that the program and the Deans of HHS had that kind of faith in me and my message and chose me to compete not only for myself but for the school is such an honor. Being able to represent UNC Greensboro Genetic Counseling, the School of Health and Human Sciences, and UNC Greensboro at large as a recipient of the ASAHP scholarship is something I am immensely proud of."* -Christina

## Passion of A Genetic Counselor: Impact, Strategy, Connection

By: Ryan Noss, MS, LGC (Class of 2012)



I would like to begin with expressing how thankful and excited I am for the opportunity to write this article. In preparation I reflected on my first seven years since graduating from UNCG. In doing so, I identified three passions for my profession and two skills gained from my time at UNCG I wanted to highlight. I hope sharing these passions and skills as well as a few pieces of advice proves useful to my peers and captures my gratitude to my employer, Cleveland Clinic, and the UNCG Genetic Counseling Program.

The first passion for my profession is utilizing genetic information to mitigate the impact cancer has on a patient and their family. Since 2014, my primary clinical responsibility has been working side-by-side with breast surgeons and oncologists in our multidisciplinary breast center. By meeting with a patient recently diagnosed with breast cancer at their initial consults, I am able to: see more patients; decrease wait times; and allow for genetic test results to impact initial treatment decisions, such as type of surgery performed. Providing the opportunity to not only assist in treating a patient's cancer, but also reduce the risk of future cancer for the patient and their family members has been incredibly rewarding. I feel the following case example clearly illustrates this first passion. A 37 year old woman with early stage breast presents to our breast cancer clinic. Genetic testing reveals a BRCA2 mutation, which leads to a change in surgery from lumpectomy to bilateral mastectomy allowing her care team to not only treat her current cancer but also reduce the risk of future breast cancer. However, it also identifies an increased risk of ovarian cancer that her personal and family history would not have clued us into and provides a testable risk factor for her three sisters and other family members.

Working at a large health system in a profession with a small work force means improving efficiency is essential. In many ways having demand for services outpace supply is a good problem to have. I firmly believe that prior generations of genetic counselors have worked very hard to create the current demand for genetic counseling services, and it is my generation and future generations of genetic counselors to meet this demand. This reality has led to the discovery of my second passion, which is developing strategies to provide genetic counseling to as many patients as possible. While my work in our breast center certainly fuels this passion, I have also been heavily involved in our department's development of telegenetics services. Currently, we provide cancer-based genetic counseling to three remote Cleveland Clinic cancer centers. Additionally, our team is working on developing ways in which artificial intelligence can increase clinical efficiency as well.

The connection I feel to past and future generations of genetic counselors feeds into my third passion: educating future genetic counselors. At the Cleveland Clinic I am able to provide clinical supervision and lectures to genetic counseling students at Case Western Reserve University. In 2018, I was honored to be a recipient of an Outstanding Genetic Counseling Clinical Supervisor Award by the Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors. This award has been one of my prouder career accomplishments.

*See next page*

## Passion Of A Genetic Counselor: Impact, Strategy, Connection (cont.)

The primary reason I feel such a passion toward teaching future genetic counselors is the wonderful experiences I had in my clinical rotations as a student at UNCG. These experiences led to the first skill I am grateful for learning at UNCG, clinical knowledge and confidence. The number of cases; quality and diversity of rotation sites; and knowledgeable, engaged clinical supervisors at UNCG was second to none (Kristy Lee, Kate Foreman, and Elizabeth Heise immediately come to mind). Without the clinical skills learned in these rotations, I am doubtful I would be able to provide my current quality and volume of clinical care.

The second skill gained from UNCG was the foundation for continued education. While in school, I distinctly remember the then program director, Nancy Callanan, telling us it was not their job to teach us everything about genetics we would ever need to know, but rather provide us with the skills and resources for continued education. As I reflect on the first seven years since graduating, I am amazed at how true this sentiment has been. For example, the technology utilized for the genetic testing I order every day was not clinically available when I was in school! Without the skills and resources necessary for continued education, my training would have quickly become obsolete. Fortunately this has not been the case.

Due to the importance of continuing education in our profession, a genetic counselor's success is often directly related to self-motivation. This leads me to my first piece of advice, find your overachievers (I suppose mentor or role model would also work, but that sounds overly formal). For me, finding overachievers has been a great way to keep the drive to improve alive and well. Without these individuals I would not have had the courage to take charge on getting telegenetics up and running or take on my current challenge of further developing my research skills. A special shout out to Rob Pilarski, Meagan Farmer, Adam Buchanan, and Brandie Leach as just a few of the over achievers who have and continue to inspire me.

I would like to conclude with my second piece of advice, pay it forward to the future of our profession. One of the strongest aspects of our training is the level of clinical supervision we receive. This supervision takes time. Without the sacrifice of our supervisors our education would be have been significantly impaired. Therefore, we should feel an obligation to honor this sacrifice by finding ways to pay it forward to future genetic counselors.

Thanks again to Lauren Doyle, Randi Stewart, and Rachel Mills for the opportunity to share my experiences. Go Spartans!

Ryan Noss, MS, LGC

Licensed Genetic Counselor



## From Mentee to Mentor: Answering the Call

By: Rebecca Loman, MS, CGC (Class of 2014)

A little over five years ago I graduated from UNCG. If you would have asked if I would eventually work with a genetic counseling training program I would have laughed. I should clarify, I would have laughed because I didn't think I had a lot to bring to the table. I felt fortunate during my time at UNCG to have wonderful mentors both in the program but also in clinic and I didn't see how I could someday be that mentor. I had no expertise in teaching or research at the time, and in all honesty I was just hoping to survive my first real job.

Fast forward to one of my first opportunities getting to work with genetic counseling students. I was in my second year at Sanford Children's clinic (Sioux Falls, SD) and I was staying busy. I was working with two geneticists along with building a practice with pediatric subspecialists. I had learned more than I ever imagined possible and was grateful for the strong foundation I had gotten in school.

As things turned out, I was presented with the opportunity to serve as a rotation coordinator for three students from the Arkansas genetic counseling program. These students were spending their second year at Sanford. I found myself enjoying the conversations with these students and wanting to take an active role in their education. The year I was mentoring these students, I not only became a better genetic counselor for my patients (because let's be honest, we are all better when we have a student watching us) but I also became a better educator and communicator.

Around the time the year was wrapping up with the Arkansas program, there was a new position for an assistant program director at the brand new Augustana University-Sanford genetic counseling program. I took a leap of faith and decided to apply. I recalled being amazed at Nancy and Randi's ability to instill confidence, compassion and creativity in each student and I wanted to do my best for future genetic counselors.

I was offered and accepted the position. Although I had no real idea what I was getting myself into, the last couple of years in the role as assistant program director have been incredible. I have found myself primarily involved in clinical rotations, helping students develop genetic counseling skills and working with supervisors to give our students the tools to be successful.



*See next page*

## From Mentee to Mentor: Answering the Call (cont.)

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If you are reading this and haven't had the chance to get involved in working with genetic counseling students, I want to encourage you to try to find opportunities to engage these individuals. You will be amazed at the skills, talents, and ideas they are bringing to the profession. They will rejuvenate your passion for genetic counseling and most importantly they will force you to evaluate yourself as a genetic counselor. Introspection is scary but I have learned more about my abilities in the years I have worked with students than I ever thought possible. I practice more self-reflection, self-care and self-compassion than I did in the years prior to working with students.

I can hear some of you saying, "but working with students is a lot of work" and you are right. It does require more time out of your day but the reward is worth it. Not just the rewards that I mentioned above but I think you will find that these students can be incredibly helpful in a busy clinic. If you aren't located near a genetic counseling program but still want to be involved there are other opportunities. Genetic counseling programs and students are always looking for individuals who are willing to be advisors for research projects. If you have ideas that you think a student could help with, reach out to a program. Whether it be your alma mater, like UNCG, or a program that is closer to home.

Looking back on my years since leaving UNCG, many things I have done in my professional life were not on the radar at the time of graduation. For that I am thankful. I was able to use the skill set I learned at UNCG and the confidence that was instilled in me by the program to dare to use my education not only to further my career, but to find fulfillment in helping others grow into the field of genetic counseling as well.

Rebecca Loman, MS, CGC



## Faculty Updates

### Marcia Griffin

The Griffin family is expanding! Our first grandchild Rowan was born on November 24th to our youngest son Samuel and his wife Annette. We're excited to be first-time grandparents, known as Mimi and Grumpy. We have sold our home of 28 years and are in the process of building a smaller retirement home. We will be living in an RV on Samuel's property until our home is complete in early Spring.

Please continue to update the program with your current contact information for our alumni database. You can share with Lauren, Randi or email me at [mmgriffi@uncg.edu](mailto:mmgriffi@uncg.edu). Thank you!



### Randi Culp Stewart



In reflecting on this past year, 2019 has been a year of discovery. Discovery about who I and we are as people and who it is that we want to become. I witness students dig deep in the face of challenge and discover a little more of who they are and the valuable ways that they can contribute. Likewise I have experienced and witnessed our faculty team work together to rediscover and even redefine what is possible in creative, efficient, resourceful and collaborative ways when gifted with new opportunities. You will see many examples of this throughout this newsletter! The process of discovery or rediscovery is just that, a process, with no beginning or end point. 2019 did a beautiful job illuminating this for us!

Finally, what I will be expressing gratitude for this Thanksgiving season is the gift of perspective. Our perspective is the greatest gift we can offer one another as it projects forward into the world who we are as humans and offers growth opportunities to those around us. Let us each consider all the ways that we give, receive and integrate various perspectives, then allow this to increase our awareness, improve our practice, enrich our mentoring and grow our compassion. Thank you to all of you for enriching the lives of your patients/clients, our program, your community and our profession! My very best to you all this holiday season and beyond.



## Faculty Updates

### Sonja Higgins

Happy Fall to you all! It has been a good year for the Higgins Family. While my primary job continues to be taking care of my now 4 and 5 year olds, I have enjoyed working more hours for Metis Genetics. I see patients through telegenetics two mornings a week and this past year, put together a webinar on Telemedicine and Automation in Genetic Counseling which I have given to students at 10 genetic counseling programs so far. It has been fun to get back to teaching genetic counseling students. There was a poster about the students' knowledge and interest in these topics that we presented at NSGC. We are also putting together an opportunity for first year students at UNCG to observe with genetic counselors at Metis, as a way to broaden exposure to alternative service delivery modes. I continue to appreciate the flexibility of working from home part time at this stage of life. At home, my son Connor has started taking piano and is doing great. My daughter, Brielle, is still a delightful and sweet child. We recently enjoyed a trip to the zoo in Columbia, SC (see photo) and attended a fall festival at Brookgreen gardens where we live (photo from hayride). My youngest step daughter is living with us full time this year and finishing high school in the spring. So, look out NC, we could be moving back that way in the next year or so. It would be great to see those in NC more often and to be involved in the genetic counseling program more often as well. Please keep in touch at [sonjaeubanks@yahoo.com](mailto:sonjaeubanks@yahoo.com).

Sonja's NSGC poster presentation:

**Webinar Stimulates Genetic Counseling Student Knowledge and Interest in Automation as a New Service Delivery Model**



### Dr. Lindsey K. Umstead



Hello! I am a licensed professional counselor associate in NC and a National Certified Counselor. My background is in college student development and clinical mental health counseling. This year I am serving as a Visiting Assistant Professor at UNCG in the Counseling department, where I teach a variety of courses including research methods, clinical assessment, and counseling theories and provide clinical supervision to doctoral students. I also have the distinct pleasure of teaching CED 645 -Mental HealthIssues in Genetic Counseling for the Genetic Counseling program. Clinically, I work with adult and adolescent clients at Three Birds Counseling and Supervision in Greensboro. I specialize in eating disorders, body image, and anxiety, and I am working towards recognition as a Certified Eating Disorder Specialist through IAEDP. My approach is trauma-informed and integrates cognitive-behavioral, feminist, and sensorimotor therapies. This upcoming January I will complete the first phase of training to provide *Brainspotting* to clients to help them access and heal trauma using this empirically supported brain-and body-based technique.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my husband and our sweet Beagle mix, Honey, working on our new home that we purchased this July, and listening to true crime podcasts I look forward to continuing my work with the UNCG Genetic Counseling program and diving into psychosocial topics with the second-year students in January!



## Faculty Updates

### Dr. Pamela Reitnauer



To our alumni and soon to be grads: Please continue to keep in touch with the program. We brag about our wonderful grads all of the time.

Here is photo of Sofia at the top of "Arthur's Seat" overlooking Edinburgh Scotland.



### Nancy Callanan

Hello UNCG Alumni, colleagues and friends. I am looking forward to reading your updates in this issue of the newsletter. I hope that many of you were able to enjoy the recent NSGC meeting and special 40th Anniversary celebration. It is hard to believe that it has been over three years since my retirement from UNCG. I still miss being teaching, mentoring and working on projects with genetic counseling students. It was truly the very best part of being the program director. This past year I enjoyed collaborating with my friends Bonnie



LeRoy and Pat Veach on the updated edition of "Genetic Counseling Practice: Advanced Skills and Practices". We anticipate that this will be published within the next few months and we hope this will be a welcome resource for genetic counseling students and practicing genetic counselors. Retirement can be a lovely time of life. Roger and I are enjoying spending time with family and friends, making new friends as we become more engaged in our community, and traveling some. This year we were able to return to two of our favorite places – England and Ireland. I hope you will stay in touch – I really appreciate the occasional emails and phone visits. Best wishes to you and yours during this holiday season.

Nancy

## Faculty Updates

### Jenna Plamondon

This fall, the UNCG Genetic Counseling Program welcomed Jenna Plamondon, MSc, CGC to the UNCG program family as an instructor for first-year course Human Embryology and Teratology.

Jenna received a Bachelor of Science in Honours Biology with a minor in Psychology from Bishops University in 2008. She then earned a Master of Science in Medical Genetics at the University of British Columbia in 2010, where she studied the genetic and epigenetic factors in a mouse model for multifactorial cleft lip. This is where she gained her knowledge and interest in embryology and birth defects. Finally, she received a Master of Science in Genetic Counseling from the University of Toronto in 2012. Jenna joined University of Maryland's Center for Advanced Fetal Care as a practicing genetic counselor in 2013.

She provides prenatal genetic counseling to patients with a variety of concerns including family history issues, abnormal screening results, abnormal ultrasound findings, advanced maternal age and medication use during pregnancy. She has an active role in the education and training of genetic counseling students, medical students, residents and maternal fetal medicine fellows. Jenna's special interests include embryology and the implementation of expanded carrier screening in clinical practice.



This newsletter would not be possible without the efforts and dedication of our program graduate assistants Rozalia Valentine, Tanner Coleman and Kat DeLap. We greatly appreciate their many meaningful contributions!



# Alumni Updates

## CLASS OF 2019

### Julianne Streukens

For professional news, I am very happy in my new position as a pediatric genetic counselor at Spectrum Health Helen DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids, MI, which I started in June of 2019. In my position I get the opportunity to see patients in our Medical Genetics clinic as well as with the Cleft, Neurofibromatosis, and Cystic Fibrosis Newborn Screen multidisciplinary teams. It's a very exciting time to be at Spectrum Health, as I am one of three new grads who started this past summer and we are expanding our team this coming spring with a new geneticist! Spectrum Health has recently renewed its mission, vision, and values with our new vision being "Personalized medicine made simple, affordable, and exceptional", which really points to the value seen in genetics by our community. To promote genetics even more, our team has also been chosen to be the benefactors for Spectrum Health's Gala 2020, which is apparently a pretty big deal (according to my colleagues)! Outside of work, I will be presenting my capstone project "Perceived Utility of Genetic Counseling for Individuals with Eating Disorders" at the NSGC AEC. I've also been working with my committee as well as Rachel Mills and Dr. Richter to prepare my manuscript for publication. As for personal news, prior to starting my new job I got married (pictures below)!! Tyler and I moved out to Grand Rapids after our wedding and quickly inherited two of the sweetest cats ever, Benson (gray) and Frank (orange) (also pictured below).



See page 6 for information about NSGC poster presentations from this class!



## CLASS OF 2018

No updates this year!



## CLASS OF 2016

No updates this year!



## CLASS OF 2017

### Jaclyn Kotlarek

I have been working as a genetic counselor for the past two years at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. Here I see patients in our general genetics, metabolic, and outreach clinics. I am also a part of the Iowa Newborn Screening Program where I provide genetic counseling to families with abnormal newborn screen for possible inborn errors of metabolism,

hemoglobinopathies, cystic fibrosis, and SCID. I love my job!



### Mary Hricik's NSGC poster presentations:

Genetic evaluation following MUTYH analysis for European founder variants is critical to identify at-risk patients: a laboratory's experience

The co-occurrence of MUTYH European founder variants and pathogenic variants in separate genes: one laboratory's experiences and implications for genetic counseling on direct-to-consumer genetic test results

## CLASS OF 2015

### Alexandra Bailey



I continue to work as a cancer genetic counselor for Atrium Health (previously known as Carolinas HealthCare System) Levine Cancer Institute in Charlotte, NC. I've been the primary student supervisor for our clinic for the past three years and was recently awarded the University of South Carolina Genetic Counseling Program's 2019 Victoria A. Vincent Genetic Counselor Supervision Award. Additionally, my husband Patrick and I were married in October 2018 and just celebrated our one year wedding anniversary! Several of my UNCG GC'15 classmates attended.

### Juliann Savatt

I am still with Geisinger in Pennsylvania (where I went after

graduation in 2013) and continue to coordinate the patient registry for the Clinical Genome Resource (ClinGen). I have had the pleasure of presenting on this work at several conferences within the last year! I also have been able to take on some additional research roles in recent months on projects led by another UNCG alum, Adam Buchanan.



The class of 2015 celebrated two weddings in 2018 (Alexandra Henshaw and Caitlin Troyer). Their weddings were both beautiful and it was a joy to connect with classmates again.

Program Engagement: Last year, I enjoyed serving on a Capstone committee for a second year student and I would welcome the opportunity to do so in the future!

### Juliann's NSGC poster presentation:

Expanding Patient Data Sharing: GenomeConnect's Pilot to Engage External Registries in Data Sharing

### Samantha Caldwell Brovold's NSGC poster presentations:

Application of mosaicism ration from cell-free DNA screening to multifetal gestations

Implications of chimerism for cfDNA/NIPT prenatal screening

8 years of testing and over one million patients screened: a statistical review of the latest MaterniT<sup>®</sup> 21 PLUS assay enhancements

cfDNA screening in triplets: a clinical laboratory experience

Updated clinical experience with esoteric aneuploidies on a genome-wide cell-free DNA test

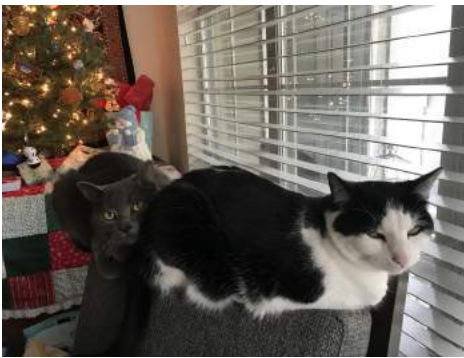


## CLASS OF 2015 (CONT.)

### Lauren Baldwin

This past year has been an exciting time of transition and growth, both personally and professionally. In November 2018, my husband, myself and our two feline friends moved from Winston-Salem to Chapel Hill in order for him to pursue his Physician Assistant degree at UNC. I am continuing to maintain my position as pediatric GC at Wake Forest and while the commute certainly could be better, I can't complain about being able to tear through a plethora of true crime podcasts. It has been nice to connect back to my undergraduate roots in Chapel Hill, but ultimately we still view Winston-Salem as home and are hopeful to move back once he completes his studies in December 2020. I was also able to stand by one of my BFFs, former UNCG-GC classmate AND birthday twin, Caitlin Barnes (Troyer) on her wedding day this year. Now not only do we share a birthday, but also a wedding anniversary (promise this was not planned in advance!!) just one year apart.

On a professional note, our institution officially began supporting the role of a Lab Genetic Counselor in the fall of last year which is now covered on a rotation basis by myself and the 4 other pediatric GCs. We just



recently had our "year in review" and it has been exciting for all of us to see the difference having a GC in this type of position can make for the patients and institution! Lastly, over the past year I have become more involved and interested in working with our ALS population, specifically family members who are interested in pre/asymptomatic testing, and in August of this year I accepted an Outreach Professional position through the N.C. Chapter of the ALS Association (ALSA). In this role I host a webinar-based support group every other month for members of ALSA who are living with the physical and/or emotional effects of familial ALS.



## CLASS OF 2014

### Aimee (Brown) Jennings



I am currently working in utilization management at Informed DNA and am enjoying the work-from-home life immensely. It is giving me plenty of time to spend with my animals, Arya (cat) and Dutchess (dog). This past year, I was a co-author for an article published in Gynecologic Oncology titled "Differences in referral patterns based on race for women at high-risk for ovarian

cancer in the southeast: Results from a Gynecologic Cancer Risk Assessment Clinic." I am also a member of the Junior Board for the Norma Livingston Ovarian Cancer Foundation which helps to raise awareness and funding for ovarian cancer research. On a personal

note, I got married in March 2018 to my husband, Aaron, and loved seeing some of my classmates at the wedding! I am still living in Birmingham, AL and enjoy coordinating a monthly GC Happy Hour with all of our local genetic counselors!



**Heather Rocha** presented the following at NSGC this year:

**No Thank You: Referrals Resulting in a Declined Appointment Over a Five Year Period**

## CLASS OF 2013

### Erin Campbell

In September 2018 I began my new position as an oncology genetic counselor at the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville, TN! It was a specialty switch that required a lot of studying after five years in reproductive genetics. In the last year, I have worked to re-establish a hereditary cancer clinic which included a switch to an electronic medical record. Needless to say, things have been very busy! It has been satisfying to stretch my knowledge base and flex other leadership and logistical muscles I hadn't needed to use in a while. I'm currently working to obtain a faculty position at the Graduate School of Medicine so that I provide more genetics education to our residents and medical students. Aside from my colleagues at UNC,



the thing I miss the most is working with GC students from UNCG and other learners at UNC.



Chase and I relocated to Knoxville in 2018 because of his new role as a young adult pastor. It makes my heart happy to see him doing what he loves. He is from Knoxville, and it has been really nice to be closer to his family and my own. I hang out with several other local GCs here on a quarterly basis for happy hour/dinner, including my classmate, Ledare. It's also nice to be closer to the mountains because we love to hike. I've attached a photo of me with Chase by Spruce Flats Falls in the Great Smoky Mountains.

I really miss working with UNCG students as a clinic supervisor. If there is a student who is interested in a summer rotation, please let me know! I also really enjoyed participating as a capstone committee member last year.

## CLASS OF 2012

### Nikki Fleming

I don't think anything is new for me in this realm since my article about contracting. I continue to have a few contracts involving a variety of skills: variant curation, remote counseling of patients, and medical writing and editing. I continue to enjoy what I do every day. :)

I continue to travel a lot, hike, climb, do yoga, dance, and enjoy time with the awesome humans in my life (often combined with the above). I am working on creating a "home" (not just a home base for other things) with my amazing partner, his wonderful two kids, and his awesome dog as well as make community in Colorado. We have all

been through a lot of changes in the last 5 years and are finally capable and willing/excited about creating some "stability" for ourselves.

I am happy to talk to students about non-traditional and contract GC work. I've never really had a traditional GC job. :)



### Courtney Kiss

I continue to work as a clinical genetic counselor in prenatal and general genetics at Kingston Health Sciences Centre. This past year our clinic accepted two GC students for clinical rotations and I had my first opportunity to be a primary supervisor which I found incredibly rewarding. I am volunteering with the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors on the Membership Committee and on the Certification Board Committee. I have been involved with spreading awareness of the genetic counselling profession to local high school students and Queen's University students. Adventures this past year have included a trip to San Diego where I tried surfing and back-country canoe camping trips (I'm now a proud owner of my own canoe—a Swift Winisk called Brown-Eyed Girl!).

### Ryan Noss

I continue to work at the Cleveland Clinic practicing in cancer genetics. In this role I continue to cover our multidisciplinary breast cancer clinic and cancer telegenetic services as well as providing clinical supervision for genetic counseling students at Case Western. On a more administrative level I am a member of: the Cleveland Clinic's breast cancer leadership program; NSGC's access and service delivery committee; and Case Western's GC program's advisory board. I will be presenting a poster at NSGC this year regarding resolution and clinical management for patients with mosaic TP53 test results and was on a publication in the journal of genetic counseling regarding the current role of genetic counseling assistants. On a personal note following NSGC I will have 16 more states to go to accomplish my goal of visiting all 50 states in my lifetime. In February my wife and I will be expecting our second child. This year I caught 2 fish on my bucket list, a tarpon and a steelhead trout.

Ryan presented the following at NSGC this year:

**Possibly Mosaic TP53 Mutation: Circulating Tumor Cells or Li-Fraumeni syndrome?**



## CLASS OF 2012 (CONT.)

### Sara Wienke

I am still enjoying my role as Senior Genomic Specialist with Guardant Health. With a solid year under my belt, I finally feel like an expert in tumor genomics and liquid biopsy. What a learning curve?! I am always happy to assist the program any way that I can. Anyone looking for a crash course on liquid biopsy? or transitioning to industry? I can help. My husband and I are enjoying watching our little man, Calvin, grow into a smart, active, kind kiddo with lots of spunk! No siblings yet, but maybe on the horizon. This year we tackled Disneyland for our family vacation and it was nothing short of amazing.



## CLASS OF 2011

### Melanie Hardy

I'm still working with JScreen at Emory University as assistant director of genetic counseling. I'm still involved with the Emory and VCU GC programs as a supervisor, and do the occasional lecture with those programs and the GC program at UAB -typically on telehealth or in assisting in role-playing exercises. Still very involved in NSGC (Chair of the Leadership/Management SIG, Co-Chair of the Laboratory/Industry SIG, Co-Chair of the Licensure Subcommittee, Chair of the ABGC Board Nominations Committee, member of the telehealth guideline systematic review group and the annual conference planning committee -I think that's it for 2019!). Won the NSGC Outstanding Volunteer Leadership Award for 2019. Also was second author on a paper in Molec Gen & Genom Med journal on Tay Sachs sequencing outperforming enzyme testing.



Finally took a vacation with family in Michigan this year. I highly recommend Sleeping Bear Dunes in the summer! Still active with our Retired War Dogs -we are going to be present to welcome Veterans from Michigan to Washington DC in November. (see pic)

Ways to engage with the program: Let me know if you want someone to talk about telehealth or licensure! Or if there's anything else you need -let me know!

Melanie also had the following poster presentation at NSGC:

**Serving the Psychosocial Needs of Patients Following Telehealth Genetic Counseling Sessions Addressing Increased Reproductive Risk**



## CLASS OF 2010

### Alexis Carere

This year has been very busy for me both personally and professionally. In January, I became President of the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors (CAGC), which I have found to be an extremely rewarding way to give back to the profession, while at the same time meeting lots of new people and learning about the Canadian genetics landscape. We are in the midst of hiring our first ever Executive Director -an exciting step forward for the organization - so I am also learning a lot about the governance of non-profit organizations and how to interview job candidates. At the start of the year, I was on maternity leave with my daughter, Nora, who turned 1 in May. I returned to work at the London Health Sciences Centre in March, but moved to a new position with GeneDx in June. I am loving my new job as a Clinical Analyst with the GeneDx Clinical Genomics Program -please reach out if you are interested in variant interpretation, exome/genome analysis, or genetic epidemiology! I have also been busy on the ABGCRResearch Committee, as we are in the process of granting our inaugural award for GC-led research. Along the way, our family found time to visit Disney World in February (see picture: Nora, Alexis, my husband John, and our son George, now 3) and we are looking forward to going back next year!



### Kristen Cornell

I'm still working as a prenatal genetic counselor at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Newport News, VA and supervise students from the VCU Genetic Counseling program. I recently got engaged to my boyfriend, Josh, and we are planning a Fall 2020 wedding in Charlottesville (see picture). Our cat, Aly, is just as sassy as ever.



### Whitney Cogswell Dobek

I am still working with the University of South Carolina Genetic Counseling program--having been with them 5 years now. I teach two courses for the first year students, while also still seeing hereditary cancer patients, and this summer, I was named the Assistant Director of Curriculum for the program. I've surprised myself with how much I enjoy becoming more involved in GC education, interviewing applicants, and helping shape a program! In my personal life, my 6 and 2 year old girls are still keeping me super busy, with my oldest starting kindergarten this year. And I continue to enjoy the therapeutic support (this parenting adventure requires constant support) of my classmates as you can see from our recent reunion.

**Kelly East** contributed to the following NSGC poster presentations:

**Measuring Up: Incorporating Patient Reported Outcomes in Clinic and Research**

**SouthSeq: Genome Sequencing in Newborn Nurseries Across the Deep South**

## CLASS OF 2010

The UNCG GC Class of 2010 had their annual reunion in Virginia Beach, VA this past August, and we continue our quest to have a reunion each year in a different state! (Pictured: Holly Taylor, Whitney Dobek, Kristen Cornell, Courtney Yerxa, Kelly East, Theresa Mihalic, Brooke Rush, Alexis Carere)



## CLASS OF 2009

No updates this year!



## CLASS OF 2008

Kate Hanauer's NSGC poster presentation:

**An innovative non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) assay offers the potential for a low-cost, highly-accurate aneuploidy screen in the global population**



## CLASS OF 2007

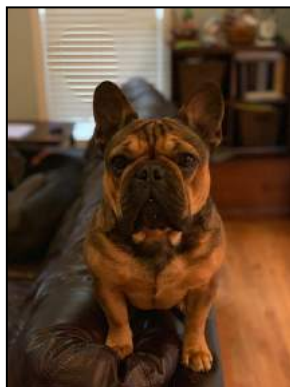


No updates this year!

## CLASS OF 2006

### Christine McPhillips Odom

I am in my second year of being a remote lab GC for molecular pathology at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. I was their first and only GC, seeing families for pediatric cancer risk, from 2008-2013. I left in 2014 to move to Savannah, GA, my husband’s home town, and spent 4 lovely years staying home with my two kids. They are now 7 and 9. We also have a Great Dane, a French Bulldog, 2 hermit crabs and assorted goldfish. I never pictured myself working from home but it works well with the rest of my life! Thanks and best of luck.



## CLASS OF 2005

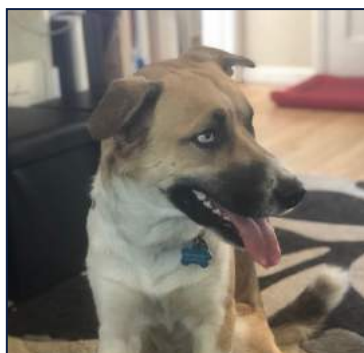


**Courtney Rowe-Teeter**

I have been part of the Stanford Cancer Genetics Clinic for 6 years and see patients in the San Jose location. I continue to love clinical cancer genetic counseling. I supervise about two Stanford Genetic Counseling Graduate students a year and enjoy this avenue of providing student mentorship. Our team recently applied for and was awarded a Stanford internal "Clinical Innovation Fund" grant. The grant will fund development of a video to be used in conjunction with in-person genetic counseling visits and will also fund upgrading our pedigree software to allow patients to

complete their personal and family history questionnaire from home in either English or Spanish and automatically draw out their pedigree. Both the video and pedigree software upgrade will improve our efficiencies and as a result improve access to our services. We look forward to implementing, studying and publishing on these new processes.

Ben and I celebrated our 18th wedding anniversary this past August, and we are proud parents of our 10 year old daughter, Sophia. Sophia is now in 5th grade, and she loves theatre. She will be playing one of the leads in her school's production of Annie. We also welcomed a furry member to our family this year. Franky is a husky, collie, lab mix who has brought us a lot of joy!



## CLASS OF 2004



**Adam Buchanan** contributed to the following NSGC presentation:

**NSGC and ASHG Joint Session: Genetic Counselors in Research: From Dabbling in Clinic to an NIH Grant**

## CLASS OF 2003

### Heidi Cope

I have been a genetic counselor at the Duke clinical site of the Undiagnosed Diseases Network since 2017. In my spare time I volunteer as the District Leader Volunteer for the Humane Society of the United States. We had a great family vacation to Hawaii this summer.

### Ashley Volz

I was honored and excited to be providing the Janus lecture at NSGC this year. The title was “Enzyme Replacement Therapy (ERT) for Mucopolysaccharidoses (MPS): how ongoing research can change the understanding of rare disease”. I have been employed at BioMarin Pharmaceutical, Inc. for 14 years now as a Sr. Medical Science Liaison.

**Christina Cain Rigelsky** contributed to the following NSGC presentation:

**A Heart to Heart Training: Advanced topics in Traumatic Events Using Cardiogenetics as an Illustration**



## CLASS OF 2002



### Randi Culp Stewart

See “Faculty Updates”

### Kristy Lee

See Alumni Accolades on page 18



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