



University of Michigan Genetic Counseling Program

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Fall 2016

Celebrating Program Director Beverly Yashar: Kaiser Award Recipient



We are thrilled to announce that UMGCP Program Director, Beverly M. Yashar, is a 2016 recipient of The Kaiser Permanente Award for Excellence in Teaching. The Kaiser Award is the most prestigious teaching award given by the Medical School. Criteria for nomination and selection for this award include demonstration

of superior teaching ability; accessibility or willingness to help students; enthusiasm and the ability to generate student enthusiasm; and the ability to serve as an exemplary role model. While this award is largely in recognition of Bev's contributions to the Medical School curriculum where she serves as sequence director of Foundations in Molecular Medicine, an integrated genetics, biochemistry, and metabolism course, genetic counseling students are daily benefactors of Bev's outstanding mentorship and teaching.

Bev has served as the Program Director of the UMGCP for 14 years and her leadership and vision have been instrumental in the ongoing growth of the program. Alumni, students, and colleagues alike can attest to Bev's passion for excellence in the clinic, the classroom, the research arena, and professional endeavors. Congratulations to Bev on this well-deserved award and recognition of her far-reaching and significant educational contributions!

Congratulations to Our 2016 Graduates!

We couldn't be more proud to welcome the Class of 2016 to the ranks of UMGCP Alumni. We look forward to their accomplishments and contributions to the profession.



Back Row: Diane Koeller, Parker Read, Carol Ko, Mary Oliver
Front Row: Linford Williams, Shenin Dettwyler, Samantha Greenberg

- **Shenin Dettwyler, MS** – Genetic Counselor
University of Michigan Cancer Genetics: Ann Arbor, MI
- **Samantha Greenberg, MS, MPH, CGC** – Genetic Counselor
Huntsman Cancer Institute: Salt Lake City, UT
- **Carol Ko, MS** – Genetic Counselor
Valley Children's Hospital: Fresno, CA
- **Diane Koeller, MS, MPH, CGC** – Genetic Counselor
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute: Boston, MA
- **Parker Read, MS, CGC** – Genetic Counselor
UT Southwestern Cancer Genetics: Dallas, TX
- **Linford Williams, MS, CGC** – Genetic Counselor
Cleveland Clinic: Cleveland, OH
- **Mary Oliver, MS** – Genetic Counselor
Spectrum Health Medical Genetics: Grand Rapids, MI

We are also thrilled about the continued success of our graduates on the ABGC Certification Exam. We once again had a 100% pass rate for those that sat for the most recent exam (Samantha, Diane, Parker, and Linford). We wish Shenin, Carol, and Mary the best of luck when they take the exam this winter.

2016 Diane Baker Alumni Lecture Award Recognizes Lori Williamson Dean

The annual Diane Baker Alumni Lecture Award honors the vision and commitment of Diane Baker, the founder and first program director of the UMGCP. On September 12, 2016, Lori Williamson Dean (Class of 1991) received the 7th Annual Diane Baker Alumni Award.

Lori currently serves as the Department Chairman and Program Director for the Department of Genetic Counseling in the College of Health Professions at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock. The genetic counseling graduate program she has developed at the University of Arkansas stands apart from other genetic counseling programs through their incorporation of telemedicine, blended courses that provide live instruction along with complementary online components, and satellite training sites

throughout the Midwest. Throughout her career, she has been engaged in clinical care as a pediatric genetic counselor, public health initiatives including as Project Manager for the Heartland Genetics Services Collaborative, and educational endeavors for the professions of genetic counseling, medical genetics, and advanced practice nurses. Lori has also co-authored important positions statements for the National Society of Genetic Counselors, including most recently the 2014 statement on *Newborn screening: education, consent, and the residual blood spot* and a high school curriculum on birth defects prevention.

During her visit, Lori provided the Diane Baker Alumni Lecture, entitled "Access to Genetics Education and Services." This lecture high-

lighted Lori's commitment to ensuring access to quality genetic counseling services across diverse geographic and socioeconomic areas, which was inspirational for students and faculty alike. During her stay, she also met with faculty in both the genetic counseling program and the Department of Human Genetics and enjoyed discussions with our genetic counseling students.



Lori Williamson Dean

UMGCP Class of 2018: Who's Who?

Join us in welcoming the UMGCP Class of 2018, our largest class to date! They arrived in Ann Arbor from across the country and have already impressed us with their enthusiasm and curiosity. We are looking forward to having the time to learn with and from them.



Kestutis Micke earned his B.S. from the University of Minnesota. As an undergraduate, he designed a genetic counseling internship at the Marshfield Clinic. He gained advocacy experience with The Aurora Center, where he served as a crisis helpline volunteer for survivors of sexual violence. Following graduation, Kestutis worked for MedTox Laboratories and at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, designing assays to detect and quantify HIV/Hepatitis C medications.

Mackenzie Mosera attended The College of New Jersey where she graduated with her B.S. in Biology and M.A.T. in Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Her undergraduate research, recently published in *Microbiology*, focused on further characterizing the role of a bacterial gene in DNA damage repair. Mackenzie's advocacy experience includes serving as a trained peer counselor and educator at ChoiceOne Pregnancy and Sexual Health Resource Center. She also worked at Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in Philadelphia. Mackenzie is a student in our dual degree program with Public Health.

Erin Nordquist earned her B.A. in Genetics and Evolution from the University of Montana. For her honors thesis she utilized next-generation whole genome sequencing and analysis of Western chipmunk species to resolve their complex phylogenetic relationships. She gained advocacy experience volunteering for the YWCA domestic violence shelter, as well as assisting homeless families in the application process for Ada's Place emergency housing program in Missoula, MT.

Caitlin Reid earned her B.S. in Biology from the University of Iowa. Her undergraduate research investigated the mechanisms of metastasis in breast cancer cells. She has also worked at the National Institutes of Health characterizing the immune response to brain tumors and subsequent immunotherapy. She gained advocacy experience at the Montgomery County's Abused Persons Program, where she helped women and men file for restraining orders due to domestic violence.

Carolyn Serbinski graduated from the University of Cincinnati with her B.S. in Molecular Biology and minors in Spanish and Chemistry. Her undergraduate research focused on factors involved in maintaining adult motor neuron axons *in vivo* using mouse models. She also worked as a supplemental instructor for Organic Chemistry at UC's Learning Assistance Center. She gained advocacy experience as a clinical service provider for the crisis and care line at Talbert House, a greater Cincinnati non-profit.

Lauren Turner earned her B.S. in Genetics and Psychology from the University of New Hampshire. Her undergraduate research focused on studying mechanisms of DNA damage repair in the model organism *Arabidopsis thaliana*, as well as performing a genome-wide association study of *A. thaliana* ecotypes. She gained advocacy experience by serving as a community educator and peer advocate for the university's Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program. She also has experience as an intern at the Johns Hopkins Comprehensive Neurofibromatosis Center.

Natalie Waligorski earned her B.S. in Cell Biology & Genetics at the University of Maryland, College Park. She served as a summer research intern at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia where she assisted in a study that explored patient attitudes toward a potential in utero cure for sickle cell disease and beta thalassemia. Natalie gained advocacy experience as a social work volunteer for teenagers at the Pregnancy Aid Center in College Park.

Stephanie Wiryaman earned her B.A. in Psychology from McGill University. She volunteered at the Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students' Society, where she facilitated support groups for students and community members who were survivors of sexual assault, and additionally trained new facilitators. Her undergraduate research investigated the linguistic and perceptual development of infants. She also interned at the Center for Human Genetics in Cambridge, MA.

Kudos to Our Award Winning Student Researchers!

Sarah Mazzola (Class of 2017) is a winner of the 2016 National Society of Genetic Counselors Research Special Interest Group Grant Award and also a recipient of a Michigan Association of Genetic Counselors Project Award. Sarah's research project, *Increasing the Utility of Whole Exome Sequencing (WES) for Primary Care Physicians: How are results applied to the care of pediatric patients*, aims to assess primary care providers' (PCP) understanding and utilization of WES results in the management of their patients. This information will be used to identify areas to improve communication and collaboration between PCPs and genetics service providers, which will lead to improved continuity of care for genetics patients in a pediatric setting.

Beatrix Wong is a 2016 recipient of the Jane Engelberg Memorial Fellowship (JEMF). The JEMF Award is granted by the National Society of Genetic Counselors to improve the practice of genetic counseling by providing support for scholarly investigation. Beatrix's research project, *Personality and Perfectionism in Genetic Counselors At-Risk for Compassion Fatigue*, will help identify genetic counselors at-risk for compassion fatigue, contributing to a growing body of work surrounding healthcare professionals and compassion fatigue. This information will help contribute to the development of intervention programs and self-care techniques for preventing compassion fatigue.

New Faces in the Genetic Counseling Community

Over the last two months, our genetic counseling community has continued to grow.

In August, **Joe Jacher, MS, CGC** joined the University of Michigan Pediatric Genetics Clinic. Joe earned his undergraduate degree in

Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology with minors in Business and Biology from Drake University. He received his MS in Genetic Counseling from the University of Cincinnati in 2014. Joe previously worked at Michigan State University as a genetic counselor in pediatric, cancer, and interdisciplinary clinics. With the addition of Joe, the University of Michigan now employs 22 clinical genetic counselors, more than any other institution in the state.

Just weeks before our new students arrived on campus, we welcomed **Christine Fischer** to the UMGCP as our very own Administrative Specialist! Christine has significant experience in higher education including administering programs and instructing college courses. With a passion for higher education and a keen interest in the medical community, Christine will be a huge asset to UMGCP students and faculty.