

GENETIC COUNSELING PROGRAM

<https://tinyurl.com/UMGCPprogram>

Learning, Growing, and Thriving During a Pandemic PART 3

The journey through the pandemic continues. Looking back on the 2020/2021 academic year, our students completed classes through a variety of modalities including in-person, remote, and hybrid. The small size of our student cohort allowed us to conduct many of the “GC student dedicated courses” in-person, while slightly larger courses, including those taken together with other graduate students, were conducted remotely. Students completed clinical rotations through a variety of modalities, with some occurring in-person in Ann Arbor, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Dearborn, and Toledo and others occurring remotely at sites near and far in Ann Arbor, Salt Lake City, and Milwaukee. We anticipate that summer clinical rotations will again be diverse in terms of their locations, modalities, and specialties, with some students spending the summer here in Ann Arbor, while others are planning for rotations in Virginia, Iowa, Utah, and Washington (fingers crossed!).

As we plan for the Fall Term 2021, we are encouraged by the foundational expectations, announced by University of Michigan President, Dr. Mark Schlissel. In his March 12 briefing, President Schlissel shared that he anticipates that the “University of Michigan will return to campus for the fall term with most classes taught in person, residence halls open at nearly 80 percent capacity, athletics events with fans in the stands and the campus community abuzz with activity.” For the most updated information about University of Michigan plans for the fall, visit <https://campusblueprint.umich.edu/fall-term-plan/>.



UMGCP Class of 2021: Ready to Launch



Front: F. Richardson, N. Huser, E. Kahn, M. Restrepo
 Back: H. Abdel-Salam, M. Donald, K. Mestel, F. Barquet-Ramos, A. Whitted, A. McKeon, J. Wood



Front: F. Richardson, E. Kahn, N. Huser
 Middle: F. Barquet-Ramos, H. Abdel-Salam, K. Mestel, M. Donald
 Back: A. Whitted, M. Restrepo, A. McKeon, J. Wood

Graduate training is always a rigorous and challenging journey. However, the Class of 2021 has weathered numerous unprecedented challenges as they navigated through their graduate journey during the COVID19 pandemic. At last, they are in the final days of graduate school. We couldn't be more proud of their tenacity, flexibility, and accomplishments. We will be welcoming them to the ranks of alumni of the UMGCP at the end of April and can't wait to see all they accomplish during their careers.

Hiam Abdel-Salam: MD Anderson Cancer Center

Farid Barquet Ramos: Dana Farber Cancer Institute

Madison Donald: Spectrum Health Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, Departments of Biochemical Genetics and Medical Genetics and Genomics

Nicole Huser: University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center

Eva Kahn: Mayo Clinic Department of Clinical Genomics, General Genetics/Pediatrics

Andrew McKeon: Currently pursuing positions in academic settings

Kaegan Mestel: Medical College of Wisconsin, Multi-Specialty Pediatrics

Michael Restrepo: City of Hope, Cancer Genetics

Frances Richardson: University of New Mexico, Division of Pediatric Genetics

Austin Whitted: Phoenix Children's Hospital, Department of Genetics and Metabolism

Julie A. Wood: Providence Health & Services, Spokane, WA, Pediatric Medical Genetics

Call for Nominations: 2021 Diane Baker Alumni Award



We are writing to ask for your help in identifying the 12th recipient of the annual Diane Baker Alumni Award. In recognition of Diane's excellence as an educator, clinician and innovator, the recipient should demonstrate assets such as commitment to professional activism, innovation in the practice of genetic counseling, leadership, and laudable scholarly achievement. Previous awardees include Barbara Biesecker (Class of 1981), Jill Stopfer (Class of 1988), Amy Sturm (Class of 2001), Stephanie Cohen (Class of 1993), Meg Hefner (Class of 1980), Anne Madeo (Class of 1999), Lori Lynn Williamson Dean (Class of 1991), Janice Bach (Class of 1979), Elizabeth Kearney (Class of 1996), Sara Scollon (Class of 2006), and Amy Gaviglio (Class of 2007).

Please submit a paragraph describing the nominee's qualifications and a copy of his/her CV to Monica Marvin at monicama@umich.edu. Nominations are due by June 15.

Nominations from previous years will be carried forward. Please note that alumni who are current members of the UMGCP Executive Faculty are not eligible for this particular award (Yashar, Marvin, Uhlmann). For a complete listing of our alumni, visit <https://medicine.umich.edu/dept/human-genetics/alumni?combine=Genetic+Counseling> (and this is also a great time to notify Monica of any updates to your current affiliation!)

ACGC Reaccreditation



Fostering excellence in education for the future of genetic counseling

In December 2020, we were thrilled to receive notification that the Accreditation Council of Genetic Counseling granted the University of Michigan Genetic Counseling Program full accreditation for eight years, the maximum time allowed for programs undergoing full accreditation. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to our self-study, including alumni, students, employers, clinical supervisors, research mentors, classroom instructors, external advisory board members, and administrative staff. The input that we garnered from our focus groups, exit interviews, surveys, etc. was invaluable in helping us highlight the strengths of our program, as well as helping us vision for the future.

Strengths noted in the summary of our virtual site visit and self-study report were many. Of particular note, current students and alumni spoke highly of the mentorship and support they received from program leadership and faculty, with appreciation for the ease of communication and our approachability, including our “open door” policy. Reviewers also noted the value of the interdisciplinary interactions with students and faculty from other disciplines in the basic sciences, public health, social work, etc. The reviewers were also impressed by the clinical and research opportunities available to our students, both in Ann Arbor and at affiliated sites. The strength of our alumni community was noted as an important asset to our program, with alumni from across the country contributing to the clinical, research, classroom, and professional development of current and prospective UMGC students. We really appreciate the strong connections our alumni have maintained with each other and the program through their careers. As the alumni association says, “Wherever you go-GO BLUE!”

At the end of the day, our clinical supervisors, classroom faculty, research mentors, students, and staff are at the heart of what makes our program so special. We can’t thank you enough. Finally, a heartfelt thank you to Brynn Arnall, our Program Administrative Specialist, who was invaluable in helping us pull together a lengthy and detailed self-study report and coordinating a virtual site visit that included meetings with over 50 members of the UMGC community! Thank you!!!

Working Together for Change

This past year has challenged us to recommit to developing and enacting a thoughtful plan to foster diversity, equity, inclusion and justice within our program, our community, and our profession. Finding the solutions requires us to be reflective about the history of who we are and forward-thinking about how to bring about meaningful change. Our efforts are multifaceted: multiple members of the class of 2021 used their thesis work to build an evidence-base that will enable us to promote equity in the provision of genetic services. Work by Austin Whitted looked at racial and ethnic disparities in the incidence of sudden cardiac death in you in the US, investigation by Michael Restrepo examined patient population specific understanding of variants of uncertain significance, and a study by Hiam Abdel-Salam looked at family communication about cancer in Arab Americans.

Engaging our communities is critical to this work. Nicole Huser’s thesis work, Amplifying Transgender and Gender Non-Binary Voices in Genetic Counseling Gender-Affirming Care Education, exemplifies the power of partnerships. Nicole assembled a multidisciplinary committee of genetic counselors, physicians, and members of the transgender non-binary community (TGNB) to envision and execute an ambitious project aimed to improve the quality of gender-affirming care provided by cancer genetic counselors. Importantly, her work was guided by a community advisory board composed of four diverse TGNB community members recruited through national TGNB social platforms. Nicole built and implemented a multicomponent intervention focused on TGNB health education. Her goal was to promote the adoption of and conversation about gender-affirming counseling practices in the genetic counseling profession. Preliminary data has demonstrated a substantive impact of this educational intervention on the clinical competence and confidence of those who participated. Multiple funding groups helped Nicole attain her objectives, including the NSGC Cancer SIG, the Jane Engelberg Memorial Fellowship and the Michigan Association of Genetic Counselors. We hope to make Nicole’s educational intervention available to additional genetic counselors in the future.



Summer GC Interest Group

The University of Michigan Genetic Counseling Program will be conducting our 8th annual UM Summer Genetic Counseling Interest Group for individuals considering entering the profession. During the months of June, July and August, we will be meeting one evening per month via Zoom. The goals of the discussions are to increase participants’ vocabulary related to genetic counseling and allow for interactions with practicing genetic counselors at the University of Michigan. Topics discussed during the Zoom calls are expected to cover multiple areas of clinical genetic/genomic practice.

The sign up for the Summer GC Interest Group will be released on May 7 through our mailing list. We had an incredible response to our call last summer, so we encourage interested individuals to sign up early. If you haven’t already joined our mailing list, you can do so at the following [link](#).

Save the Date!

- Friday, April 23, 2021: GC Admissions Match Results Release Day
- Thursday, April 29, 2021, 1:30 p.m.: DHG Graduation Reception (remote) <https://umich.zoom.us/j/9838529569>
- Thursday, April 29, 2021, 7 p.m.: UMGC Graduation Reception (remote) <https://umich.zoom.us/j/98472907087>
- Friday, May 7, 2021: Sign up for Summer GC Interest Group Released
- Friday, May 14, 2021: UM/WSU GC Supervisor Workshop (remote)
- Tuesday, June 15, 2021: Deadline to submit nominations for 2021 Diane Baker Alumni Award
- Wednesday, August 25 thru Friday, August 27, 2021: Fall Orientation for Incoming Students
- Monday, August 30, 2021: Fall Classes Begin

