

# Master of Health Administration



Welcome to the Fall 2013 UNC Charlotte MHA Program Newsletter!

Please accept my apologies. So much was happening— good things— this past spring that we failed to produce a spring newsletter. Consequently, the fall edition is out a bit earlier than normal and contains some of the updates we wanted to share last spring. We plan to produce a winter edition by semester's end and get back on track. Among the notable achievements that you will have to wait until the next edition to learn more about: 5 of our graduates earned prestigious administrative fellowships, 3 of our current students earned prestigious paid summer internships, and 1 continuing student won a prestigious award from AUPHA.

We continue to build our LinkedIn site, and increase our collaboration with the Greater Charlotte Healthcare Executives Group (GCHEG) and other to foster networking opportunities that connect our students and alumni.

Our sister public health programs are expanding. The department will launch its new PhD in Public Health Sciences with an initial concentration in behavioral sciences and new graduate certificate in public health core concepts in Fall 2014. The public health programs (MSPH, BSPH) are up for re-accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). Details about this process are posted on the department's home page ([www.publichealth.uncc.edu](http://www.publichealth.uncc.edu)). We encourage you to read and comment on the self study—either to us directly or to CEPH— as our planned growth into a school of public health will directly and indirectly impact our MHA program.

We need your continued support and engagement to continue this trajectory of excellence. Please get connected and stay involved.

Cheers,  


Michael E. Thompson, MS, DrPH  
 Associate Professor

## Congress 2013: Networking at its Best

The UNC Charlotte MHA Program was well represented at the 2013 American College of Healthcare Executives' Congress on Healthcare Leadership in Chicago, with thirteen first-year and continuing MHA students attending. Students participated in seminars with esteemed

speakers discussing a variety of topics in healthcare. Attendees had opportunities to network with healthcare executives and students from across the United States. All agreed the networking opportunities were the most valuable experiences during their time at Congress. Leah Huffstetler, a first year MHA student, described her experiences networking, "Every professional I met at Congress was very open and willing to spend time engaging in a career advice conversation. Their stories, advice, and life lessons were so insightful and helpful in navigating my own career path."

Matthew Kesler, another first year MHA student, said he was able to learn more about topics discussed in his classes, such as evidence-based medicine and patient centered care. Matthew felt that he gained tremendously from his networking experiences, and advises future Congress attendees, "Don't be afraid to strike up a conversation with anyone at Congress, whether it be a student or a healthcare professional. The contacts that you make at Congress could help you in your development as a healthcare professional."

Networking is an important part of career development in healthcare administration, and both Leah and Matt were able to see its value firsthand at Congress. Matt and Leah recommended that all students try to attend Congress, and added that they hope to return next year.

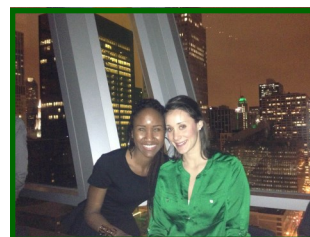
(From left to right) Shonalie Roberts and Leah Huffstetler



(From left to right) Jesse Tanas, Matthew Kesler, Leah Huffstetler, and Richard Martin



UNC Charlotte MHA students at a group dinner in Chicago



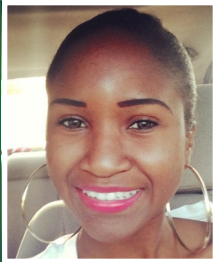
## Internship Spotlight



Michael Huneycutt

*"This summer I worked at the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) in Washington D.C. HLC is a coalition organization which represents over 40 different healthcare member organizations such as Aetna, Premier Healthcare Alliance, Cleveland Clinic, and many others. As the Policy Intern, I researched and attended House and Senate hearings on Medicare Reform, the ACA, and Health IT policy. I presented my findings throughout the summer to our membership organization CEO's and government affairs officers. It was a fantastic experience and I learned so much about health politics, policy, and future plans."*

## Internship Spotlight



**Shonalie Roberts**

*"I completed my summer internship at the University of Pennsylvania Health System. It featured rotations throughout the health system entities, including its 3 hospitals, primary and specialty care practices, corporate services, rehabilitation facilities, and affiliated community health centers. My primary rotational exposure was at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP), the highly rated academic medical center and largest of the three hospitals within the system. Here, the rotations were depart-*

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## Alumni Spotlight: Elisa Alfieri

Elisa Alfieri graduated from UNC Charlotte's MHA program in 2010. Ms. Alfieri holds one of the two MHA Advisory Board seats reserved for alumni. As described below, she also was recently inducted as a member of the UNC Charlotte Chapter of Upsilon Phi Delta, the national honor society for health administration. Ms. Alfieri is a Management Company Associate for Carolinas HealthCare System where she enjoys working on many different projects related to planning and Certificate of Need. She comments, "I like the diversity of my workload and the ability to touch many different aspects of health administration." Ms. Alfieri



believes the most important thing she learned during her time as an MHA student was working effectively in teams, because she spends most of her time coordinating and communicating in a team environment. Ms. Alfieri said, "While it may seem difficult during grad school to manage multiple team projects simultaneously, the skills learned through team based activities have prepared me for my current work." Her advice to current MHA students is "Soak up every opportunity you have to learn new things inside and outside of the classroom." Students should consider becoming active in student and professional organizations because these organizations offer opportunities to learn and collaborate.

## UPD Induction 2013

The UNC Charlotte Chapter of Upsilon Phi Delta (UPD) held its annual induction ceremony and reception as part of National Public Health Week. UPD, the national academic honor society for healthcare management and policy, recognizes and rewards academic excellence in healthcare administration.



Dr. Stephen Wagner, Vice President at Carolinas Healthcare System and adjunct MHA Program faculty.

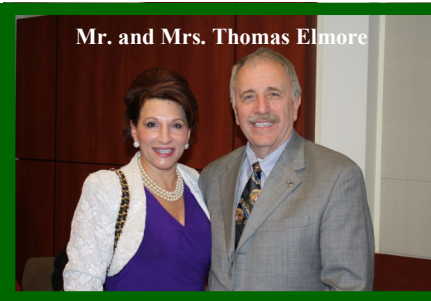
Student inductees included Elizabeth Cook, Alesha Eaves, Meredith Gellman, Karen Grochowsky, Renee Miller, Philip Mullinax, and Krista Stepney.

This year's induction ceremony, the chapter's second, included for the first

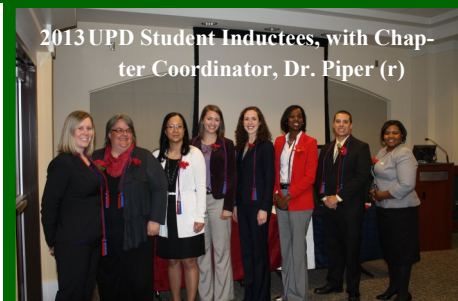
time, the inductions of honorary, alumni, and faculty members. The inaugural honorary inductees were Mr. Thomas Elmore, former Vice President at Novant Healthcare and current MHA Advisory Board member; Mr. Michael Tarwater, CEO of Carolinas Healthcare System and Special Advisor to the UNC Charlotte MHA Program; and



Mr. and Mrs. Michael Tarwater



Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Elmore



2013 UPD Student Inductees, with Chapter Coordinator, Dr. Piper (r)

Advisory board members, Clay Locklear, Director of Business Operations at Levine Children's Hospital, and Elisa Alfieri, Management Company Associate at Carolinas HealthCare System were inducted as alumni members.

Drs. Bill Brandon and Rosemary Tong, both of whom have supported the MHA program enthusiastically from the beginning, were honored as faculty inductees.



Alumni Elisa Alfieri and Clay Locklear



Dr. Bill Brandon (r) receiving his award

MHA students, alumni, and faculty members, friends and family turned out to help honor the new inductees.



## Welcome New Advisory Board Members!

This spring, the UNC Charlotte MHA Program Advisory Board thanked outgoing members, Alex Barker, Stacey Brown, Byron Grimmatt, and Fred Hargett for their dedicated service.

The Board welcomed three new members, including National Recruiting Director for BAYADA Home Health Care Michele Miron, MBA, SPHR. Ms. Miron has over 26 years of recruiting experience, and is able to provide the Board with a national perspective on employment trends and needs in healthcare. Joining Ms. Miron on our Advisory Board is Premier Healthcare Alliance Senior Public Relations Director, Alven Weil, MBA. Mr. Weil has over 15 years of experience in public relations, communications, sales and marketing, and government affairs. He currently supports Premier's Washington, D.C.-based advocacy staff with efforts to influence legislation on behalf of Premier's hospital clients.



*Pictured Above: Michele Miron*

Occupying a seat newly designated for a Greater Charlotte Healthcare Executives Group (GCHEG) representative, is President, Jean Wester, FACHE. In addition to her duties as GCHEG president, Ms. Wester is Senior Director of Revenue and Relationship Management/Operations with Novant Health, Inc. Ms. Wester has nearly 20 years of experience in a variety of healthcare settings; including an academic medical center, a regional HMO, a national health care insurer, and not-for-profit integrated health care systems. This fall, Ms. Wester will be succeeded by the newly elected GCHEG president, Greg Page, MBA, FACHE. Mr. Page is the Chief Operating Officer for Lake Norman Regional Medical Center. We are fortunate to have such a talented and experienced group of healthcare executives contributing to the development of our MHA program.

## MHA Tailgating Event

First and second year MHA students enjoyed the sunshine and some 49er football at the MHA tailgate Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> for the game against NC Central University. The first season of 49er football has been an exciting one, and MHA students did not want to miss out on the fun! Even with the demanding class and work schedules that most students balance, they still find time to have fun and come together outside of their classes.

Michael Honeycutt, the events coordinator for the student run Charlotte Healthcare Executives Student Organization (CHESO), helped to organize this event and will continue to find opportunities for students to socialize and mingle together. The MHA program plans to continue these tailgates into the future, and all alumni and students are invited to join in the fun.



*(From left to right) Michael Honeycutt, Lauren Greth, Korey Lockett, Anna Emerson, Devanshi Patel, and Diana Thomas.*

## Blackfinn Alumni and Student Networking Event

Department of Public Health Sciences students (current and newly admitted), and alumni met at



BlackFinn American Saloon for networking, food, and fun during National Public Health Week. All who attended enjoyed the opportunity to meet and mingle with their fellow healthcare colleagues and peers.

The event was a wonderful opportunity to welcome new students, and engage alumni. Networking events help our students to develop relationships, which will assist them in their professional development.

(Internship Spotlight Continued)

*ment-specific and included exposure to Marketing, Support Services, Human Resources, Nursing, Finance, Business Development, Process Improvement, Patient and Guest Services, Clinical Operations, Patient Safety, and Information Technology.*

*"I completed two projects as a summer intern and presented findings and my recommendations to HUP's senior management. The first project dealt with Patient Satisfaction and reducing inpatient noise at HUP. This project involved interviewing patients to determine noise-contributing factors, and a review of current literature for examples of efforts by other hospitals (comparable to HUP in scope and resources) to reduce noise. The second project, financial in nature, involved the development of a database to house Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) claims and to identify any trends that exist. RACs are contracted through Medicare and are financially incentivized to review claims (already paid to providers by Medicare) for errors in order to retrieve any money that was erroneously paid."*

# Support the MHA Program

If you are in a position to help our students during these tough economic times, a newly established fund allows MHA alumni and others to support student focused activities including research, travel, professional development, and community engagement. Similar funds also were established to support public health students and the department as a whole.

Giving to these funds can be accomplished through the university's donation page (<https://giving.uncc.edu>), but designating the gift to one of these funds is a bit tricky. See <http://publichealth.uncc.edu/giving> for instructions on directing your contributions to one (or more) of these funds.

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## MHA Students Study Abroad in Cuba

Spring break 2013 gave 14 students, including several of our MHA students, an opportunity to travel to the “forbidden” island of Havana, Cuba! Due to a recent loosening of travel restrictions, researchers and students are now allowed to travel to Cuba for educational purposes.

UNC Charlotte Associate Professor, Dr. Maren Coffman, jumped at the opportunity to provide her students with this once in a lifetime experience. The trip



to Cuba is offered as a 3-credit class. In addition to the week in Cuba, various Moodle readings and discussions are a part of the curriculum that make up the class, *The Cuban Healthcare Paradox*.

MHA Student Melissa Alzate, described her experiences as enlightening. She was amazed with the healthcare system in place in Cuba. She commented that one of the most incredible aspects was that, “their dedication to the primary care physician is amazing” and that, “Cuba has limited resources but they take those and put them toward one of the most effective ways to keep a population healthy - giving them access to basic care and making sure everyone has it”.

Another MHA student, Philip Mullinax, said he found the maternity homes to be incredibly interesting. He said, “this is where women with at risk pregnancies stay, some for a few weeks and some to term. This has helped reduce Cuba's infant mortality,

and its infant low birth weight is less than 5%, better than achieved in the US.”

In addition to learning about the Cuban healthcare system, students had fun learning about the culture. Melissa described one experience interacting with the locals: “We visited a senior center and the ladies there serenaded us with a lovely ballad. One of them even did a whole body shaking dance and we were impressed with her skills!” Melissa said that she would definitely recommend this unique opportunity to future students, as it is a chance to fully immerse oneself in a different culture.

The next opportunity to take *The Cuban Healthcare Paradox* will be spring break 2014, February 28<sup>th</sup>- March 8<sup>th</sup>. Many activities are planned! Contact Dr. Maren Coffman if you are interested in this incredible experience. Applications are due by November 1<sup>st</sup>.



Above: Students watch as Cuban women at the senior center dance to local music



Above from left to right: (Top Row) Sam Myers, Melissa Bell, Philip Mullinax, (Bottom) Renee Miller and Melissa Alzate

## Happenings



Above: MHA students and faculty pose with Carolinas Healthcare System CEO following their Spring 2013 round table meeting.



Right: Entering MHA students pose for a group photo during orientation in August 2013