

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

WEC SENATE 3

PROGRAM NOTES 3

TAI CHI LESSONS 3

IMPORTANT DATES 4

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PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES AT AUGSBURG COLLEGE



PATTY MARCINIC, LEFT, IS ONE OF TWO FACULTY WHO ALSO SERVE AS COORDINATORS FOR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES.

One of the strengths of adult education at Augsburg is that the college offers graduate degrees that are distinctive in their fields and unique to our school. One such degree is the Master of Science in physician assistant studies. The physician assistant program is the only PA program in the state and our only graduate degree that offers classes during the Day calendar. Like many of our degrees, the PA program honors Augsburg's mission to create leaders in service to the world. The program transforms students into dependent care practioners who are dedicated to serving populations in need.

The physician assistant profession is a high-growth healthcare field, due to increased demands on medical doctors' time. Under the supervision of a medical doctor, a physician assistant can treat most typical primary care patients, from diagnosis to treatment plans and prescribing medication. While the PA profession is moving toward more specialization, Augsburg's PA program stresses primary or family care, so that graduates can serve the needs of a variety of patients.

Each year, a new cohort of 28 students begins a rigorous 36-month program. Augsburg's PA program is divided into

an academic phase and a clinical phase. I had the opportunity to discuss the distinctive qualities of both phases with faculty members Patty Marincic, academic coordinator, and Heather Bidingier, clinical coordinator.

Marincic explained that the greatest strength of the academic phase is the focus upon integrated content. The curriculum was designed to approach areas of study from multiple care perspectives. "If students are learning about cardiology in their clinical medicine and history and physical exam course, then they studying cardiology in pharmacology," Marincic commented. Within the curriculum, theory is immediately connected to practice, which encourages critical thinking, a highly valued skill in a successful physician assistant.

The ability to analyze and interpret medical research is another important skill for a physician assistant, considering the evolving nature of medical theory and practice. Therefore, students in the PA program engage in a research review during the academic phase. This project requires students to gather, interpret, and present research on a specific topic. The research project serves as a culmination of their studies, before they head to the clinical phase.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES, CONT.

THE 2007 PA COHORT SCORED IN THE 99TH PERCENTILE ON THEIR CERTIFICATION BOARDS, OUT OF ALL 136 PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES.



Heather Bidinger, clinical coordinator

During the clinical phase, students complete eight six-week clinical rotations in several required specialties, including psychiatry, women's health, and emergency care. Heather Bidinger coordinates the clinical placements for students, which means that she facilitates 252 clinical preceptorships each year.

When professors observe students as part of a required evaluation process, engagement and motivation are what they look for most in a practicing student. As Bidinger explained, "A good student is one who is inquisitive, well-prepared, and taking advantage of their experience."

Throughout the clinical rotations, students complete coursework, in addition to the 50-60 hours per week of clinic rotations. Students are also required to complete a research project, based on a patient case.

This research project encourages students to confirm the validity of the treatment they recommended.

The project culminates with an oral recitation on campus. While the PA program is academically challenging for its students, it is successful in creating state-of-the-art healthcare providers. The 2007 cohort scored in the 99th percentile on their certification boards, out of all 136 programs in the United States.

Several alumni have returned to Augsburg, either as guest speakers or preceptorship mentors. Two of the program's faculty members, Brenda Talarico and David Barlow, are also alumni. In the community, alumni retain their commitment to service, engaging in volunteer and professional leadership opportunities.

These successful students and graduates exemplify the goal of adult education at Augsburg College, to cultivate successful professional leaders who are committed to giving back to their communities.

INTERESTED IN SHARING YOUR STORY?

THE AUGSBURG FOR ADULTS OFFICE IS INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT YOU.

What guided you to choose Augsburg College? What is your experience, as an adult student? We would like to publish a series of student profiles in our newsletter. You will receive a \$25 gift token for the Augsburg College Bookstore when your story is printed.

If you are interested in having your story published in our monthly newsletter, please submit 1-2 paragraphs to foxwilso@augsborg.edu.

WEC STUDENT SENATE

The Weekend College Student Senate has been busy the last few weeks, planning events and their upcoming election. But it's all in a trimester's work for an organization that aims to improve the educational experience for all students on a weekend or alternative calendar.

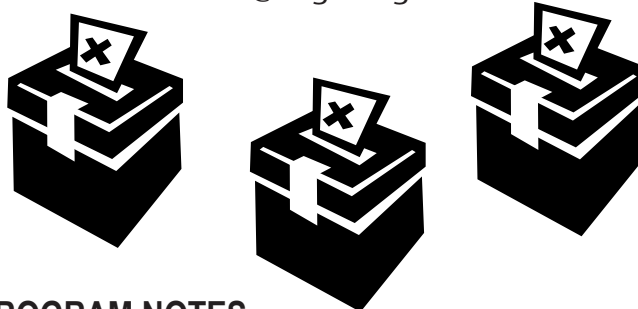
On February 9, the student government organization hosted WEC Winter Wonderland, an opportunity for students to bring their families to an Auggie women's hockey game. On that brisk Saturday afternoon, students and staff convened in Christensen Center for pre-game snacks and mingling. Then, everyone watched the late-afternoon hockey game against Concordia-Moorhead. WEC Senate, along with the Deans' Office and the Augsburg for Adults division, sponsored door prizes and free giveaways to students who attended. In the future, WEC Senate hopes to host more of these family-style events.

Towards the end of the trimester, WEC Student Senate will begin their election process. They are seeking nominations for three positions: president, vice-president, and senator-at-large. These three positions would serve for the 2008-

2009 academic year. At a recent WEC weekend, the Senate hosted Snackin' with the Senate in the Christensen Center to recruit potential senators.

Currently, four students serve on WEC Senate: president Mia Bothun, an education major; vice-president Michele Roulet; an art major, and senators-at-large Courtney Baggin, an education major, and Ibragim A. Mirzoyev, an accounting major.

If you're looking for an excellent opportunity to prove your leadership skills and help influence the direction of Augsburg, consider running for WEC Student Senate. All students who take classes during the weekends or evenings, on the undergraduate or graduate level, are invited to participate in the election process. For more information on WEC Student Senate, contact Mia Bothun at bothun@augsborg.edu.



EVERY TUESDAY – FREE TAI CHI LESSONS

Every Tuesday, the Center for Counseling and Health Promotion hosts free Tai Chi lessons for students, faculty, and staff. Classes are from 5-6 p.m. in the Century Room in Christensen Center.

Tai Chi is a slow and gentle form of movement created in China and practiced throughout the world. Both a form of exercise and a martial art, Tai Chi is known for its positive effects on health and well being. For more information, or to be put on an email reminder list, contact Dianne Detloff at dehtloff@augsborg.edu or 612-330-1707.

PROGRAM NOTES

Master of Business Administration

MBA alumnus Nicholas Thomley recently announced his candidacy for the Minnesota House of Representatives. Thomley is running for the District 33A seat, which represents the west metro cities of Minnetrista, Loretto, Independence, Maple Plain, Mound, Medina, Spring Park, and St. Bonafacius.

According to a recent St. Paul Pioneer Press article, the Minnetrista resident is seeking the DFL endorsement. Thomley is also the CEO and founder of Pinnacle Services and the CFO of Prospect Services, Inc.

**IMPORTANT DATES
TO REMEMBER...**

MARCH 10
Rochester classes meet

MARCH 11
Rochester classes meet

MARCH 12
Native American Film Series: Buffy St. Marie, 5:30 p.m. - Pre-screening reception with students (location TBA) 7 p.m. - Screening of Buffy St. Marie: A Multimedia Life, hosted by Joan Prowse 8 p.m.

MBA Information Session, 11:30 a.m. Thrivent -- 625 4th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN.

The Exception and the Rule
Written by Bertolt Brecht. 7 p.m., Foss Studio Theatre, Foss Center
Also showing March 13, March 14

MARCH 13
Rochester classes meet

“Self-Reflection for Leadership Development,” 6 p.m., refreshments at 5:30 p.m., Minneapolis Room, Christensen Center

MARCH 14
WEC, MAE, MAL, MAN, and MSW classes meet

The Nightingale by Imant Raminsh 7 p.m., Sateren Auditorium, Music Hall

MARCH 15
Visiting Writers Program -- Author Anne Panning, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, Lindell Library

MARCH 18
MBA Information Session, 6:00pm, OGC 112, Oren Gateway Center

PA Information Session, 10 a.m., Location TBA

MARCH 20
PA Information Session, 3:00 p.m., Location TBA

MARCH 21
GOOD FRIDAY – CAMPUS CLOSED

MARCH 24
Rochester classes meet

Rochester MBA Information Session, 6 p.m., Rochester Campus

MARCH 25
Rochester classes meet

MARCH 26
MBA Information Session, 11:30 a.m., Thrivent -- 625 4th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN.

MARCH 27
Rochester classes meet

MARCH 28
WEC, MAE, MAL, MAN, and MSW finals

MARCH 30
Concert Band Home Concert, 7:00pm, Hoversten Chapel, Foss Center

APRIL 1
MBA Information Session, 6:00pm, OGC 112, Oren Gateway Center

APRIL 4
Grieg Society Recital, 7:30 p.m., Sateren Auditorium, Music Hall

APRIL 6
Masterworks Chorale Concert, 7 P.M., Normandale Lutheran

APRIL 7
Spring Rochester classes begin

APRIL 8
Spring New Student Orientation for WEC and MAL, MAN, and MAE, various locations

APRIL 11
Spring Classes Begin WEC, MAE, MAL, MAN, and MSW