

PSYCHIATRY

News and Research
from the Department of
Psychiatry and Health Behavior

NEWSLETTER

SERVING AND PERSEVERING DURING COVID-19

This issue of our departmental newsletter comes during the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. First and foremost we wish good health for all our departmental sisters, brethren and friends. The spread of infections has been awful, but it has been compounded by the adverse psychological reactions that some of our patients (and ourselves) have experienced. The need for quality, available mental health services is now great, and so we also wish you peace and strength as you take care of those that need you.

We all want to meet our daily obligations as best we can during these strange times, so I want to share with you greetings from our faculty that are making contributions at MCG beyond the walls of our department. These individuals provide service within the MCG Dean's Office. Our department was a leader in the Dean's office before my arrival in 2012, as at that time our own Dr. Peter Buckley was serving as Dean of MCG. Dr. David Hess succeeded him as Dean, and I have had the good fortune to be asked by Dr Hess to serve as Executive Vice Dean for the last 2 years, while also still serving as our departmental Chair. Here are the stories of our faculty's decanal roles:



W Vaughn McCall

Dr. W. Vaughn McCall

Chair, Department of Psychiatry
and Health Behavior
Executive Vice Dean
Case Distinguished University Chair
Medical College of Georgia
Augusta University



Psychiatry Clerkship Program

With the advent of the new medical school curriculum redesign and condensed 3rd year medical student curriculum soon upon us, Dr. Azeem (Associate Clerkship Director) and I would like to describe the upcoming changes to the Psychiatry Clerkship for the academic year 2020-2021. We are excited about the opportunities the new curriculum will present to our students, and our goal is not only continue to have students academically excel in the clerkship but also to become integrated into their clinical site team and optimize their learning experience – both in the clinical setting and asynchronously. Currently our students both in Augusta and on all regional campuses complete 4 weeks of the clerkship with additional asynchronous learning activities in Desire2Learn (D2L) on various psychiatric topics to enhance and reinforce their clinical experience as well as prepare them for their NBME exam.

The biggest change approaching the clerkship as part of this curriculum redesign is shortening the clerkship from four to three weeks, so we are focusing on how to get the most bang for our educational and clinical buck! In order to do that we are making several changes and updates to the Psychiatry Clerkship. First, we are minimizing the amount of switching between clinical sites that students do. For example, students assigned to AUMC will spend all three weeks on either the consult-liaison service or the BHU service

rather than splitting the month between one of those sites and Lighthouse Care Center. We will then continue to supplement with additional outpatient experience in an age-group in which they are getting less experience. We hope that students will be more fully integrated into one clinical team which will then enhance their ability for active participation. Our largest task is reviewing the in-person Academic Half Days and online learning content that our students complete in D2L. Luckily one of our general psychiatry residents, Rebecca Woo, will be assisting with this over the next few months. Together we will be reviewing, updating, and optimizing the students' online learning content – making sure to minimize repetition and that the content we provide is engaging and evidence-based. We hope to integrate more interactive case modules, brief educational videos, and add more clinically-related resources such as objective rating scales and treatment algorithms to empower students in their clinical work.

Overall, this is an exciting but challenging clerkship change. One that we hope will lead to the continued academic success of our students as well as positively impact student recruitment into psychiatry. We will continue to welcome and pursue attending and resident involvement in both clinical teaching and Academic Half Day facilitation to give students experience with a wide range of educators and physicians within our department.



Chelsea Carson, M.D.
Associate Professor
Psychiatry Clerkship Director



Sameera Azeem, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Professor
Associate Director, Psychiatry Clerkship Program

AU/UGA Medical Partnership's Campus

I have had the pleasure to serve as the the AU/UGA Medical Partnership's Campus Dean for the past 4 years. In my current role, I am responsible for the oversight and leadership of this 4-year campus of MCG that educates 40 students per year, with expansion plans to grow to 60 students/year by fall 2021. I also serve as the Associate Dean for GME and Designated Institutional Official for the AU/UGA Medical Partnership since 2010 when I was recruited from West Virginia University (WVU) to the Medical College of Georgia. I completed my training in a combined residency program in Internal Medicine and Psychiatry. I've spent my entire career in academic medicine and have enjoyed teaching medical students and residents as well as treating my own panel of med/psych patients. In addition to my faculty appt. in the Dept of Psychiatry, I also hold an Adjunct Clinical Faculty appointment in the Department of Psychology, in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Georgia. I've taught graduate students at UGA for several years, covering various topics in psychopharmacology.

Over the past 7 years, I have also assisted the state in addressing the growing physician shortage by helping to develop new residency programs at new teaching hospitals across the state. I currently oversee the statewide GME expansion project for the Board of Regents, and at project completion, there will be 10 new teaching hospitals and an additional 765 new resident positions across the state.

My interests in psychiatry have been on the impact of exercise on mood disorders and addictive disorders. In my spare time, I enjoy lake life, boating, fishing and watching college football!



Dr. Michelle Nuss
Dean, AU/UGA Medical Partnership Campus

Office of Student and Multicultural Affairs (OSMA)

Office of Student and Multicultural Affairs (OSMA) falls within the umbrella of Academic Affairs at MCG. I have had the amazing opportunity to serve as an Associate Dean at MCG for 10 years in June. While our medical school grows and changes, my roles have also changed to meet those needs. Initially, I was hired as Associate Dean for Diversity Affairs and two years later inherited the Student Affairs portfolio. One of my favorite parts of my position is the ability to touch the lives of students in high school pipeline programs all the way through matriculation, White Coat, Orientations, Match Day, and Hooding. Our office is comprised of four Class Deans, an Assistant Dean of Student Diversity and Inclusion, a Director of Academic Support, and four administrative team members. Our office is committed to providing students with accessible and responsive services and we work hard to ensure an open-door policy at all times. These services include academic advising, career advising, academic houses, mental health and well-being programs, and management of mistreatment concerns. In addition to working with students in a developmental way, I enjoy serving as a liaison

between MCG and other facets of AU whether it be Student Health Services, Student Counseling and Psychological Services, Residence Life or Diversity and Inclusion. This allows me to connect various services to students, which I thoroughly enjoy.

Energy, collaboration and student advocacy are the hallmarks of OSMA. The ten years at MCG have flown by and I'm certain it's because of the caliber of people with who I have the privilege of working and serving.



Dr. Kimberly Vess Loomer
Associate Dean for Student & Multicultural Affairs
Associate Professor, Psychiatry & Health Behavior

Educational Innovation Institute (EII)

Greetings from the Educational Innovation Institute (EII), the epicenter of educational research in the Office of Academic Affairs! I have been a part of the EII and the Department of Psychiatry and Health Behavior since 2015. The EII is a stand-alone research center that supports both independent and collaborative research among faculty at MCG and AUMC. Our goal is to infuse a scholarly approach into the daily tasks and activities that faculty perform as they educate students and train physicians. My role within the EII is to conduct independent research on topics related to the improvement of medical education and support the scholarship of faculty members engaged in educational research..

The EII has many research projects underway, both wide sweeping and targeted. As you must have heard, MCG is engaged in a curricular redesign, and as such, Drs. Kleinheksel and Page are studying the process of organizational change management. Their data is instrumental in helping Academic Affairs understand the needs and concerns of faculty members involved in the change process. Curricular innovations are being developed by Drs. Wood and Miller, which include the promise of virtual reality and artificial intelligence in preparing students for patient care. Dr. Thomas and Miller are engaged in data analytics and predictive learning for

medical students. Imagine your data points organized in one place where an algorithm could help you decide on a specialty or identify what courses may be potentially challenging! I have been fortunate to have received several grants to study the professional identity experiences of medical students and physician assistants considered underrepresented in medicine. I have also been working alongside Drs. Wood, and David Williams, in the Dept. of Psychiatry and Health Behavior on a study investigating resident burnout at MCG, as well as with Dr. Kleinheksel on promoting medical students' professional identity formation through simulation. My future goals include launching the EII's reputation back into national prominence.



Tasha Wyatt, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Educational Researcher,
Educational Innovation Institute

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Associate Dean for Student Affairs

I have had the privilege to serve as Associate Dean for Student Affairs for the Third Year Class since May of 2013. In that capacity, I am responsible for helping to assure that our students have the support they need throughout their third year and beyond. With 190 students, this is already a significant undertaking, but with students distributed throughout the state, it becomes even more of a challenge. Among my primary responsibilities is to provide Academic Advising, which ostensibly is to help students who are struggling with various elements of their clerkships. One of the challenges of the third year is to prioritize time spent doing clinical work with time spent studying for the Shelf Exams. I aim to help students come up with creative ways to facilitate their preparation. Another important facet of my responsibility is for Career Advising. This can be a most challenging task, as many students find themselves torn between various specialties and subspecialties. This creates a significant amount of angst, for which I feel I am well equipped to help them.

Once a specialty has been chosen, there is an application process called the Electronic Residency Application System (ERAS), to which students are required to submit. One aspect is the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE or Dean's Letter). Students have the opportunity to select from a handful of writers in Academic Affairs and I typically write between 20 and 40 each year.

While I am very busy at times, I find this role especially rewarding and find myself using many of the same skills that I use with my patients. It is especially heartwarming to see their eventual maturation into full-fledged practitioners.

Eric Lewkowiez, M.D.
Assistant Professor
Associate Dean of Student Affairs



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To give online, visit mcgfoundation.org.

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- Department's Greatest Need