

**EXCEPTIONAL  
EDUCATION**





# Proven Track Record

## PA Program Builds Strong Foundation at Mount Union

Dozens of successful graduates, impressive national exam passage results and strong connections to esteemed hospitals and physicians are just a few of the accomplishments the University of Mount Union's physician assistant studies program has achieved since the program's launch in 2009.

The University's Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program was among Mount Union's first graduate level program offerings. The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has granted Accreditation-Continued status to PA program at Mount Union.

The program attracts students from throughout the state and country as well as Mount Union undergraduate students with a desire to pursue their education in the medical field. After earning an undergraduate degree in biology at Mount Union, Michelle Porter '13, M '15, didn't want to leave Mount Union to further her education.



“The faculty, staff and students are all so kind, helpful and incredible. I knew that these trends would continue in Mount Union’s graduate programs,” Porter said.

Betsy Ekey, who will take over as PA Studies program director August 1, noted that the one-on-one interaction with faculty members is often a determining factor for students choosing PA schools.

“Mount Union’s undergraduate tradition of allowing students to feel comfortable approaching professors for one-on-one assistance is also carried on to the PA program,” Ekey said.

### **CARING MISSION**

The mission of Mount Union’s PA program is to “educate knowledgeable, competent and compassionate physician assistants who provide patient care with professionalism and integrity.”

“Mount Union’s program doesn’t just focus on the medical aspects of patient care, but also emphasizes the importance of ethics, integrity and responsibility,” Jenny Carpenter M ’14 said of the program.

Students enrolled in the program fulfill this mission as they complete a 15-month didactic phase in the classroom and laboratory and then move on to 12 months of clinical rotations at area doctors’ offices, hospitals and clinics. Students complete clinical rotations in women’s health, general surgery, pediatrics, primary care, internal medicine, emergency medicine, behavioral medicine and family medicine.

The University has established partnerships with more than 200 locations including the Cleveland Clinic, Mercy Medical Center and the nearby Alliance Community Hospital, which provide hands-on training in a variety of settings.

## **PA Graduate Spotlight: Ryan Adler, PA-C, ATC, CSCS M ’11**



**Job Title:** PA, Digestive Disease Institute

*I work on the main campus of the Cleveland Clinic as a member of the gastroenterology and hepatology team. I provide day-to-day care for patients admitted to the GI service as well as perform consults within the hospital and ICU.*

### **Why Mount Union**

The reason I chose Mount Union was the personal interview process. I felt like the faculty and staff members were interested in who I was as a person and were committed to my growth and development in the journey of becoming a physician assistant.

### **Asking for Help**

One of the most helpful experiences in school was after a difficult exam that did not go as planned. I reached out to my classmates and faculty to see what I could be doing differently. Afterward, I excelled on the exams and realized that it’s okay to ask for help!

### **Connections with Patients**

My favorite thing about my job is the connections that are made on a daily basis. To be able to help a patient is a challenging and rewarding feeling. I have been fortunate to work with great physician assistants and physicians.

## PA Graduate Spotlight: Olivia Myers '10 M '12



**Job Title:** Dermatology PA

*I work under Dr. David Corallo's supervision to diagnose and treat skin, hair and nail conditions and diseases; write prescriptions; perform biopsies; educate patients on diagnoses and prevent skin cancers through regular screenings and sun safety.*

### Mount Union Confidence

Mount Union's program was new at the time I was applying to PA schools, and I had watched the program start from the ground up. But despite this newness, I was confident that Mount Union's program had the potential to bring new and groundbreaking ideas to PA education. This "newness" also gave my classmates and me the ability to help mold and shape the future of the program as it continues to strengthen.

### Hands-on Experience

The most memorable hands-on experience was anatomy lab at the Cleveland Clinic. We also gained hands-on experience with clinical skills, learning how to suture, cast and perform exams.

### Favorite Part of My Job

I like working with people in my own community and being able to educate them on the prevention of skin disease.

## LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

In addition to classroom, laboratory and clinical learning opportunities, Mount Union PA students can also participate in various educational opportunities outside of the classroom. These include attending the American Academy of Physician Assistance (AAPA) National Conference and the National Medical Challenge Bowl, a competition where teams of three PA students face off by answering challenging medical questions on a variety of subjects.

"We consider Mount Union's PA curriculum to be one of the best around because it focuses on patient-centered care, an understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of health care access and needs and the importance of life-long learning for the PA," said Dr. Patricia Draves, vice president for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University. "In addition, through its mission, the program helps to meet the surrounding community's need for qualified healthcare providers."

## Betsy Ekey Named PA Program Director

Betsy Ekey, assistant professor of physician assistant studies and academic coordinator, will assume the role of program director beginning August 1, 2015 and was recently promoted to associate professor with tenure. Ekey has been with the program since it started in 2009 and has played an integral role in its development and successes throughout the past six years.



Ekey earned a Bachelor of Science degree in medical science and a Master of Science degree in physician assistant studies, both from Alderson-Broaddus College. Prior to joining the Mount Union faculty, she was a physician assistant at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Ekey is known for teaching her students about diseases from "A to Z," enabling them to be knowledgeable healthcare providers. She also prepares students with medical decision-making and problem-solving skills

that are critical in the clinical healthcare setting. She is active nationally in service to the Physician Assistant Education Association.

In her new role, Ekey hopes to oversee the inclusion of problem-based learning into curriculum and helping students apply textbook knowledge to clinical scenarios.

"I look forward to expanding and growing the clinical opportunities for our students," she said. "I'm excited and honored to have the opportunity to lead the program into the future."

*"We consider Mount Union's PA curriculum to be one of the best around because it focuses on patient-centered care, an understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of health care access and needs and the importance of life-long learning for the PA."*

*— Dr. Patricia Draves, vice president for Academic Affairs and Dean of the University*