



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Featured Professional School	1
Perspective from a CNS Alum	1
What does competitive mean?	1
PPA Applications	1
Upcoming Events	1
The GRE: New & Old	2
How to Pick Your Major	3
Student Poll	3
Scholarship Application	4
Fun Facts	4
Meet the Advisors!	5

Upcoming Events in the College of Natural Science

**University of Michigan
Pharmacy School Visits**
Tuesday, January 24th and
Monday February 27th
1:00-3:00 pm
203C Nat. Sci. Bldg

Michigan Med School Night!
Wednesday, February 22nd,
6:30-9:00 pm
BPS Atrium



Featured Professional School

Grand Valley State University's Physician Assistant Program

The physician assistant (PA) occupation is currently one of the fastest growing careers in the country. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics is expecting a 39% job increase in the next ten years, as PAs are in high demand. What exactly is a PA? A physician assistant is a health care professional that is licensed to practice medicine and provide services with the supervision of a physician. PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and in almost all states PAs can write prescriptions. PA programs are 2-3 years in length after completing an undergraduate degree. Grand Valley State University is home to one of the top PA programs in the country. *(Continued on page 2)*

GVSU Quick Facts
Competitive GPA: 3.6
Patient Contact: 500+ hours
GRE: Not required
Location: Grand Rapids, MI

Perspective from a CNS Alumnus in Public Health

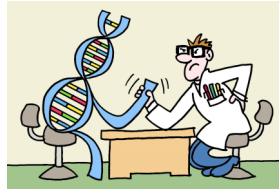
Q: What inspired you to pursue Public Health?

I spent time researching malaria, HIV drug adherence, and conducted field data collection in Zambia, Africa. While in Africa, I realized how much the rest of the world needed public health leaders to help them implement the many resources available to them. I knew that what I was doing really mattered to the people I interacted with, and I helped teach people how to help themselves. *(Continued on page 4)*

Jamey Hardesty
Major: Microbiology-
Human Biology
Graduate School: U of M
School of Public Health

What Does "Competitive" Mean?

We have heard that term a lot. Whether you are thinking about applying to medical, dental, or any other professional school or program, we all want to be "competitive". But what does that mean? *(Continued on page 5)*



Pre-professional Peer Advisor Application Available!

Are you interested in helping other pre-professional students like yourself? Do you want to improve your public speaking skills and get to know your advisor a little better? Then you should apply to become one of the PPA's! Email Heidi Purdy at purdyh@msu.edu to indicate your interest and receive an application! Applications are due **January 31st, 2012 by 5pm.**



CNS Pre-Professional Newsletter

The GRE has changed! New vs. Old

GRE	NEW	OLD
Verbal Reasoning	-text completion, sentence equivalence, reading comprehension -no analogies or antonyms -score: 130-170 (1 point increments) -2 sections, 20 questions each -30 minutes per section	-analogies, antonyms, sentence completion, reading comprehension -score: 200-800 (10 point increments) -1 section, 30 questions -30 minutes total
Quantitative Reasoning	-multiple choice, numeric entry, quantitative comparison -score: 130-170 -1 point increments -2 sections - calculator	-problem solving, data interpretation, quantitative comparison -score: 200-800 -10 point increments -1 section
Analytical Writing	-30 Minutes per task - Total 60 minutes for two tasks or questions	-45 minutes for Issue task -30 minutes for Argument task

The GRE is a computer-based graduate entrance exam that is required by many graduate, business and professional schools, usually taken prior to college graduation. The GRE is used by admission counselors to assess the readiness of students for graduate-level work. As of August 2011, the GRE has been completely revised, featuring a new test-taker friendly design with newly modified questions. Educational Testing Service (the makers of the GRE) hope that this new test more closely reflects the kind of thinking students will be required to do in graduate school. The test is still broken into three main subgroups; verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning and analytical writing. The major difference is that the verbal reasoning section has been completely updated and students are able to use a calculator on the quantitative reasoning! To the right is a chart that compares the old GRE to the new GRE, which will hopefully help all you potential graduate students succeed! For more information on the GRE, please visit www.ets.org/gre.

Grand Valley State University Physician Assistant Studies

Founded in 1995, the PA program is a 28-month program that awards students a Master of Physician Assistant Studies (M.P.A.S). Students in the program at GVSU are very diverse. An equal number of applicants to the program are derived from those who possess a baccalaureate degree from either Grand Valley or another institution of higher learning and/or those who have pursued careers other than physician assistant prior to admission. Once admitted into the program, students take coursework including human anatomy, medical physiology, clinical applications, clinical medicine, pathophysiology, practical therapeutics, PA professional seminar, and research methods. The curriculum combines traditional classroom sessions with web-based instruction, case studies and problem based learning, preparing students for the clinical applications of this profession. Students spend their final three semesters completing rotations in many different specialties. In addition, before graduation, students complete a research project, thesis or in depth case study. For more information please visit: <http://www.gvsu.edu/pas/>



Volume I, Issue III

How to Pick Your Major

As a pre-professional student, picking a major can be a big decision. As you know, your pre-professional coding (pre-med, pre-dental, etc) is not a major or degree-granting program; it is a way of communicating to advisors your interest in a certain career path. Pre-professional students must complete a bachelor's degree to go on to professional school. Luckily for you, MSU offers a huge variety of majors...and you can choose any of them! How?

- **Think about your likes and dislikes.** Your major will hopefully be a subject area you are interested in, enjoy taking classes in, and like learning more about. Avoid choosing a major because you think it will "look good" on your application.
- **Take your time.** Students at MSU change their major an average of four times! Explore your options and take a few classes before rushing into a decision. Also, talk to advisors to discuss your career goals and they can help you sort it all out!



- **Keep an open mind.** Remember that pre-professional students do not need to have a major within the College of Natural Science. As long as you complete the prerequisite courses needed to apply to professional school you can be just as competitive with a non-science major as with a science major.

- **Think about your skills and strengths.** Pick a major based on your strengths. Not only will this help you be more successful in your classes, but it also lends itself to developing a parallel career plan if you decide later that you don't want to attend professional school. Additionally, less than 50% of applicants are accepted into professional health schools. Having a major in a field you are interested in helps keep your options open.

Advice from a peer-advisor: "During the summer, I visited the University of Southern California and spoke to an academic advisor about pre-pharmacy/pre-professional requirements. He told me about a young lady who was accepted into medical school with a Bachelor's Degree in French. She graduated from medical school and was working as a full-time physician during the time the earthquake hit Haiti. She was one of the few physicians flown to Haiti to help in the disaster, not because she was a world-renowned physician, but because she could speak French fluently."

Student Poll

This month's poll: What was this year's top destination for New Year's Eve?

- New York City, NY
- Las Vegas, NV
- New Orleans, LA
- Los Angeles, CA

Link to this month's poll:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YFLGHVC>

Last month's poll: What is your favorite Thanksgiving side dish?

50% of respondents said **stuffing**

50% of respondents said **mashed potatoes**

Perspective from a CNS Alumnus in Public Health

Q: What aspect of public health interests you the most? My entire life I've been intrigued by infectious diseases. There is so much yet to be learned, but maybe more importantly, there's a lot to be discovered about how to combat them. Currently, health-care is shifting towards a model that recognizes the validity of public health control measures in the clinical setting. Over the next decade, these dynamics will become considerably more prevalent to everyone with clinical roles. There will be a great need for public health practitioners.

Q: On a day-to-day basis, what does your career entail? I served as an Influenza Epidemiologist for the Michigan Department of Community Health. I assisted in monitoring and analyzing infection rates in clinics, hospitals, and schools during the 2009/2010 Influenza H1N1 pandemic. I monitored our surveillance systems for the State of Michigan, and conducted daily reporting to the media.

Q: What areas of public health are available to recent MPH graduates? As of late, there has been a significant transition of public health officials into the lab. No longer are epidemiologists dismissed to rural nations throughout the world. Today, we are on the cutting edge of science and health-care.

Q: What would be your advice to current undergraduate students? As cliché as it may sound, listen to your gut. Many of you have wide-ranging ambitions and career goals, but the one thing I've learned along the way is that there is no "set path" to get anywhere.

Pursue your passions and curiosities. At the end of the day, being passionate about what you do will lead to greater successes, and thus improving your chances of meeting your life-long ambitions. In fact, I encourage each of you to stand out in a way that makes you unique. Don't seek out a formula, as there is no such thing. Follow your heart (or mind for those of us science geeks) and you'll be amazed at how fun the journey can be.

Q: Is there anything you would have changed in your academic career? Absolutely! I would have invested less energy into trying to be a "model candidate" for medical or graduate school. While in grad school, I learned that being who you are is what lets you be successful. I chose Human Biology entering MSU because I thought it would be more ideal for medical school but the reality was I did not do very well as a student because I was not passionate about what I was doing. When I added a second degree, Microbiology & Molecular Genetics, my whole world opened up, as I loved what I was studying. Don't overthink your degree choice, but make sure that you love it. If not, try something new. It may make all the difference in the outcome!

Q: What is the most rewarding part of your career? There is an intangible value to knowing that what you are doing makes a significant difference to others. The less "kudos" we receive as epidemiologists, the better we are likely doing our job. Most times, no one is aware of what we prevent, and [they] are unclear of what our role is until an outbreak presents itself.

College of Natural Science Scholarship Application Open!

Are you trying to find ways to make attending college a bit more affordable? Then you should definitely start working on your College of Natural Science Scholarship Application right away! The application is due by **January 31st!** To apply:

- Update your resume (the Writing Center can help with this!)
- Write a 250 word personal statement of your career goals and interests

Go to <http://sas2.ais.msu.edu> and submit them by **January 31st**

WINTER FUN FACTS

- * The "winter blues" were first diagnosed in 1984 and have recently been named seasonal affective disorder or S.A.D.
- * The record for the most snow angels at one time was set in Ontario Canada in 2004 when a couple of schools joined to create 15,851 snow angels
- * Chionophobia is a fear of snow.
- * If it gets cold enough, single digits or below, ice crystals can form and snow can fall from clear skies.



- * A single snowstorm can drop 40 million tons of snow, which carries energy equivalent to 120 atom bombs.
- * Antarctica sets the record for the world's coldest temperature at -129 °F
- * Average snowflakes fall at 3.1mph
- * The world's largest snowman was actually a snowwoman. Residents of Bethel, Maine built the 122 ft giant in 2008, giving her 30 ft spruce trees for arms and skis for eyelashes.
- * 10 inches of snow equals one inch of liquid rain

New Human Biology Advisor: Natalie Clark!

The College of Natural Science is very excited to announce the hiring of a new Human Biology advisor! Natalie Clark is originally from Hemlock, Michigan and attended Grand Valley State University. There she received a bachelors degree in Biology and her masters in Education. While at GVSU, Natalie was involved in various campus organizations including an all-female acapella group, the GVSU Pom-Pon team, and was a member of a sorority. Her masters degree has an emphasis in College Student Affairs and she has worked as a graduate assistant in advising for two years.



Q: What was your favorite college experience? It would have to be working as an orientation leader during the summer. It was such a wonderful experience meeting incoming freshman and helping them get acclimated to college. Through this experience I was able to meet wonderful people who have become mentors, as well as discover the career of academic advising. If it wasn't for this job, I wouldn't be an academic advisor today.

Q: What is the best advice to give to students? Don't be afraid to explore new opportunities. College is the one time in your life where there are very few things holding you back. While new experiences can be scary, they can be life changing!

Q: If you could go back and change something, what would it be? I would have studied abroad for a summer or semester in Europe or Australia. I was able to do a two week course in Puebla, Mexico during graduate school. It had a huge impact on me and I could only imagine what a summer or semester abroad could have taught me about other cultures and myself.

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

I have two equally favorite parts. One is having the opportunity to work with college students, helping and guiding them in their career decisions. It is so rewarding to see students utilize the information and help I give them to become successful in whatever their career path is, whether it's professional school or realizing a passion in another field. The second is getting to work in a college atmosphere. I was fortunate enough to have a wonderful college experience, and I could not think of a better environment to go to work every day. I think I have the best job in the world!

Q: What was your favorite class? My favorite class was my Cadaver Lab. It was so intriguing to hold a human brain and heart in my hands.

What Does "Competitive" Mean?

First things first, you want to take the required pre-admission courses before applying. Without those courses, you will not have your file looked at. Next, you will want to perform at or above the accepted student average on the required standardized test (MCAT, GRE, etc) and GPA. You will also need to have impressive letters of recommendation, which will require building good relationships with at least a few faculty members and professionals in your field of interest.

Along that note, you will want to gain experience in your field of interest, possibly through shadowing, volunteering, or working. This will not only help you confirm that the field is right for you, but will also show your earnest interest in that profession. Giving back to the community and having a compassionate approach is also looked highly upon, and volunteer experience can showcase that part of you.

As a professional, you will work with people from various backgrounds, and having multi-cultural experience in college can enhance your skills. Gaining leadership and group experience will allow the admissions committee to see that you can be a leader and work well in a group. You may also want to consider getting research experience as well. This depends on whether or not you plan on doing research in your field, and/or if the school you are looking at highly values the skills developed while participating in research.

Overall, you want to make sure you are the best "you" possible and showcase it. To run through a personal check list, follow this link to see exactly where you are at (<http://ns.msu.edu/premed/Self-Eval.doc>). You can also come in to see the us Pre-professional Peer Advisors to talk about how you might find these experiences.