ELON UNIVERSITY FALL 2026

The Rounds

The Newsletter of Elon University Physician Assistant Studies





Greetings from Dr. Kim Stokes, Chair & Program Director

Happy PA Week! It 's an exciting time to be part of Elon PA. Our program has doubled in size, and our faculty and staff have grown alongside it. New colleagues bring fresh perspectives, new ideas, and opportunities to learn and grow together.

I am grateful to the faculty, staff, alumni, preceptors and community partners whose support made this expansion possible. We hosted the ARC-PA site visit in May and anticipate a decision on our continuing accreditation application in early 2027.

Our students and alumni continue to excel. Across our cohorts, we have two National Health Service Corps Scholars, a PAEA Health Policy Fellow, student representation at the AAPA Leadership and Advocacy Summit, and an NCMS Academy for Future Healthcare Leaders Fellow. The Class of 2025 has successfully entered the workforce, with 82% reporting employment and nearly 60% remaining in North Carolina to serve local communities. Those not yet working are completing additional training such as fellowships or doctoral coursework or holding out for a golden opportunity while taking some time off.

Our faculty also continue to advance the profession through leadership roles at the state and national levels and service to local organizations.

I look forward to sharing our continued accomplishments and opportunities to stay connected with Elon PA. If you're in the area, we hope to see you at the Alamance Caswell Medical Society meeting in October to hear Dr. Tim Oaks ' story!

Dr. Kim Stokes,
Chair & Program Director

ELON UNIVERSITY | Physician Assistant Studies

Growing the Future of Elon PA



This year marks an exciting new chapter in the history of the Elon University Physician Assistant Studies program. In January 2026, we welcomed our largest class ever, with 76 future physician assistants beginning their journey at Elon. This milestone reflects the continued growth of our program and our commitment to preparing exceptional clinicians who will meet the evolving health care needs of North Carolina and communities across the nation. (continue reading)



PRECEPTOR CORNER

ELON PA
Learn more by visiting our Elon PA Preceptor Program website

Investing in the Next Generation

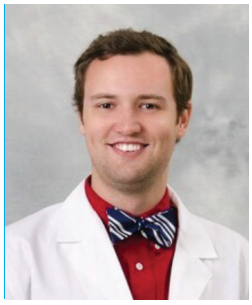


Behind every exceptional physician assistant is a dedicated clinician whochooses to teach.

Clinical preceptors are the cornerstone of PA education, opening their practices to mentor students, share their expertise and help prepare the next generation of compassionate, practice-ready providers.

To our current preceptors, thank you! Your investment in our students has a lasting impact on their education, their future patients and our profession.

Interested in becoming an Elon PA preceptor? We welcome clinicians from all specialties and practice settings. Preceptors receive an honorarium and Category 1 CME credit for every completed student rotation, and long-term preceptors may also qualify for affiliate clinical faculty appointments. Share your practice profile.



Lance McGhee, PA-C
Orthopaedics, Kernodle Clinic

First, let me introduce myself. My name is Lance McGhee, and I am a proud graduate of the Elon PA Program Class of 2016. I grew up in Durham, North Carolina, and attended North Carolina State University, where I majored in human biology.

I discovered the physician assistant profession later in my college years, but I was immediately drawn to it. Many of my early interactions with PAs came through the care my grandmother received, and I was inspired by the compassion, expertise and quality of care they provided. Those experiences, combined with my lifelong love of sports, ultimately led me to a career in orthopaedics. Since graduating from Elon in 2016, I have practiced at Kernodle Clinic Orthopaedics, where I enjoy helping patients return to the activities they love, whether through surgical intervention or conservative treatment options.

After graduation, I earned my Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) in Orthopaedics in 2021. In 2023, I was commissioned into the U.S. Navy Reserve, which has provided incredible opportunities to practice medicine beyond my primary specialty. While my background in orthopaedics has proven valuable in my military career, serving in the Navy has also allowed me to broaden my clinical experience and perspective.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my career has been teaching. I enjoy mentoring both PA students and the enlisted sailors and officers I work with in the Navy.
(continue reading)



STUDENT & ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS



Sarah Conway, Elon PA Class of 2027

Sarah Conway has been selected to attend the AAPA Leadership and Advocacy Summit (LAS) conference in September of 2026.

The LAS is a premier professional event for Physician Assistants (PAs) and PA students, designed to strengthen advocacy, leadership and professional engagement at the national level.



Ashley Haith, Elon PA Class of 2027

The North Carolina Medical Society Foundation has selected Ashley Haith to participate in the 2026 -2027 Academy for Future Healthcare Leaders Program.

The North Carolina Medical Society plays a vital role in advocating for physicians and patients, promoting high-quality health care and supporting the professional development of medical professionals in North Carolina.

The FHL program emphasis leading in an inter -professional healthcare environment and networking across institutions. The interactive learning format invites participants to actively engage with faculty, speakers and peers.



Sloan Horejsi, PA-C, Elon Class of 2024

The Journal of Dermatology for NPs & PAs has featured Elon alumna, Sloan Horejsi.

She is a dermatology physician associate at DOCS Dermatology Group 's Midwest Center for Dermatology & Cosmetic Surgery. She is the author of the case study in this issue titled, "Brunsting–Perry Pemphigoid Presenting as Recurrent Nasal Ulcerations," available to read here: https://lnkd.in/eYiEhmV

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Tracey Thurnes, EdD, MPAS, PA-C

Originally from Midway, North Carolina, Dr. Tracey Thurne has spent the past 14 years at Elon University helping educate and mentor future health care professionals. After beginning a career as a physician assistant in cardiology, she joined Elon as one of the founding faculty members of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies and has enjoyed watching both the program and the School of Health Sciences grow and thrive over the years. (continue reading)







PA PROFESSION UPDATES

Kopynec Family Scholarship Recipients

The DPAS Scholarship Committee is proud to announce this year 's recipients of the Kopynec Family Scholarships. These scholarships are intentionally designed to support students who exemplify the values central to the Elon Physician Assistant Studies mission , including academics, service, professionalism, leadership and a commitment to compassionate, patient-centered care. (See Recipients Here)

June 30th, marked a historic milestone for North Carolina PAs: the PA Team-Based Practice law is officially in effect

Team-Based Practice modernizes North Carolina law to better reflect how health care is delivered today and helps position PAs to continue improving access to high-quality, patient-centered care across our state. PA Team-Based Practice FAQs

Alamance Caswell County Medical Society Dinner

The next Alamance Caswell County Medical Society dinner meeting will be a very special one! Dr. Tim Oaks, renown Cardiovascular/Thoracis surgeon will be the guest speaker, his story in and out of medicine is a must to hear!
RSVP by October 11: aslusma@aol.com or text 336 -263 -9888

Student Loan Update: Resources and Next Steps

A federal court has granted preliminary relief in the lawsuit brought by PAEA and AAPA, temporarily blocking the Department of Education's amended definition of professional degree programs for federal student loan limits for PA students while the case moves forward. PAEA FAQs

MISSION

The Elon University Department of Physician Assistant Studies embraces the overall mission of the University and seeks to fulfill the Departmental vision of

"LEARNING. CARING. SERVING. LEADING."

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