

Master of Health Administration

Onward!



Welcome to the Spring 2012 UNC Charlotte MHA Program newsletter!

As you will read in this issue, we have had an action-packed academic year. Our MHA program continues to thrive and to extend its reach and its impact.

We desire—and need—to stay connected to our alumni. We seek to establish sustainable partnerships and offer career advancement and networking opportunities as we continue to collect the data we need to maintain your highly valued CAHME accreditation.

We continue to build out our LinkedIn site to foster networking opportunities, to partner with CHESO and others to offer opportunities and services that connect our students and alumni, and to increase our visibility via student internship placements and post graduate residencies/fellowships.

We need your support and engagement to continue this trajectory of excellence. Please get connected and stay involved.

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Cheers,



Michael E. Thompson, MS, DrPH
Associate Professor
Coordinator, Graduate Public Health Programs

UAB Case Competition

The Health Administration Case Competition, hosted by the University of Alabama at Birmingham, provides graduate students from CAHME-accredited health administration programs an opportunity to put what they have learned into practice with a real-life, real-time case. Student teams from around the country present their recommendations before a panel of judges drawn from the nation's leading health care executives and academics.

Representing UNC Charlotte at its first competition were second year students Kate Lowe ('captain,' center), Nancy Vendley (right), and Kristen Frankel (left). First-year MHA student, Melissa Alzate (not pictured), also attended to observe the competition and provide moral support for our team. The two-day competition, which concluded a frenetic two-week case analysis and presentation development period at the home university, included over 30 teams from the country's leading MHA programs meeting in Birmingham.

This year's case dealt with a real situation at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC). The teams drew lots for the preliminary round, with the group winner advancing to the finals. While the UNC Charlotte team was complimented for having the best strategy in its group, the team did not advance to the finals. At the end of the competition, the UNC Charlotte team had a chance to see the UPMC management team present its solution to the case. Kate noted, "It was a chance for us to use knowledge and skills we learned in the class room in a real life situation. Also, we were able to work in a team and think both critically and creatively about a healthcare issue that probably affects many organizations." The experience has left many first year MHA students already planning for next year's competition.



UAB Case Competition Team (l-r): Kristen Frankel, Kate Lowe & Nancy Vendley

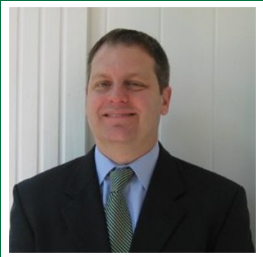
Alumni Spotlight



Adam Kessler ('11)

In addition to his MHA degree, Adam also received a graduate certificate in Gerontology. Adam reports that, "Immediately after graduating I took a position in the Associate Leadership Development Program (ALDP) at BAYADA Home Health Care, a rigorous training program for new managers. Currently, I am working as a Client Services Manager at the Asheville Pediatric office. I have applied a great deal of what I learned in the MHA, particularly the group leadership skills that I gained from CHESO and the team dynamics training that I received working with my group in the capstone course. This time prepared me well for the demands of the professional health-care world, and I am thankful for the connections that I made, both personal and professional, during my time in the program."

Alumni Spotlight



Samuel Price ('08)

Before receiving his MHA degree from UNC Charlotte in 2008, Sam Price received his Bachelors of Science in Economics from Clemson University. He now works for Lash Group, a specialty arm of Amerisource Bergen Corporation. Lash Group collaborates with pharmaceutical manufacturers to provide reimbursement support, co-pay and patient assistance, adherence services, case management, reporting, and analytics.

According to Sam, *"We make our clients' pharmaceutical and biotech products more accessible by increasing speed-to-therapy, reducing*

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Established by the Carolinas HealthCare Foundation, colleagues, family and friends, the Dr. Robert Barber Memorial Scholarship endowed scholarship for Master of Health Administration (MHA) students at UNC Charlotte honors the life and memory of Dr. Robert Barber. The scholarship is awarded annually to an MHA student who demonstrates the leadership qualities and integrity that defined Dr. Barber's exemplary career.

An executive with Carolinas HealthCare System, Dr. Barber worked tirelessly and joyfully as an adjunct faculty member in the UNC Charlotte Department of Public Health Sciences supporting our MHA Program. In addition, he served as a preceptor, mentor, and advisory board member. Dr. Barber applied his knowledge and experience toward the betterment of Carolinas HealthCare System, the MHA program, and the community. He was respected for his leadership, creativity, innovation, and integrity.

Second-year MHA student, Theresa Nicholas, is the inaugural Dr. Robert Barber Memorial Scholarship recipient. In accepting the award at a reception held in March with Dr. Barber's family and friends, Theresa noted, *I was a student in Dr. Barber's Health Care Finance course in the fall of 2010. My experience with Dr. Barber was nothing short of memorable and I count myself blessed for having the opportunity to grow under his leadership. As a professor, Dr. Barber was every bit as encouraging as he was demanding. He accepted nothing short of excellence from his students and it was apparent that he held his personal duties to the same standard. I often wondered how such a highly revered executive had the time to be such a dedicated professor.*



Theresa offered this advice for MHA students: *"Find ways to get involved and invest in the community as it relates to the degree – Charlotte is FULL of volunteer opportunities; give back to the health care sector.*

Invest time in networking events and stay informed about scholarship opportunities, because they are out there.

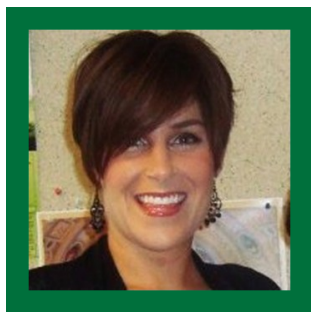
Consider that you are making an impression everywhere you go. Charlotte is

small and that impression can take you a long way as you never know who you are speaking to or in front of.

The scholarship opportunity came quickly and I was grateful to have already been prepared with credible references and leadership/community experience that made me a strong candidate"

The Barber Scholarship is awarded annually. Students apply for the coming academic year during the college's spring scholarship application cycle. Details about this and other CHHS scholarships and awards as well as application materials are found at <http://health.uncc.edu/advising-center/scholarships>.

Students and alumni are welcomed to contribute to the scholarship endowment (or to discuss endowing another scholarship). Please direct inquiries to Heather Shaughnessy, the College's Director of Development at hshaughn@uncc.edu.



Theresa Nicholas

ACHE Congress

UNC Charlotte MHA students Yetunde Akindahunsi, Andrea Barberi, Kathryn Lowe, Kelsey McEvoy, Philip Mullinax, and Krista Stepney traveled to Chicago in February to attend the 2012 ACHE Congress on Healthcare Leadership. Attendees enjoyed networking opportunities and organized first UNC Charlotte MHA student and alumni dinner at the Congress.

Be a part of the discussion!

Join our

**"UNC Charlotte
MHA Program"**

group on...



ACHE Panel Event:

Successfully Leading Change in HealthCare Organizations was the theme of an April 10th panel attended by nearly ninety healthcare executives and several MHA students. The Charlotte Healthcare Executive Student Organization (CHESO), our student affiliate chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), in partnership with the Greater Charlotte Healthcare Executives Group (GCHEG), an ACHE regional affiliate organized the event.

Michael Blackburn, President, and Chief Executive Officer of Frye Regional Medical Center in Hickory, NC moderated the event. Panelists included Tina Rispinto, Senior Director of Learning and Leadership Development at Premier HealthCare Alliance; Richard Ray, Principal Managing Partner and Senior Consultant at Workforce Systems Design; and Lynne Ingersoll, Assistant Vice



Pictured (l-r) Lynne Ingersoll, Michael Blackburn, Richard Ray, Tina Rispinto

President of Leadership and Organization Development at Carolinas HealthCare System.

Panelists covered topics such as the first steps when implementing change within a healthcare organization and responding to challenges arising during the transition. The night’s key messages included advice to clearly identify the change, assess the organization’s readiness for the change, and know the organization’s sponsors and key stakeholders.

BlackFinn Alumni Networking Event



Public Health Sciences, Students and alumni at BlackFinn during National Public Health Week

The Graduate Public Health Association and the Charlotte Health Executive Student Organization, in cooperation with the Department of Public Health Sciences, hosted the second annual PHS graduate alumni networking event at BlackFinn American Saloon at The Epicentre during National Public Health Week. The abundance of students, faculty, and alumni, and great food made it a wonderful night for networking

and kicking back during a packed National Public Health Week.

Former President Bill Clinton proclaimed the first week in April as National Public Health Week, noting it was a time for celebrating successes and achievements in public health. This event was more than a networking opportunity, but a chance to celebrate the accomplishments of our alumni and our student organizations.

Price (continued) drop off and maximizing ongoing continuity of care. I manage a team of specialists to verify benefits for providers and provide additional reimbursement services such as coding, claims, and prior authorization support. Our client, AmGen, pays us to provide these services so that the physician’s office doesn’t have to. It’s win-win for everyone.”

When asked what he took away from his time at UNC Charlotte and the MHA program, he said: “The MHA program at UNC Charlotte really opened doors for me. When I started with the program, I had absolutely zero health-care experience. I had been working in financial services for several years and wanted to work in a field I could be more passionate about, like health-care. My current manager, also a UNC Charlotte MHA alum, created an interim position for me (Quality Analyst) for my internship. I ended up accepting the QA job permanently after the completion of my internship. The internship, much less the promotion, would not have been possible without the MHA program. You could say it launched my career!”

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New CHESO Officers elected

The Charlotte Healthcare Executives Student Organization (CHESO), a student affiliate of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) recently elected most of its 2012-13 Executive Committee.

Krista Stepney will serve as President, succeeding Kate Lowe, who plans to complete her dual MHA/MBA in December.

Alesha Eaves succeeds the graduating James Reynolds as Vice President, and Denise Moseman succeeds the graduating Shilpa Joshi as Treasurer. The secretary and event coordinator positions will be filled in the fall once the new cohort begins classes. For details, see <http://www.sco.uncc.edu/>

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Spring roundtable with Michael Tarwater

Last month, Michael C. Tarwater, MHA, FACHE, President & CEO of Carolinas HealthCare System and distinguished executive advisor to the MHA program, hosted a special luncheon and roundtable discussion with a small group of first-year MHA students and faculty. The group included MHA students Karina Agopian, Melissa Alzate, Alesha Eaves, Meredith Gellman, Renee Miller, Krista Stepney, Brittany Sutton, and Elisa Waszczeniuk; Dr. Nancy Fey Yensan, Professor and Dean, College of Health and Human Services; Dr. Michael Thompson, Associate Professor and MHA Coordinator; and Dr. Elena Platonova, Assistant Professor (see group photo below). Mr. Tarwater now hosts a student roundtable twice a year, once in the spring for first-year students and again in the fall for second-year students. All told, the majority of students in each MHA cohort will have the opportunity to attend one of these unique sessions.

At the luncheon, attendees spent time getting to know Mr. Tarwater and having their questions answered about his experiences as an administrator with Carolinas HealthCare System, advice he would offer to individuals pursuing a career in health administration, and his thoughts about the future direction of health care.

Mr. Tarwater discussed the importance of clear, effective communication skills in all media, noting the difficulty in undoing a mistake once it is in the public realm. He emphasized the need to draw on core values in making business decisions and the importance of communicating those values to staff as well as to external stakeholders. He reinforced this lesson by example just two days later in responding to an extensive series of investigative articles on the hospital industry in North Carolina published by the *Charlotte Observer*.



Michael C. Tarwater, MHA, FACHE, President & CEO Carolinas HealthCare



Students attending the event expressed how fortunate they felt to have had the opportunity to meet and spend time with such a high-ranking executive in the health care field.

Alumni Spotlight: Natalie Rosemin ('09)



Natalie Rosemin ('09)

Natalie Rosemin is currently a Senior Project Assistant with Carolinas HealthCare System.

When asked what she took away from her time at UNC Charlotte and the MHA program, she said, “It

is extremely important to have colleagues who motivate you and inspire you to be successful. Networking with individuals in various positions

and organizations is a great way to learn about career opportunities.

“One major way to build yourself professionally is to undertake challenging assignments and projects. Make sure that every assignment submitted to instructors and managers has your ‘footprint’ on it. Managers and professors should be able to distinguish your work from your colleagues

“I learned from Professor James Studnicki that the most successful people in life are not necessarily the smartest, but they are the individuals who remain perseverant, hardworking, and persistent.”