The Department Welcomes Dr. Christian Wernz

We are delighted to announce the addition of a new face to the roster of Department faculty, Dr. Christian Wernz.

A number of you met Dr. Wernz at our spring alumni event when he and his wife, Pooja Thakur Wernz, were in Richmond during our faculty search. Dr. Wernz comes to us after nine years on the faculty of the School of Engineering at Virginia Tech where he taught decision and risk analysis, decision theory, and management systems theory and applications.

Dr. Wernz received his BS and his MS-MBA from the University of Karlsruhe in Germany, and his PhD in Engineering from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 2008. His research focus is on decision-making in organizations and complex systems with a focus on multi-level, multi-period, and stochastic interactions among agents and their environment. He has led a number of funded research projects, including a project funded by the National Science Foundation entitled, “EAGER: Advancing the Foundations of Systems Engineering through Multiscale Decision Theory”; a project on integrating model-driven and data-driven approaches to advance healthcare payment innovations, funded by the Harvey L. Neiman Health Policy Institute; and “Analyzing and Improving Technology Investment Decisions at Hospitals,” funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. He has also worked on projects examining multi-level incentives for healthcare systems and data-to-decision methods for disaster response.

He is active in a variety of professional organizations including the Institute of Industrial Engineers and the Institute of Operations Research and Management Sciences (INFORMS). In 2015, Dr. Wernz won a “Highly Commended Paper” award from the Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence, 3rd place for the INFORMS Service Science Section Best Paper Award in 2009, and Teacher of the Week from Virginia Tech’s Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research in 2012.

Dr. Wernz, who speaks four languages (English, German, French, and Spanish) is currently in China traveling and teaching a summer class in Decision Analysis at Zhejiang University (ZJU) in Hangzhou, near Shanghai, one of China’s oldest and most prestigious universities. Chris says, "I couldn't be more excited to be joining the VCU Department of Health Administration and moving with my family to Richmond. It is a tremendous honor to be joining the ranks of the Department's outstanding faculty, and a true privilege to be teaching its excellent students. I look forward to meeting the alumni and becoming part of the family." He will join us in the Grant House in late July.

If you are in the neighborhood, please stop by and wish the new member of our HAD community a warm welcome!
We did it!! In less than eight weeks, our students, faculty, and YOU endowed the Yasar A. Ozcan Scholarship to honor Dr. Ozcan’s 38 years of service to VCU, and to provide financial support to our students into the future. Our most sincere thank you to those of you who contributed, and particularly those of you who contacted your classmates and encouraged them to contribute. Activities almost always have side effects. In this case, they were good ones. I heard several nice stories of reconnection as class presidents tracked down their colleagues for whom our addresses were out of date. Here and there, contacts resulted in informal alumni gatherings, and discussions of reunions. Please let us help with this. Beth Williamson Ayers is our resident reunion planner extraordinaire! Please also keep us up to date with your location and activities so your classmates can find you, and so that we can let our VCU community know about your activities and accomplishments and maybe help you with your challenges.

Summer in the Grant House is theoretically quiet. Our 23 MHA graduates are all starting new jobs. While many of them will continue working for the organizations in which they did their residencies, a few have opted for new adventures in other places, but they are all starting their journeys as young healthcare professionals. Sixteen MSHA graduates are enjoying their evenings and weekends away from discussion boards and text books. All of them came to us employed, and most are pursuing new pathways in their current organizations. Others, however, are off in search of totally new opportunities. Two PhD students also went through our graduation ceremonies. Tina Highfill defended her dissertation and graduated in May, and Jaya Khushalani will defend her dissertation in July and graduate in August.

In May, we sent the MHA Class of 2018 off to their residencies. The list of sites for this year can be found here. Our most sincere thanks to those of you who will mentor them over the coming year. Members of the MHA Class of 2019 have scattered across the country for summer internships, travel, and visits to family. We look forward to their return in August. The MSHA Class of 2018 will be in Richmond in a few weeks to begin their final year of coursework. They will join 21 incoming MSHA students and a bumper crop of four new PhD students.

We also have a bumper crop of 15 students in the healthcare concentration we offer in conjunction with the EMBA program through the VCU School of Business. Adjunct Instructor, Dr. Kevin Jackson, is directing the concentration this year, which consists of four 3-day sessions between May and July.

Summer is the season for academic conferences of various kinds. Our national association of healthcare management programs, AUPHA, met in Long Beach, CA in June, and AcademyHealth met in late June, this year in New Orleans, LA. We are looking forward to seeing many of our PhD program alumni at both events.

Our work with SIR, the strategy consulting firm I mentioned in the spring Cardwell Comments, is nearing completion. Thank you very much to those of you who met with SIR staff or responded to their surveys. We greatly value your input and insight as we work to make our programs the best in the country. We will be digesting their results through the summer and tell you what we learned and how we will use this knowledge to improve our programs in our next newsletter.

Our summers are never as quiet as we always imagine them to be. However, there are some spaces for pause and reflection, a necessary component of recharging and improving. We all wish you a peaceful and enjoyable summer, with at least some time to relax and reflect. Please come visit if you are in the neighborhood, and again thank you for all you do for the Department and our students.

Your thoughts and comments are always welcome: cwatts2@vcu.edu or 804-828-5222.
During the ACHE Congress on Healthcare Leadership meeting in Chicago, IL in March, the Department held its annual reception for alumni, students and friends. Approximately 75 guests enjoyed a reception graciously sponsored by Hancock, Daniel, Johnson & Nagle, P.C. (HDJN) of Glen Allen, VA. Mr. Jim Daniel, Director of HDJN, offered remarks and Dr. Cindy Watts provided an update on the Department’s activities and accomplishments. Beth Williamson Ayers attended the conference and managed the exhibit booth activities. Dr. Dolores Clement attended the meeting and performed her final duties as the Central Virginia ACHE Regent. She was honored at the meeting for her service.

A group of MHA, MSHA, and PhD students gathered in the Grant House for a workshop on negotiation in April offered by Dr. Tim Vogus. Dr. Vogus is an Associate Professor at the Owen Graduate School of Management at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. He guided students through several case studies and offered strategies for successful and productive negotiations. Dr. Vogus also conducted an employment negotiation webinar for the third year students during their residencies.

During the first week of April, MHA residents returned to the Grant House to participate in the spring seminars. To show support for the students during this busy day, the Alumni Advisory Council sponsored a luncheon for the residents and participants. Following the luncheon, Bassam Kawwass (MHA ‘80), president of the AAC, shared remarks about his career and experiences with the program. Beth Williamson Ayers spoke to the residents about various alumni activities and future opportunities to stay connected to the Department. Following that discussion, an Early Careerist Panel of recent MHA alumni spoke about their first few years after graduation. Ashland Evans (MHA ‘13), Manager of Hospice and Palliative Services for Mary Washington Healthcare; Joanna Fowler (MHA ‘16), Consultant with Dixon, Hughes, Goodman; and Alexa Warner (MHA ‘14), Manager for VCU Health Strategy and Marketing, shared their professional experiences on the transition into their healthcare careers.

In early April, the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association held its annual spring conference in Williamsburg, VA. Three ACHE Regent Awards were presented during a luncheon. Terrie Edwards, FACHE (MHA ‘84) Corporate Vice President of Sentara Healthcare, received the Senior Healthcare Executive Award; Roberta Tinch, FACHE (MHA ’09) COO at HCA Spotsylvania’s Regional Medical Center, was presented with the ACHE Regent’s Healthcare Executive Award; and Alexa Warner (MHA ‘14) Manager for VCU Health Strategy and Marketing received the Early Career Healthcare Executive Award. The Department was represented by Dr. Cindy Watts, Dr. Dolores Clement, and Beth Williamson Ayers.
As you saw in our last issue of Cardwell Comments, Dr. Yasar Ozcan announced his retirement after 38 years in the Department. We celebrated his departure in April with a reception at the Valentine Museum. Retired faculty, alumni, friends, and family joined faculty, staff and students for this momentous occasion. Among the speeches and presentations, Dr. Cecil Drain, Dean of the School of Allied Health Professions, hand-delivered Dr. Ozcan’s Emeritus Faculty letter and Dr. Cindy Watts presented him with a clock, thanking him for his numerous years of service, dedication, and leadership. He will be missed, but he promised to visit the Grant House from time to time!

The MHA Class of 2017 hosted Family Day in April at the Boathouse at Rocketts Landing. Family and friends gathered with students and faculty over lunch and recalled highlights of their two years together. Several awards were presented at the event. Five students received the A.D. Williams Foundation Scholarship: Carter Crawford, Annie Hancock, Sarah Heldreth, Devin Ross, and Morgan Stubbe. Devin Ross was also the recipient of the Donald J. Romano Scholarship. Class of 2019 Student of the Year Awards were given to Maggie Chenault, Rebecca Holloway, and Katie Pumphrey. Faculty awards were presented as well. There were two recipients of the Jerry L. Norville Outstanding Educator award: Rodney Adams and Roger Neathawk. The Dolores Clement Award for Outstanding Advising was presented to Dr. Cindy Watts and Dr. Jan Clement was awarded the Class of 2019 Teacher of the Year award. Congratulations to all of the award recipients and best of luck to the third year residents!
Announcements continued

The Paul A. Gross Landmarks in Leadership spring lecture series was held at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in April. As a special treat, members of the MHA Class of 1977 attended and enjoyed celebrating their 40th class reunion. The event began with an outdoor reception before attendees headed inside (minutes before a thunderstorm!) for the evening program entitled “Social Determinants, Health Equity, and the Health of Populations: New Initiatives and Great Expectations.” The panelists were introduced by Dr. Alan Dow (MSHA ’05), who is the Assistant Vice President at VCU for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care. The panelists consisted of Sheryl Garland (MHA ’88), Vice President of Health Policy and Community Relations at VCU Health System and Director of VCU Office of Health Innovation; Beth Merchant (MHA ’98), Vice President of Bon Secours Richmond Health System; and Karen Legato, Executive Director of Health Brigade. Dr. Cecil Drain, Dean of the School of Allied Health Professions and Dr. Cindy Watts shared remarks to honor the retirement of Dr. Yasar Ozcan. To honor his career, the Yasar A. Ozcan Scholarship Fund was created this spring and will support students in Health Administration. Dr. Watts made the official announcement that enough money had been raised to fully endow the Scholarship. Dr. Ozcan’s legacy will live on through the hundreds of students he taught and mentored over the years. We wish him the very best in his retirement.

The end of April signaled a new beginning for the School of Allied Health Professions. The groundbreaking event for the new SAHP building was held at the construction site and was attended by faculty, staff, and students. Dr. Michael Rao, President of VCU, Governor Terry McAuliffe, and our very own JD Drasbek (MHA Class of 2019) addressed the crowd. You can read additional information and watch a video of the event here.

(L to R): JD Drasbek, Dr. Marsha Rappley, Dr. Michael Rao, Dr. Cecil Drain, and Gov. Terry McAuliffe
Announcements continued

Adjunct Instructor **Susan Dubuque**; **Dr. Jon DeShazo**; **Beth Matis**, CEO of HCA’s Retreat Doctors' Hospital; Kate Boyles, Director of Development, Richmond Behavioral Health Foundation; and Dr. Jim May, Director of Substance Abuse Services, Richmond Behavioral Health Authority served as the evaluation panel for the MSHA Capstone Projects in May. The four projects included an analysis of the impact of bundled payments on VCU Health programs, a communications plan for Richmond Behavioral Health Foundation, a proposal for a palliative and hospice care education program, and a proposal for a consumer-faced information platform to promote better health care decision making.

VCU officially has an AcademyHealth student chapter thanks to the efforts of **Dr. Jan Clement**, the School of Medicine’s Department of Health and Behavior Policy, and the Wilder School. Their first chapter meeting was held in June at the Grant House and was coordinated by PhD student **Hillary Linhart**.

In June, **Beth Williamson Ayers** and **Tracy Kemp Stallings** (MSHA ’95) represented the Department at the Virginia Chamber of Commerce Healthcare Conference at the Richmond Convention Center. The Department partnered with VCU Health at an exhibit booth. **Dr. Cindy Watts** and **Dr. Dolores Clement** attended, as well as MHA Class of 2019 student **Roberta Solomonova**. Roberta was the winner of a brand new Nook, courtesy of a random drawing sponsored by the **HEAL** program, which is funded by the Williamsburg Health Foundation. **Mr. Bill Downey** (MHA ’85), President and CEO of Riverside Health System, introduced the morning speakers.

**Spring Speaker Series**

The Leadership Series, designed to bring leaders on campus to share thoughts, experiences and ideas about their leadership journeys, continued in the spring semester. Designed to offer practical views and valuable tips from successful leaders in our community, the seminar is open to all students in our programs.

The first seminar was led by **Mr. John Duval**, former Chief Executive Officer of VCU Hospitals and Clinics of the VCU Health System in Richmond, VA. He was the special assistant to the Vice President of Health Sciences and CEO of VCU Health System. He recently retired from the VCU Health System. His presentation was titled “VCUHS Journey to High Reliability.” At the beginning of his presentation, Mr. Duval said it was his last formal speaking engagement at VCU and was honored that it was to our students.

**Mr. Ashland Evans** (MHA ‘13), was the second speaker in our series. Ashland serves as Manager of Hospice and Palliative Services at Mary Washington Healthcare in Fredericksburg, VA. He discussed hospice and palliative care issues and how they align with current and future healthcare initiatives.

We would also like to thank all of the guest speakers who spoke to our students in our classes during the spring semester. You can see a full list [here](#).
PhD Alumni Joanna Jiang (’97), Chun-Chieh (Anna) Lin (’10), Reethi Lyengar (’11), and Urvashi Patel (’06) joined first year students virtually this academic year to share their experiences and advice on using their degree after graduation.

Members of the MHA Class of 2016 celebrated their one year reunion in Savannah, GA in April. They had a wonderful time catching up as they ventured through the historic city. Joanna Fowler, who sent us pictures, said in her email “From all of us—thank you for making these lifetime friendships possible! Grant House Forever!”

Katherine Fowler (MHA ’01) was honored in April with the Visionary Award at the 9th Annual Everyone CARES Gala in New York. The CARES Foundation leads in the effort to improve the lives of the Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia community and seeks to advance quality healthcare through support, advocacy, education and research. Ms. Fowler currently serves as Immediate Past President on the CARES Foundation’s Board of Trustees, having served as President in 2014-2015 and Vice President in 2011-2013. Katherine’s son, Andrew, has CAH and she discovered CARES shortly after his birth in 2009. Katherine currently works as Executive Director for Vanguard Medical Group in New Jersey. Before that, she worked in the Business Development Office at RWJ Barnabas Health as Vice President, Outpatient Services.

In April, the MHA Class of 1977 gathered in Richmond to celebrate its 40th class reunion. Eleven classmates and several spouses participated in the reunion events. They kicked off the two-day reunion at the Paul A. Gross Landmarks in Leadership event. The next morning, the Department hosted a breakfast, Dr. Cindy Watts provided an update of the various activities of the Department, and Beth Williamson Ayers gave the class a tour of the MCV campus. Attendees were able to sit in the same room in the Randolph Minor Annex where their classes were held 40 years ago. That evening, the class met for dinner joined by Jerry Norville, former Chair of the Department, who sponsored part of the dinner gathering. Dr. Larry Prybil, (also a former Department Chair), who could not attend, also contributed to the dinner. Thanks to committee organizers Nick Nicholson and Chris Durrer. With support from Beth, the reunion was full of great stories and happy experiences in the MHA program.
**Alumni continued**

Patrick Shay (PhD ’14) and Abby Kazley (PhD ’06) presented a session together at the June AUPHA meeting in Long Beach, CA entitled “Maximizing Innovation: Using Lightning Lab Activities to Exercise Student’s Creative Muscles.” Dr. Shay presented another session at the conference with colleagues from the University of Washington, the University of Florida, and California State University, Chico, entitled “Cultivating Creative Curriculum: Innovation Learning Opportunities in the Classroom and Beyond.” He and Trinity colleague, Edward Schumacher, won first place in the poster competition with a poster entitled “Unleashing Innovation: The Tiger Tank Pitch Competition.” Patrick, who is currently on the faculty at Trinity University, teaches an organizational theory class for our PhD students.

The School of Allied Health Professions hosted an alumni reception in June at the Hotel Roanoke where alumni and friends networked and enjoyed an exclusive update by Dean Cecil B. Drain. Dr. Drain spoke about the new building as well as the School’s many outstanding programs. Beth Williamson Ayers represented the Department. She enjoyed returning to her home town and seeing all of our alumni and their guests. Health Administration alumni in attendance were: Bill Reid (MHA ’52), Hunter Grumbles (MHA ’52), Bill Jacobsen (MHA ’89), Will Windham (MHA ’08), Brandon Burrow (MHA ’13), and Karen Lowdon (MSHA ’04).

Dr. Marsha Rappley, VCU Vice President for Health Sciences and VCU Health System CEO, traveled to Nashville, TN to meet with alumni Richard Bracken (MHA ’77), Jess Judy (MHA ’77), Bryan Brand (MHA ’81), Brent Clark (MHA ’00), John Smalley (MHA ’77), and Jason Winnham (MHA ’09). Dr. Rappley expressed her strong support of the Department of Health Administration and her desire to take the entire School of Allied Health Professions to the next level of excellence.

Allen Carroll (MHA ’88) has retired as Chief Executive Officer at Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital in Charleston, SC. After leading the Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital for 27 years, he has a long list of outstanding accomplishments. The hospital earned Magnet Hospital recognition twice for its superior nursing team, it was listed on multiple occasions among the Top 100 hospitals by Truven Health Analytics, and it was among 83 hospitals in the country to achieve a five-star rating in the most recent federal rating system. Allen was also named as one of Becker’s Hospital Review 100 Leaders of Great Hospitals in America in 2013. A search for his replacement will begin in the near future.

Verlon “Sal” Salley (MHA ’02) will be presented with the AHRA (Association of Healthcare Radiology Administrators) Award for Excellence in July. The award recognizes medical imaging managers for excellence in leadership. Sal was selected because of his exceptional innovation, leadership, and administrative capabilities. Also, AHRA published an article that he co-authored titled “Changing Culture through Staff Engagement.”

Bill Jacobson, Hunter Grumbles, and Bill Reid at the SAHP alumni reception in Roanoke.
Position updates

**Jon Applebaum** (MHA ’88) is now serving as the President and Chief Operating Officer of Novant Health Thomasville Medical Center in Thomasville, NC. Jon most recently served as President and CEO of Duke LifePoint Health Care Twin County Regional in Galax, VA.

**Ross Airington** (MSHA ’17) is the new Director of Health Policy for Washington Strategic Consulting, a boutique policy/lobbying/strategy firm based in Washington, DC, whose clients include hospitals and hospital associations. He was previously a health policy analyst for the Medical Society of Virginia in Richmond, VA.

**Omar Chughtai** (MHA ’09) and **John Neidenbach** (MHA ’13) swapped hospitals! Omar is now the Chief Operating Officer at Good Samaritan Hospital in San Jose, CA where John previously held that role, and John is now serving as the Chief Operating Officer at West Hospital & Medical Center in West Hills, CA.

**Quinnetta Claytor** (MHA ’13) is the Associate Chief Operating Officer at East Houston Regional Medical Center in Houston, TX. Her previous position was Director, Performance Improvement Corporate Team at HCA in Washington, DC.

**Katie Golob** (MHA ’14) began a new role as Associate Administrator for the Department of Surgery at VCU Health System in Richmond, VA. She was most recently the Ambulatory Manager for Neurosciences and Psychiatry at the UVA Health System in Charlottesville, VA.

**Nina Hobcroft** (MSHA ’95) has been appointed Vice President of Strategic Alliance and Market Development at VCU Health System in Richmond, VA. Prior to joining VCU Health, Ms. Hobcroft was senior vice president of strategy and development at HCA’s Capital Division in Richmond, VA.

**Akash Jassal** (MHA ’16) is now a Business Analyst at Solutions Made Simple, a Leidos company, in Arlington, VA. Akash was most recently a Medical Economics Analyst at Bon Secours Health System in Richmond, VA.

**Aryana Khalid** (MHA ’06) accepted a position as the Managing Director at Glover Park Group in Washington, DC. She was previously the Executive Vice President at AHIP.

**Sallie Lewis** (MSHA ’12) has a new position at UVA Health System as Director of Operational Initiatives in Charlottesville, VA. Her last post was as the Director of Be Safe, UVA’s patient and team member safety-focused improvement system.

**Laura Kreiser** (MHA ’17) accepted a position as Operations Coordinator at Denver Health with the Ambulatory Care Services Team in Denver, CO. Laura did her residency at Main Line Health in Radner, PA.

**Dennis Morales** (MHA ‘14) is Practice Administrator at VCU Health Center for Advanced Health Management. He formerly worked at Apollo MD as Vice President of Operations in Roanoke, VA.

**Andrew Schutte** (MHA/JD ’13) recently became Associate General Counsel for the Office of General Counsel at VCU Health System in Richmond, VA. His previous position was as an Associate at Hancock, Daniel, Johnson & Nagle, P.C. in Glen Allen, VA.

**Jennifer Seiden** (MHA ’00) has a new position at Premier Inc as the Director of Ambulatory Quality Performance in Richmond, VA. She was previously the Administrative Director for Population Health at Bon Secours Health System.

**Rupal Wadhawan** (MHA ‘16) has taken a position with the Faculty Practice Plan at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, MO as the Manager of Practice Development. Rupal was most recently an Administrative Fellow at Barnes-Jewish Hospital.
The Rand Corporation received an AHRQ grant in 2015 to establish the RAND Center of Excellence on Health System Performance. One of the goals is to identify and characterize health care systems with the objective of developing a taxonomy that helps explain differences across health systems in the uptake of practices to improve patient-centered outcomes. Dr. Gloria Bazzoli has been asked by Rand Corporation to join a technical expert panel, which is involved in organizational, economic, and clinical research focused on patient outcomes and health systems to review evidence and help RAND develop a taxonomy of health system oriented approaches to improve performance on patient centered outcomes.

Please join us in welcoming two new Affiliate appointments in the Department: Mr. Chip Decker, CEO of Richmond Ambulance Authority, and Mr. Rob Lawrence, COO of RAA. Both have been friends and supporters of the Department for years. Dr. Yasar Ozcan regularly took his Health Analytics and Decision Support class on field trips to RAA, and Chip and Rob also host the KMU students at their facility when they visit each year. Welcome gentlemen!

The Richmond Times-Dispatch featured an article written by Adjunct Professor Susan Dubuque titled “Survey Says Government Should be Active in Health Care.” Advertising agency ndp (of which Susan is a founder and principal), in conjunction with Catalyst Healthcare Research conducted a survey in an effort to understand consumer perceptions of population health. The full story can be found here.

Adjunct Instructor Rodney Adams was asked by William & Mary to be its Program Director for a comparative healthcare course in Capetown, South Africa next year.

Dr. Dolores Clement, Dr. Jon DeShazo, and Dr. Cindy Watts attended the annual meeting of the Association of University Programs in Health Administration in Long Beach, CA in June. Dr. Watts is a member of the AUPHA board, and chairs the Graduate Program committee. Dr. DeShazo represented the Department at a sponsor table. Dr. Clement, with colleagues from Rush University and the Beryl Institute, presented a session entitled “Incorporating the ‘Patient Experience’ in Curricula: Compelling Reasons & Different Modes.”

### Faculty Publications


MHA Class of 2018 students **Carter Crawford** and **Abdul Nur**, along with MHA Class of 2019 student **Rebecca Holloway**, organized a joint service project in April with the School of Medicine to help clean up the James River.

Four MHA Class of 2019 students were honored at the VHHA conference in April as this year’s recipients of the Stuart D. Ogren Scholarship. Congratulations to **Maggie Chenault**, **Andrew Ledwith**, **Supriya Patel** and **Roberta Solomonova**.

In April, PhD student **Tina Highfill** successfully defended her dissertation entitled “Patient Outcomes and Managed Care: What was the Impact of the State Regulatory Backlash?” Dr. Highfill graduated in May and is currently with the US Bureau of Economic Analysis in Washington, DC.

Seven MHA students traveled to Philadelphia, PA in April to compete in the Collegiate Leadership Competition. **Dr. Cheryl Rathert** traveled with the team and was also their coach, spending weeks with the team outside of class to prepare them for the challenges. The CLC creates a practice field where students can apply what they are learning in a context that allows them to demonstrate their leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities. They create a tangible experience for future organizational leaders. The team, consisting of MHA Class of 2018 students **Jennifer Eguzoro** and **Christine Galligan**; Class of 2019 students **Ciara Jones**, **Supriya Patel**, **Roberta Solomonova**, and **Jasmine Wharton**; and observer, MHA Class of 2019 **Liesel Reussner**, competed in six challenges throughout the one day event. The team won the Process Award and came in second in the Overall category.
The incoming MSHA Class of 2019 raised a glass with MSHA Class of 2018 students, faculty, and staff for a fun happy hour event at Postbellum in May during their on-campus session.

The Department hosted a lunch speaker series event for the MSHA students during their on-campus session. Dr. Thomas Ryan (MSHA ’99) spoke to the students about the future of healthcare and the need for cooperation and collaborative leadership. Dr. Ryan serves as the Senior Physician Advisor to the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association.

After concluding the May on-campus session, the MSHA Class of 2017 graduation dinner was held at the Berkeley Hotel. The keynote speaker was Dr. Thomas Auer, CEO of Bon Secours Virginia Medical Group. Six students were awarded the AD Williams Award: Brian Deasy, Kelly Fried, Dr. Michael Handrigan, Dr. Bruce Mathern, Dr. KC Ogbonna, and Dr. Ryan Vega. Dr. Cindy Watts was presented with the Dennis D. Pointer Award for teaching excellence. The event ended with a performance by Bethany Baker who played the guitar and sang a parody of their class’ experiences over the years.

PhD student Jaya Khushalani won third place in the 2nd Annual 3MT (three minute thesis) competition held by the VCU Graduate School. Her research focuses on drivers of racial disparity in receipt of breast reconstruction.

Several PhD students have published papers and posters. Please visit the Department’s PhD page to see their accomplishments. The Department will be welcoming three new full time and one part time PhD student in the fall.

PhD student Jennifer Early was recently named as Interim Director of Community-Engaged Research at VCU. You can read about her appointment here.

For more pictures from our events, check out our albums on Facebook www.facebook.com/vcuhad/.
In early June, the Department took part in the School of Allied Health Professions Career Exploration summer program for undergraduate college students, also known as the Pipeline Program. The students rotated through each of the nine departments of the School of Allied Health Professions. After a short case study discussion and overview of our programs, MHA Class of 2019 students Courtney Harlow, Rebecca Holloway, and Ashley Murphey took them on a tour of several departments at the VCU Health System including laundry, disposal, and the power station. Thank you to recent graduate Jessica Ropelewski (MHA ‘17) for coordinating the VCU Health tours.

MHA Class of 2019 student Rebecca Holloway is co-authoring a publication with Dr. Sandra B. Barker and Dr. Randolph Barker entitled “Animal Assisted Interventions in an Acute Healthcare Setting.” In the brief, they explain that a number of healthcare facilities are initiating animal assisted interventions, but many of them are operating with few or no guidelines. The authors explain, “The manual is a tool for healthcare administrators, volunteer managers, and their staff to provide guidelines for establishing and maintaining animal-assisted interventions to maximize benefits and minimize risks to all parties.” After graduating from VCU with a B.S. in Psychology, Ms. Holloway served as Program Coordinator for The Center for Human-Animal Interaction (CHAI) in the VCU School of Medicine where she lead volunteer recruitment, retention, and management. She also served as research assistant on several animal-assisted intervention studies, and has worked to educate a new generation of healthcare providers on the benefits of human-animal interaction through invited presentations to internal and external groups. In the summer of 2015, Rebecca began training her own dog, Mackey, for therapy work. Since then, Rebecca and Mackey have visited countless patients, families, and staff at VCU Medical Center and look forward to many more years of service.
Michael C. Zucker, FACHE (MHA ’91) is the CEO and Co-founder of Ranger Health, Inc. based in San Antonio, Texas. He began his career with HCA as an administrative resident at Trident Regional Medical Center, Charleston, SC under the mentorship of Frank J. DeMarco, III (MHA ’75). Mike spent the next 8 years with HCA at Reston Hospital Center (VA), Redmond Regional Medical Center (GA) and Parkridge Medical Center (TN) in senior leadership roles.

Mike then joined MedCath, Inc. (Charlotte, NC), a company that operated mobile cardiac catheterization routes and then pioneered the development of physician joint-ventured cardiac specialty hospitals. Mike led the development of the company’s first hospitals, including the Heart Hospital of Austin (TX), which consistently ranks as a Top 50 cardiac program in the nation. Mike was then recruited to NeuroSource (Chicago, IL) to develop the country’s first free-standing, joint ventured neuro specialty hospital, The Chicago Institute for Neurosurgery and Research in partnership with the largest neurosurgery group in the U.S. Mike then joined USMD in Arlington, TX to develop joint-ventured hospitals in the Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex in partnership with Texas Health Resources.

In 2006, Mike co-founded Partners Imaging, Dallas, TX, a company developing office-based cardiac CT imaging partnerships with cardiologists across the country. He led the company through rapid growth and an eventual exit. He then reconnected with some of his colleagues from earlier in his career who were forming Vanguard Health Systems (Nashville, TN) and joined them after their first acquisition, Baptist Health System (San Antonio, TX), a six hospital, 1,800 bed system, as their Executive Vice President of Strategy and Development. During Mike’s tenure at Vanguard, he led the country’s most successful CMS Bundled Payment Demonstration Program, the Acute Care Episode (“ACE”) demonstration, which was one of only five sites in the country. Vanguard/Baptist Health gained national recognition for its early success in bundling cardiac and orthopedic admissions while driving down costs, improving quality, and sharing savings with physicians. Much of what was learned under the ACE demonstration would be introduced in the Affordable Care Act through the CMMI, and would eventually become Bundled Payment for Care Improvement (“BPCI”). Vanguard Health System was acquired by Tenet Healthcare in 2013. Mike continued to lead development and expansion for Tenet’s South Texas region.

In 2015, Mike co-founded Ranger Health (San Antonio, TX) to provide a suite of solutions to self-insured employers to manage their high-cost, episodic admissions. Ranger Health has developed a unique network and shared-savings model that aligns physician and employer incentives. In 2016, Ranger Health launched a direct-to-consumer, mobile-on-demand, urgent care service utilizing Physician Assistants. The consumer-direct service has grown rapidly and the company has recently expanded its footprint to Austin, TX.

Mike continues to be a champion for the VCU/VCV Health Administration Program and has made it back to campus over the years to speak to our students and faculty. Mike attributes much of his success to his professors and fellow classmates that prepared him well to enter the healthcare industry. Mike is quick to add, “The administrative residency program was one of the most meaningful aspects of the MHA program. Spending a year under the preceptorship of Frank J. DeMarco, III was one of the greatest experiences of my career.” He also attributes his time working for Mark Clayton (MHA ’81) as another important influence on his professional development while at HCA. “Working with Frank and Mark did more to shape my career in those early days then they will ever know. The quality of the program’s alumni and their commitment to develop future leaders was then, and still is, a defining attribute of our nationally ranked program”.

Mike has been involved with numerous professional associations and community organizations including serving on boards and committees in the Texas Hospital Association, Boys Scouts of America and American Heart Association. We won’t hold it against him that he also serves on the advisory board of Trinity University’s Health Administration Program (we are quite proud that our alumni are respected by other programs to serve in such a capacity)!

“The quality of the program’s alumni and their commitment to develop future leaders was then, and still is, a defining attribute of our nationally ranked program.”
If you have not done so recently, please take a moment to update your contact information in the Department’s alumni database. Our alumni database is our most important tool for keeping in touch. The information contained in the database is not made public and can only be accessed by Department faculty and staff and those alumni who have been verified and assigned a username. The sign in page for the database can be found here.

Can’t remember your log-in information? Don’t fret, just ask! Rochelle Clarke, our Director of Information Systems Technology, is just an email or phone call away! She can also help you get into our database if you need to update your contact information, or want to look-up a classmate. She can be reached at 804-828-5400 or at rclarke3@vcu.edu.

Adjunct Spotlight

Robert F. Graboyes, (MSHA ‘98), PhD, has taught health economics as an adjunct professor in the School of Allied Health Professions since 1999 (Department of Health Administration since 2000). He is Senior Research Fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University in Arlington, VA.

Author of “Fortress and Frontier in American Health Care,” his work focuses on technological innovation in health care and asks, “How can we make health care as innovative in the next 25 years as information technology was in the past 25 years?” His research focuses on ways to provide better care to more people at lower cost: telemedicine, remote telemetry, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, additive manufacturing, medical tourism, robotics, broader scope of practice for non-physician providers, patient empowerment, and genomic medicine.

Dr. Graboyes earned his MSHA at VCU in 1998. He has also been an adjunct professor at the University of Virginia, George Mason University, and George Washington University, and a full-time member of the Economics faculty at the University of Richmond. In 2000 and 2007, Dr. Graboyes traveled to Central Asia as part of a joint training program involving the Department of Health Administration and the Kazakhstan School of Public Health.

In 2007, the graduating MSHA students awarded Dr. Graboyes the Dennis Pointer Award. He is particularly proud of one sentence from the students’ awards ceremony citation: “At no time did we know his opinion on any issue he posted for discussion; no matter how we addressed the problem, he challenged our position.” In 2014, Dr. Graboyes received the Reason Foundation’s Bastiat Prize for Journalism, an international competition “which honors the writing that best demonstrates the importance of individual liberty and free markets with originality, wit, and eloquence.”

In addition to his MSHA, Dr. Graboyes holds a BA (English) from the University of Virginia, an MA (Government) from the College of William and Mary, and an MPhil and a PhD (Economics) from Columbia University. Previously, he was senior health care advisor for the National Federation of Independent Business, Sub-Saharan Africa economist for Chase Manhattan Bank, and regional economist & director of education at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. Earlier on, he was a newspaper reporter and professional musician.

Dr. Graboyes reveres an old piece of Talmudic wisdom: “I have learned much from my teachers, more from my colleagues, and the most from my students,” and adds, “The Grant House has offered me the chance for all three.”
**Staff Spotlight**

**Megan McDermott** has been with the Department of Health Administration for almost two years. She serves as the Executive Assistant for the Department and Assistant to the Chair. Prior to joining the VCU community, Megan attended Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, AZ where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts, with an emphasis in Graphic Design and a minor in Art History.

Megan has always had an interest in design and creative writing. While serving on her high school’s yearbook committee as Business Manager, she attended several national competitions and won two competitive writing awards. Those experiences helped prepare her to work on NAU’s newspaper, *The Lumberjack*, as a Production Designer.

After moving to Richmond, Megan began a career in advertising at The Martin Agency as a Print Media Buyer negotiating contracts for media space in over 100 local and national newspapers. After six years, Megan transferred to Account Management and worked as a Financial Manager managing multi-million dollar media and advertising budgets for clients such the American Cancer Society, Geico, Hanes, and Discover Card.

In 2014, Megan worked for a small promotional marketing company that specialized in targeted, peer to peer fundraising email campaigns for non-profits. There she wrote email message content, created mock-ups of client branded products, and designed promotional fliers.

Megan now blends her project and fiscal management abilities and her creative flair in a number of roles for the Department. She plans and executes Departmental events, designs and contributes to the Cardwell Comments, processes invoices and travel reimbursements, keeps the Chair’s calendar organized, and is the resident Department photographer!

In her spare time, Megan enjoys photography and was the grand-prize winner of the Richmond Times-Dispatch’s *Your Best Shot Photography Contest: The Summer Edition* in September 2016. She also enjoys going to the movies, being a “fur-baby” mom to her two cats, and beachcombing. Megan also maintains an “orchid garden” in her office with three thriving orchids. One co-worker even referred to her as the Orchid Whisperer.

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**In the next issue…**

- Department Retreat
- AcademyHealth & AOM Events
- New MSHA Program Director
- MSHA On-Campus Session
- MHA Class of 2020 Orientation

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**Contact Us!**

We want to hear from you! If you have ideas for stories, or want to learn about specific updates, please let us know!

If you move or change jobs, you can update your profile at [had.vcu.edu/alumni-members/alumni/members/index.php](http://had.vcu.edu/alumni-members/alumni/members/index.php)

**The Grant House**

1008 E. Clay Street

Box 980203

Richmond, VA 23298

mmcdermott@vcu.edu

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Alumni Advisory Council
September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017

Officers

President
Bassam Kawwass, FACHE, MHA 1980
President & CEO, Archer and Associates
925 Upper Hastings Way
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
Email: Bassam.Kawwass@ArcherAndAssociates.org

President-Elect
Mike King, FACHE, MHA 1978
Senior Consultant, Healthcare Repass, Inc.
128 Timberlake Ct.
Mt. Gilead, NC 27306
Email: mking12@aol.com

Past President
Eric Young, MHA 2007
Vice President of Operations, Sentara Leigh Hospital
830 Kempsville Road
Norfolk, VA 23502
Email: emyoung4@sentara.com

Members - at-Large

Chris Accashian
MHA 2001 - 2nd year
CEO, St. Francis Medical Center
13710 St. Francis Blvd
Midlothian, VA 23114
Email: christopher_accashian@bshsi.org

Bridget Fitzpatrick
MHA 2014 - 1st year
Director of Operations, St. Francis Medical Center
13710 St. Francis Blvd
Midlothian, VA 23114
Email: bridget_fitzpatrick@bshsi.org

Matt Gitzinger
MHA 2008 - 2nd year
Director of Clinical Support Services, Vidant Health
211 Virginia Road; PO Box 629
Edenton, NC 27932
Email: matt.gitzinger@vidanthealth.com

William Haugh, FACHE
MHA 2008 - 1st year
CEO, Georgetown Community Hospital
1140 Lexington Rd.
Georgetown, KY 40324
Email: william.haugh@lpnt.net

Jenifer Murphy
MHA 2009- 3rd year
Patient Safety Manager, VCU Health
Richmond, VA 23298
Email: jenifer.murphy@vcuhealth.org

Tracey Papas
MSHA 2011 - 2nd year
Director, Continuous Value Improvement, Anthem
5729 Rolling Creek Place
Glen Allen, VA 23059
Email: Tracey.papas@gmail.com

Carrie Willetts
MSHA 2007 - 2nd year
President, Wellspan Ephrata Community Hospital
169 Martin Ave
Ephrata, PA 17522
Email: cwilletts@wellspan.org

Sam Williamson
MHA 2010 - 3rd year
Director of Finance, Piedmont Atlanta Hospital
1968 Peachtree Rd NW
Atlanta, GA 30309
Email: samuel.williamson@piedmont.org

Alan Keesee
MHA 2009 - 2nd year
COO, Sunrise Hospital & Medical Center
3186 S. Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Email: Alan.Keesee@hcahealthcare.com
Dear Colleagues,

It isn’t an easy decision to retire from the place I have called my second home and the alumni, colleagues, staff, and students I have considered as my health administration family (HAD family). I was privileged to be part of this home and family for 38 years. My HAD family supported me throughout my career and planned excellent events in recognition of my humble academic contributions. On April 6, 2017, at one of these events -- my retirement party-- my HAD family was together to honor me with a great send-off party. During the event, an announcement was made that the Yasar Ozcan Scholarship was fully endowed. This was repeated at the Paul A. Gross Landmarks in Leadership alumni gathering (and 40-year reunion for the Class of 1977), and at the MSHA graduation dinner on May 11. My memories will stay fresh from these events. More importantly, I will cherish the honor you have bestowed on me by endowing the scholarship fund in eight weeks. I would like to take this opportunity to thank to my HAD family - students, alumni, friends, family, faculty, and staff - who made the Ozcan Scholarship possible. More specifically, special thanks to the MSHA Class of 2017, and Dr. Cindy Watts who initiated the idea, fueled and operationalized by Ms. Beth Williamson Ayers.

Additionally, I would like to thank my extended family at the School of Allied Health Professions and VCU for their past support, and for conferring Emeritus Professor status on me.

Wishing you all the best, my Health Administration family and friends.

Yasar A. Ozcan, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus

Department of Health Administration