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Update from the Program Director

UTGCP Alumni and Friends,

It is hard to believe that another academic year is already upon us. This will be my 12th year with the UTGCP and I could not be more grateful for the community that we have built. As we expand our social media presence to include Instagram (#getwiththetimesolddirector #nevertoolatetolearn #utgcp) and ramp up our outward facing presence so that everyone will see our successes and learn about our career, we want to make sure that the UTGCP family has a place to keep up with new jobs, marriages and family additions, so join our Facebook group UTGCP Community and let fellow alumni and supervisors know what is happening in your world (see more in Sarah and Meagan’s article in the Helix).

You may be wondering why the second years were back on campus on August 7th this year, and it is due to an exciting development – electives. The same format that made our students excel as entry level counselors is still in place, but in a slightly condensed format. Students rotate through cancer, medical genetics and prenatal for six weeks each in the spring of the first year and again for six weeks each in the fall of the second year. They are then able to rank elective options for two different four week experiences in the spring term of second year. These will conclude by spring break to allow for dedicated thesis wrap up time prior to graduation. We hope that each student will be able to take advantage of at least one non-clinical genetic counseling experience during their electives. With over a quarter of genetic counselors practicing in non-clinical roles, it is vital that our students see first hand what these positions have to offer. They will also be able to focus on a clinical area of interest that dovetails with their chosen area of specialty. Stay tuned for posts in the spring that share the students’ experiences.

The effort to transition to electives was sparked by conversations at the Advisory Board and Core Genetic Counselor Group meetings about both incorporating more non-clinical opportunities and doing our part to grow the genetic counselor workforce. We brought in an outside consultant to help us vision our goal of expanding the Program while maintaining excellence. Step one in our expansion was to admit 10 (yes 10!) students to the incoming class of 2019. The intent with step two is to include more UT System partners in our sphere so that we can continue to add more UTGCP graduates to the workforce. As we look to the future, we will use our 2017-2020 strategic plan for guidance:

- Increase the visibility and contributions of the UT GCP within the Texas Medical Center and the UT System
- Incorporate innovative teaching methods and advancing technology to broaden the engagement of both students and faculty
- Expand the number of training slots in order to positively impact the genetic counselor workforce both regionally and nationally
I hope you will join me in spreading the message that the UTGCP provides excellence in genetic counseling education by setting high standards and exposing students to a deep and diverse experience while providing a supportive environment in which to excel.

The NSGC AC in Columbus is next month and it always provides a great way to catch up. The reunion dinner is on Thursday evening at Sidebar (please reach out if our punchbowl evite missed you or went to spam). Be on the lookout for messaging from the Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors at the AC on the match system that goes into effect for this coming spring admissions cycle ([https://natmatch.com/gcadmissions/](https://natmatch.com/gcadmissions/)). Much like a residency match, after interviews conclude, the applicants will submit a rank order list of schools and the programs will submit a rank order list of applicants. On a true Match Day, we will open an email and our next set of students will be revealed at the same time that applicants will have their school revealed! The hope is that the process will cause less anxiety for applicants than the previous 3-5 day offer window did. I hope the same is true for the Program Directors!

Safe travels to the AC,
Claire

The Houston Helix was ready to be sent right before Harvey. Needless to say, nothing has been normal in Houston since Harvey came to Texas. Thank you for the outpouring of love and support from everyone in the extended UTGCP family for everyone here in Houston. Hearing from you on social media was heartwarming. We are still planning to be at the AEC and to have a great reunion. Enjoy all of the pre-Harvey love in this newsletter!

#HoustonStrong #GCsGetItDone #UTGCP
2016-2017 Highlights

March for Science

2016 AEC

Thesis Defenses

Specialty Meetings
Recruitment Event

Houston GC Happy Hour

Mentor/Mentee Events

First Year/Second Year Get-Togethers

Graduation
Introducing your official UT GCP social media managers, Sarah Noblin (UT GCP class of 1999) and Meagan Kaulfus (UT GCP class of 2017)! We have a few updates to how UT GCP will be utilizing our social media platforms. The most exciting update is the addition of a closed group on Facebook called “UT GCP Community.” This was created in the hopes of having a platform where all UT GCP Alumni as well as program supervisors and other supporters could interact with one another. Our hope is that this group will be a place where people can share professional and life updates, coordinate group events, network with fellow alumni, and more! We are so proud of the amazing things our alumni accomplishes and we would love to highlight your achievements on social media in our new “Spotlight on UT GCP Alum” series! Please keep us updated on new publications, presentations or talks given, participation in outreach events in so that we may give our alumni the recognition they deserve! You can either tag us on social media using the hashtag #UTGCP or email us directly (Sarah.J.Noblin@uth.tmc.edu or mkaulfus@houstonmethodist.org).

If you haven’t already, make sure you like our public Facebook page “University of Texas Genetic Counseling Graduate Program” and follow UT GCP on Instagram (username: utgcp) to stay up to date on the current happenings of our program. Lastly, make sure you use our official hashtag (#UTGCP) on social media when posts are program/alumni/or genetic counseling related!
Meet the UTGCP students!

**Class of 2019**
Alexa, Danielle, Emily, Allison, Cayleen, Samantha, Peyton, Georgiann, Carol, Angelica

**Class of 2018**
Annelise, Sarah, Taylor, Lauren, Kate, Jess, Ellie, Sara
Welcome, UTGCP Class of 2019!

ALEXA BREAM

I'm originally from Bedminster, NJ and went to undergrad at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA. I am really excited to move to Houston and finally get some warm weather year round. I can't wait to explore the city and find that best places to eat. In graduate school in particular, I am looking forward to starting rotations and learning as much as I can about genetic counseling! Outside of school I love reading and going hiking, and am obsessed with anything having to do with dogs and other cute animals. I also enjoy attempting (and failing) at recreating recipes and desserts that I find on Pinterest.

PEYTON BUSBY

Hey everyone! My name is Peyton Busby and I am very excited to be joining the accomplished group of genetic counselors from the UT Genetic Counseling Program. I am from Round Rock, Texas (the place with the world famous donuts) and I graduated from UT Austin this past May with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. During my time at UT, I became involved with the Austin branch of the Muscular Dystrophy Association and served as a volunteer camp counselor for two summers and as a cabin leader this past summer at their annual summer camp for all of the kiddos in the Austin and Houston areas with varying types of MD. Besides talking about genetics and reading “What to Expect When You’re Expecting” before classes start, I enjoy eating all of the delicious foods Austin has to offer and entertaining my 10 month old Australian Shepherd, Sansa, who never seems to run out of energy. I am looking forward to meeting all of the amazing people in the Houston area and starting my career as a GC!

GEORGIANN GARZA

Hi! I'm Georgiann Garza and I'm from Laredo, Texas. I went to St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas and graduated in 2015. I've been working as a genetic counseling assistant for the last two years and I am so ready for this next step! For fun, I love going outside, playing sand volleyball, going kayaking, and taking my dog for a walk. I also enjoy watching old movies, baking, and trying new foods, which is probably one of the things I'm most excited to do now that I'm moving to Houston. I always say I'll try anything twice!
EMILY KROSSCHELL

I am from Zumbrota, Minnesota, a small town in the southeast of the state. I enjoy being outdoors, especially hiking and kayaking, and I love to bake. I am also a pretty big fan of board games. I live on a sheep farm, and I love living in the rural countryside. It is going to be a big change moving down to Houston, and there are so many things I am excited about. I am looking forward to being a part of such a fabulous Genetic Counseling Program and training in an amazing medical center. Currently, I am not leaning toward any specific area of genetic counseling, so I am excited to see how my interests develop throughout my time in Houston. I am also very much looking forward to the food in Houston. My house in Minnesota is a half hour from the nearest restaurant, so I am definitely going to take advantage of the diversity of eats available in Houston. And finally, aside from school and food, I cannot forget one of the most exciting things about moving: I get to skip most of the next Minnesota winter!

ALLISON MOATS

Allison Moats here. I hail from Ohio, the heart of the Midwest, and have a circuitous academic history so bear with me. During high school, a publication on the 4.4 million-year-old hominin fossil Ardipithecus ramidus inspired me to learn more about human origins and attend Kent State University (yes, that one). At KSU, I studied incidence of two proximal femur pathologies in an ancient osteological population. In 2014, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in biological anthropology and a minor in biology. My undergraduate research fostered my interest in learning more about the role genetics play in early life growth and disease development, and I decided to pursue a PhD in developmental genetics at Harvard University. I started grad school in the fall of 2014, just in time to experience the worst Bostonian winter recorded in modern times: 108.6 inches of snow (that is two feet deeper than Shaquille O'Neal is tall). During grad school, I learned a lot about working in a lab, but more importantly, I discovered the thing that drives me is helping others and that pure research was not fueling this. Therefore, I left with a Master of Arts in 2016 and returned home to Ohio just in time to participate in the application season for a career in genetic counseling; started from the bottom now we’re here. Although I will deeply miss my beloved mid-western autumns, I am excited to experience largely snow-free winters that will facilitate some of my favorite activities: bouldering/rock climbing, hiking, and generally anything in nature. When the weather is unrelenting, I enjoy reading, crocheting, yoga, and quiet places. I am looking forward to the vast exposure afforded to us through the unrivaled Houston Medical Center and of course meeting all the wonderful genetic counselors of Houston.
CAYLEEN SMITH

Hi! I’m Cayleen Smith from Loudoun County, Virginia. I graduated from Virginia Tech in the fall with a major in Biology and minor in Sociology. While I was at Virginia Tech, I spent a lot of my time doing undergraduate research in a lab that studied the epigenetic factors of metabolic diseases. I was also very involved in a club called the Coalition for Refugee Resettlement. We went to a close by city to help refugee families settle into their new homes and to tutor the children.

As much as I loved my time as an undergraduate at Virginia Tech, I am so excited to move from Blacksburg to Houston and be a part of the Genetic Counseling Program at the University of Texas! I am looking forward to hanging up my parka and enjoying the hot weather. When I am not studying, I enjoy playing soccer (or really any other sport), running, and hiking. I cannot wait to meet all of my classmates and start my journey towards becoming a Genetic Counselor!

SAMANTHA MONTGOMERY

My name is Samantha Montgomery and I’m from New Orleans, Louisiana. My mother worked in forensics, so from a young age I knew I wanted to work in science. After working one summer in high school as a urology research assistant at Tulane University, I realized I was far too lonely to spend my life in a lab. That’s what led me to genetic counseling! I graduated from Auburn University in 2016 with a degree in Human Development and Family Studies. During my undergraduate career, I volunteered with Lee County Autism Resource and Advocacy where I worked with children with Autism and their families. I also interned for Rape Counselors of East Alabama where I served as a victim advocate, monitored the crisis hotline, and educated the community about sexual assault and prevention. After graduation, I came back to my hometown and worked for Autism Spectrum Therapies as a Behavior interventionist. I enjoyed this last year, but I am so excited to move to Houston and start this journey! I am looking forward to applying all of my experiences towards my career as a genetic counselor. In my free time, I love to travel, cook, paint, draw, and during football season, cheer on the New Orleans Saints and Auburn Tigers!
ANGELICA STARNES

Hello Houston GCs! I am very honored to have been selected to do my training at the UT program and join the genetic counseling community in Houston. It is a special place for me since I was born and raised in the greater Houston area. Throughout high school and college, I participated in various summer internships in the Houston Medical Center and UTMB Health in Galveston, which led to my interest in genetic counseling. While earning my bachelor’s degree in Biology from Texas A&M University in College Station, I completed a capstone research project in plant genetics. Following graduation in May of 2015, I worked at Baylor Miraca Genetics Laboratories as a genetic testing coordinator, working closely with lab and clinical genetic counselors as well as clinicians around the world. This is where I affirmed my inclination that genetic counseling was the career I wanted to pursue. Over the past year, I have been enjoying life in Colorado Springs with my husband, Nick. In my spare time I love to play soccer, bake, play my flute and hike. Although I will greatly miss the amazing landscapes and sights of Colorado, I am looking forward to returning to Houston and it’s fantastic food and culture. I could not be more excited to start this journey and meet you all during my time in Houston!

DANIELLE WILLIAMS

Hello! My name is Danielle Williams and I am originally from Colorado. I graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2016 with a Bachelor's degree in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology and a certificate in Public Health. While completing my degree, I was a teaching assistant and a high school tutor for at-risk youth. I loved being able to apply my knowledge to make science accessible and interesting for people outside of the field! I also volunteered with Imagine where I worked with individuals with physical, cognitive, and developmental disabilities to understand the day-to-day lives of family members and caretakers. Since graduation, I have worked as a Genetic Counseling Assistant at the Huntsman Cancer Institute. Having the opportunity to work with such an incredible team of Genetic Counselors really solidified my interest in the field! In my free time, I enjoy hiking, attempting to cook, and exploring new places. I can't wait to experience all the delicious food Houston has to offer and live in a warm climate for the first time. I'm excited to be a part of the UTGCP and learn from all the great faculty members!

CAROL NOWLEN

My name is Carol Nowlen, I'm a 23-year-old fraternal twin, and I'm from a very small town in New Jersey just across the river from Philadelphia. I graduated in 2016 from Rutgers University with a BA in Genetics. During my gap year I've been lucky enough to coach gymnastics at the gym I grew up in, and I hope to find a way to stay active in the sport in Texas. When I'm not working, I do my best to get outside as much as I can, whether it's heading to the beach or hiking with my pups. I've pretty much spent my whole life in New Jersey, so I'm really excited to move to Houston to experience a new city and eat as much as I can in a place where the food is notoriously good. I can't wait to be a part of this program!
SARAH AZAM

For my summer rotation, I went back home to Iowa and rotated at Mercy Cancer Center in Des Moines. I saw a variety of cancer cases and got to see all the various tasks and responsibilities that come with being the sole genetic counselor at the cancer center. I was also able to connect with the other physicians, nurse coordinators, financial counselors, and mental health counselors and understand their roles in a multidisciplinary approach to patient care. Since the clinic structure was different from my rotations in Houston, it also allowed me to understand how genetic counseling is conducted in smaller, more rural settings.

For my thesis project, I am looking the utility of panel genetic testing for primary brain tumors and if there is any relationship between the test result and brain tumor characteristics or family history factors. My thesis is in collaboration with Ambry Genetics, so I will be analyzing their genetic testing data from patients who present with a primary brain tumor. I've gotten IRB approval, so I'm looking forward to getting started once I'm back in Houston!

LAUREN FLEDDERMAN

This summer I took advantage of the UTGCP’s summer Spanish immersion rotation in Houston and had the opportunity to improve my Spanish skills through the counseling of prenatal patients at several of the county hospitals. I enjoyed spending an extended amount of time at the two clinics and getting to know the teams who worked there. Being part of the team dynamic broadened my understanding of how a genetic counselor functions within a larger healthcare system. For my thesis project, I am using a survey to investigate genetic counselors follow up testing practices for patients with a screening result indicating an abnormality of the sex chromosomes. I am looking forward to revisiting each of the main three specialties in the upcoming months and gaining more experience that will hopefully lead me to my dream job!
I am in shock that I’m already starting my second year with the UTGCP! Time has completely flown by! Although I’m sad to say goodbye to summer, I’m so excited to be back in Houston to see my classmates and get to know our awesome new first year students. Over the summer, I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to go back home to Phoenix, Arizona for my rotation. I was extremely curious to experience the genetic counseling atmosphere in my hometown, as I may apply for a job there in the future. I spent 5 weeks at the University of Arizona Cancer Center, where I was able to counsel patients for a variety of cancer indications. This summer was key for building my confidence in counseling full sessions on my own, and provided invaluable hands-on experience with the many roles of a genetic counselor. Outside of my time spent counseling patients, I learned a lot of information about insurance and billing, helped with hosting a support group meeting for individuals with BRCA mutations, and even made a few visits to the U of A medical school for some lectures and a very interesting patient panel. The icing on the cake was having a phenomenal supervisor to work one-on-one with throughout my rotation. She helped me grow by leaps and bounds in just 5 short weeks, and I loved learning from her!

I was also able to get some important steps completed in the thesis process over the summer. My thesis project aims to learn more about leukemia patients’ attitudes toward genetic testing. My committee and I are interested in exploring this topic because individuals diagnosed with leukemia have historically not undergone genetic testing. However, with the recent identification of several novel genes associated with predispositions to leukemia, genetic testing is becoming more common for these individuals. As such, we have many research questions that seek to explore the acceptance, knowledge, and barriers to genetic testing in this patient population. We plan to use focus group discussions to collect information from patients at M.D. Anderson’s Leukemia Center. We hope that the data generated by this project will help characterize the unique needs and concerns of this patient population. I am happy to report that I just recently received IRB approval for this project, and I’m so eager to get started with hosting focus groups and collecting data!

In my free time outside of school, I’ve been actively involved with Houston Roller Derby and was drafted to my incredible team, The Valkyries, last October. Since I’ve been skating with HRD, I have made so many new friends and have learned and grown so much as a skater. Some of my favorite experiences in Houston thus far have included facing off with other HRD teams in monthly games at the Revention Music Center in downtown Houston. This has been by far the coolest venue I’ve ever skated at in my 6-year derby career. Not to mention the derby fans in Texas are over-the-top and amazing! But the best fans of all have been the UTGCP faces I’ve seen in the crowd at some of my games this season. You guys rock!
ELLIE GOULD

This summer I had the opportunity to complete a laboratory rotation. This was a great experience as I was able to learn more about the industry side of genetic counseling. While this rotation was very interesting to me, I am looking forward to getting back into clinic this fall. Currently, I am working on my thesis which will be looking at genetic counselors' implicit attitudes toward disability and how this affects practice methods. I am really excited about this project and eager to start collecting data in the near future. I am still deciding in which specialty I will look for jobs, but I am hoping to stay in the Houston area following graduation!

KATE MOWREY

I spent my summer rotating in medical genetics at UTMB's locations in League City and Galveston. I was able to counsel many different indications, including metabolic disorders, neurodevelopmental disorders, single-gene disorders, and many more! During my time at UTMB, I gained confidence in my counseling skills and knowledge about the work that goes into each patient before and after the session. This perspective gave me an immense amount of ownership over each patient I saw throughout my rotation. I enjoyed being apart of another medical genetics clinic, as it provided me with insight into what type of work culture I would hope to be apart of during my career. For my last week of rotation, I was fortunate enough to be a camp counselor at Camp PHEver! I blast hanging out at Camp For All with all the kids and plan on visiting my former campers next year!

As for my thesis, I received IRB approval earlier this summer (#blessed). My thesis will focus on the influence of an individual's perception of disease severity on mental health, specifically depression and anxiety, as well as utilization of mental health services, in adults with a diagnosis of Tuberous Sclerosis Complex. I am in the process of developing the electronic version of my survey and hope to start data collection in September!

JESS OMARK

I spent my summer rotation at the Sparrow Health System in Lansing, Michigan. During my rotation at the Sparrow Cancer Center, I was able to participate in the opening of a new cancer center to better serve the community. I further improved my genetic counseling techniques through sessions with cancer patients and becoming acquainted with the daily work of a genetic counselor outside of the counseling session. I also learned about the culture of genetic counseling in Michigan, which will better prepare me for pursuing a position outside the state of Texas.

I also spent some time during my summer working on my thesis. The topic of my thesis is exploring the perceptions of people with unexplained mismatch repair deficiency regarding updated genetic testing. We believe that the results of this survey will be important for a better understanding of the factors that cause people to be most interested in updated genetic testing. We are pursuing IRB approval at this time, and will begin to send out the survey within the next couple of months. My summer experiences have allowed me to pursue my specific interests in genetic counseling and better prepare me for employment after my graduation in May!
ANNELISE PACE

It’s hard to believe that summer is over and that I’m on to my second year! For my summer rotation I chose to take advantage of the variety of genetic counseling opportunities (and food) in Houston. I did a rotation in cancer genetic counseling through Baylor, Houston Methodist, and UTMB. I loved seeing how different clinics are run and I couldn’t have asked for better supervisors at each location. It was nice to spend some more time practicing cancer counseling since it continues to be my area of interest.

I’m now preparing to start data collection for my thesis which is looking at the genetic testing outcomes of patients from MD Anderson’s Genitourinary Genetics Clinic. I’m hoping this project will show what indications for testing are most common in this population and which indication(s) yield the highest percentage of positive genetic testing results. Stay tuned! I’m looking forward to my first NSGC and making the most of this last year with my much-loved classmates.

SARA WOFFORD

I had a wonderful time this summer rotating in Houston with Baylor genetic counselors in prenatal and cancer counseling. Working with walk-in patients was an interesting and novel experience for me and provided many opportunities for growth. I also learned so much this summer about the working relationship between genetic counselors and other medical professionals and navigating insurance coverage. For my thesis project, I am distributing a survey designed to compare the decision-making processes of geneticists, genetic counselors and pediatric neurologists when determining what genetic testing strategy is best suited for an individual patient with a neurological condition. I am looking forward to beginning to collect data soon! As the beginning of the job hunt approaches, I am currently leaning towards working in cancer genetic counseling and plan to stay in Houston after graduating.
Class of 2017...
where are they now?

JORDAN BERG

Texas won me over these past two years, so after graduation I moved up to Dallas! Since graduation I have been busy spending time with my family, travelling, submitting my thesis manuscript to the JGC (which has now been accepted!), exploring my new city, missing everyone in Houston, studying for boards, and starting a new job! I am excited to be a part of a great team as a cancer genetic counselor at UT Southwestern. I look forward to seeing everyone at NSGC this fall (where I will be presenting my thesis as a poster presentation), TSGC in the spring, and for many years to come as an official part of the genetic counseling world.

MAGGIE CLIFFORD

After graduation in May I enjoyed driving all over the state of Texas to visit friends and family. It was nice to get to enjoy time with some of my favorite people! After a sad farewell to Houston I drove to Fort Worth where I am now a cancer genetic counselor at UT Southwestern. My job has been great and I have grown and learned a lot over the past six weeks. I lived with my parents for a couple of months in my hometown of Coppell but recently moved into my new home in Fort Worth. I have three roommates who are wonderful! I have been plenty busy studying for boards this past month and am excited to finally have time to explore my new city! I am excited for the opportunity to present my thesis as a poster presentation at NSGC. Can’t wait to see everyone in Columbus :)}
LESLIE DURHAM

Hi guys! Well I just graduated in May, but although it has been a short period of time, a lot has happened! I was offered a pediatric position at Randall Children’s Hospital in Portland, Oregon. My fiancé and I packed up our belongings and spent 4 days driving to the west coast with our dog and 3 cats in early July and got settled in to our new home. My new graduate coworker and I are pretty much starting a new pediatric genetics clinic with all the hard work that entails. We are exhausted but very excited to see how our clinic grows and what opportunities await! As far as my new city is concerned, Portland is so green and beautiful and I am excited to begin exploring all of the outdoor activities it offers (especially the Willamette vineyards south of the city!). Unfortunately, I will not be attending AEC this year, but my poster has been accepted for the poster presentation portion of the conference. In the meantime, I will be studying for the boards exam that I will take at the end of August.

AMANDA GERARD

I spent a few weeks after graduation traveling and taking some time off before starting my new position as a pediatric genetic counselor at Texas Children's Hospital. I love working with the patients at TCH, and I am excited to continue living in Houston and staying involved with the Houston GC community! My little free time when I am not working or studying for boards involves planning fun things that I would like to do in my post-boards life. I will be attending NSGC in September to present my thesis project as a poster presentation.
MEAGAN KAULFUS

Hello fellow UT GCP Alumni! It feels amazing to have graduated from the best genetic counseling program out there! I am feeling extra thankful for the training I have received as I have made the transition to starting my first job as a cancer genetic counselor at Houston Methodist! I mainly work out in the community clinics (Sugar Land, West, and Willowbrook) providing necessary genetic counseling services to patients who are receiving their oncology care out in the community. I am loving working for Houston Methodist and everyone has been so nice and welcoming towards me. I am excited to see what the future holds for me in this position! I am also looking forward to become involved in the UT GCP program as a supervisor and in any other ways that I can give back to such an amazing program that gave me so much as a student! After I graduated, I used my time off to mainly relax, spend time with my family, and be in denial that when I eventually did return to Houston that some of my classmates would have already moved away. Miss you guys #meanttobetheGC.

KATY REESE

Things are going good here in Albuquerque, NM! I am working for a private practice doing prenatal counseling. No super exciting life developments other than moving to a new state. I’m loving all of the outdoor activities here. I’m still unsure if I will be going to NSGC this year but I will be giving a poster presentation if I’m able to make it!

CHELSEA WAGNER

After a thrilling vacation to Bali, Indonesia, I was able to start my brand new job with the UT Prenatal group here in Houston. I am looking forward to continuing to explore the city with my husband and our fur baby, Lucie. I look forward to seeing many of you at this year’s NSGC AEC where I will have a platform presentation to present my thesis work on genesurance issues.

ELLEN ZIRKELBACH

Ellen Zirkelbach moved back to Los Angeles, California after graduation. She is working in her dream job as a prenatal genetic counselor for Integrated Genetics, and is absolutely loving it. In between studying for boards, she is enjoying the California sunshine, coffee shops, beaches, and reuniting with old friends.
Welcome to our new Houston Genetic Counselors!

Amanda Gerard (Baylor Pediatrics) from UT Houston
Meagan Kauflus (Methodist Cancer) from UT Houston
Liz Mizerik (Baylor Pediatrics) from UNCG
Victoria Tescon (Baylor Prenatal) from LIU
Chelsea Wagner (UT Prenatal/Cancer) from UT Houston
Rachel Wills (Baylor Pediatrics) from OSU
NSGC Annual Conference

UTGCP Alumni Dinner

Sidebar, Columbus OH
Thursday, Sept 14th
7:30

Invite and additional information sent via email
Every year UT GCP recognizes an alumnus who presents themselves as an outstanding genetic counselor and an exemplary representative of our program. Nominations are collected each year so keep an ear and eye out for another amazing colleague to add to the list.

Inaugural Recipient 2005 – Catherine Wicklund
2006 Recipient – Sarah Jane Noblin
2007 Recipient – Michelle Strecker
2008 Recipient – Jennifer Hoskovec
2009 Recipient – Marianna Raia
2010 Recipient – Jennifer Czerwinsk
2011 Recipient – Jamie Chance
2012 Recipient – Blair Stevens
2013 Recipient – Sandra Darilek
2014 Recipient – Carolyn Wilson-Brackett
2015 Recipient - Kaylene Ready
2016 Recipient - Laura Amendola

Class of 2013 — Katherine Dempsey
Class of 2014 — Jacqueline Mersch
Class of 2015 — Sarah (Mayes) Huguenard
Class of 2016 — Theresa Wittman

UT GCP recognizes the first new graduate from each class to publish their thesis research.

Recipients of each award will be announced at the reunion dinner at NSGC AEC.
# UTGCP Alumni

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<tr>
<th>Class of 1991</th>
<th>Class of 1999</th>
<th>Class of 2006</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deb Durand</td>
<td>Sara Cooper</td>
<td>Marianna (Horz) Raia</td>
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<td>Patricia Sculley</td>
<td>Ashley (Nelson) Solomon</td>
<td>Gabriel Lazarin</td>
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<td>Pamela (Nackajski)</td>
<td>Michelle Strecker</td>
<td>Stacey Miller</td>
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<td>Welgenhausen</td>
<td>Sarah Jane (Tew) Noblin</td>
<td>Kaylene (Whetstone) Ready</td>
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<td>Jennifer (Sherrill) Czerwinski</td>
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<td>Julia Wynn</td>
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<td>Class of 1993</td>
<td>Saleen Chenevert</td>
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<td>Becky Finkboner</td>
<td>Angela (Gibson) Jacobson</td>
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<td>Marnie Rocklin</td>
<td>Amie (Ortman) Blanco</td>
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<td>Cathy Wicklund</td>
<td>Leslie (Rogers) Evans</td>
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<td>Class of 1994</td>
<td>Betsy Clark-Gaye</td>
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<td>Fara Etzel</td>
<td>Kendra Waller</td>
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<td>Lauren (Wright) Nelsen</td>
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<td>Cassidy Rodnick</td>
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<td>Class of 1995</td>
<td>Valerie Banks</td>
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Class of 2011
Emily Gabitzsch
Laura Godfrey Hendon
Trisha Nichols
Sarah (Swain) Barnett
Laura (Panos) Smith
Ashley (Henriksen) Woodson

Class of 2012
Nevena (Cvjetkovic) Krstic
Carolyn (Garby) Haskins
Roya Mostafavi
Salma Nassef
Sam Penney
Katie Rock
Ann (Simmons) Bunnell

Class of 2013
Allison (Copeland) Ortega
Jessica Davis
Kate Dempsey
Michelle McDougle
Nikki Mohrbacher
Brad Rolf

Class of 2014
Amanda Hanson
Andi Lewis Ybarra
Jackie Mersch
Shannon Mulligan
Emily Parham
Aarti Ramdaney
Stephanie Thompson

Class of 2015
Lizzie (Baack) Bowdish
Callie Jenevein
Carla McGruder
Sarah (Mayes) Huguenard
Katie (Sagaser) Schutte
Haley Streff
Kayla (Vaughn) Rosnau
Caiqian (Wu) Cropper

Class of 2016
Torry (Breen) Howell
Katie Chan
Christina Falugi
Meagan Giles
Jessie Ross
Ginger Tsai
Victoria Wagner
Theresa Wittman

Class of 2017
Jordan Berg
Maggie Clifford
Leslie Durham
Amanda Gerard
Meagan Kaulfus
Katy Reese
Chelsea Wagner
Ellen Zirkelbach

Class of 2018

From the Editors

Jordan Berg, Class of 2017

Despite not being in Houston, it has been a great opportunity to work on this newsletter and remain involved with all things UTGCP since graduation. It has been a pleasure working with Jackie both on this newsletter and as a fellow cancer genetic counselor at UTSW. Looking forward to catching up with everyone in Ohio!

Jackie Mersch, Class of 2014

It has been great working with Jordan on my third and final newsletter. Another year in the books at UTSW in Fort Worth! I was promoted to supervisor of the Fort Worth Cancer Genetics program at the end of last year. My abstract on Variant Reclassification was accepted for a platform at the AEC. My co-author will be presenting because I’ll be in Munich, Germany enjoying Oktoberfest! Prost!!