

# THE AA-C ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANT

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December 2008, Issue 6

Case Western Reserve University  
Master of Science in Anesthesia (MSA) Program

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## CREATION OF THE MSA PROGRAM LOGO

The MSA Program's logo was created to reflect our vision and values. Our logo is a graphical design of the Turning Point sculpture on Case Western Reserve University's campus, with rays of sun emerging from the peak of the sculpture. Philip Johnson, world-renowned architect and native Clevelander, created Turning Point. The sculpture symbolizes the power of education to change individual lives and the impact of philanthropy on our institution's history. The beams of light embody knowledge, strength, excellence and hope.



We would like to thank Richard E. Baznik, Director of the Institute for the Study of the University in Society, for sharing with us his striking photograph of the Turning Point sculpture, which became the inspiration behind our logo.



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[www.anesthesiaprogram.com](http://www.anesthesiaprogram.com)

## PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE: OUR PROUD PAST

### Joseph M. Rifici, AA-C, M.Ed.

As this year draws to a close, it is a time to reflect on past accomplishments and also to prepare for what's ahead.

Over the past year, our clinical instructors and faculty continued their impressive dedication to teaching. Dr. Matthew Norcia was named permanent medical director of the MSA Program, and we have benefited greatly from his expertise.

Our program created new partnerships with health profession advisors from across the United States, and we made great strides to increase the awareness of anesthesiologists and those in the medical field about the AA profession.

The MSA Program also reached a historic milestone. 2008 marks the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our first graduating class, the Class of 1973. Congratulations to our eight alumni who celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2008. I have seen first hand the transformations and growth of our program over the years. Our alumni and students, our faculty and instructors, and the many individuals who have contributed to the important work of the anesthesiologist assistant program at Case Western Reserve University give us reason to be proud. Each is a part of our legacy of excellence in education. In the upcoming year, we will focus on our proud past and celebrate our alumni. As we look back on our collective accomplishments during our program's history, please share with us your memories and join us in our celebration.

I extend my warmest wishes to you and your family for a joyous holiday and New Year.

Joseph Rifici, *Executive Editor*  
Jennifer Puin, *Managing Editor*  
Laura Bishop, *Coordinating Editor*  
Katherine Flach, *Graphics Editor*



## MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE: OUR PROMISING FUTURE



### Matthew P. Norcia, M.D.

The future of the AA profession appears boundless. Having been closely involved with the profession for only a brief period, I see the expansion of the profession on the sharp part of the growth curve both locally and nationally. In the last half-decade or so, increases in numbers, greater exposure, and widened acceptance have all contributed to and propagated that growth.

Since 2004 three new schools have opened and are graduating almost 100 new AAs every year. Another school is slated to open in Florida soon. Many other states are actively seeking information, forming academic and political relationships, and creating training sites to establish a foundation for additional schools to be built.

Due to the efforts of many ambitious AAs and conscientious physicians, there has been a tremendous amount of work done to stimulate national awareness. Especially through the organizational effort of the American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants and its busy members, a closer relationship to the ASA has been developed to help legitimize the existence of the AA profession to those who are not familiar with it. The AAAA has also been very active in helping state societies organize legislative strategies and create their own state academies for AAs to aid in the campaign of the profession at that level. We cannot forget the most important part of the equation, which are the AAs themselves. As they are introduced into more areas and establish themselves as exceptional and desired anesthesia care providers, they create the most profound impression and stimulate the strongest interest for more AAs.

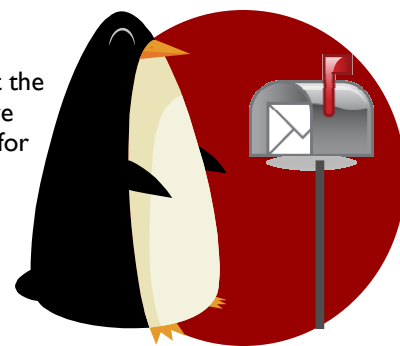
What does this mean for the future? Quite simply, it means a much greater demand for AAs. We will have to keep up the supply by creating more schools, finding more clinical and academic instructors, breaking into more states and overcoming barriers in existing states, periodically revising and upgrading the training and certification processes, and continuing to strengthen affiliations with other anesthesia care providers. All these things are possible because they are occurring right now, but it will require the effort of every person in the field to fully achieve such lofty goals.

## OFFICE NEWS

### We've Got Mail

From September 2008 to date the MSA Program office has answered more than 125 calls and e-mails requesting information about our program. During the same period we provided 12 shadowing experiences to prospective applicants, two of whom aspire to be members of the incoming class of June 2009. Of the remaining ten shadowers, six will submit their applications in the near future. The willingness of our clinical Instructors and students to host shadowers enables the program to grow. Thanks to all who so enthusiastically contribute to this essential facet of our program's marketing.

Do you know someone who is looking for the right clinical career? Tell them about the Case Western Reserve University MSA Program. If you find they are interested, give them the number to the Program office, (216) 844-8077, and suggest that they call for more information. Our staff will happily answer their questions. Prospective applicants may use the same phone number to schedule an appointment to shadow an anesthesiologist assistant for a day at University Hospitals Case Medical Center. There they will have the opportunity to talk to our program director, instructors, and students and learn first hand what it takes to be a Case Western Reserve MSA student.



## STUDENT RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

### Case Western Reserve University Health Professions Fair

The MSA Program participated in Case Western Reserve University's third annual Health Professions Fair, which took place on 24 October 2008 in the Thwing Center Ballroom. The Fair provides students the opportunity to explore a variety of health profession programs and to speak directly with program representatives. Laura Bishop, education coordinator, represented the MSA Program at this event for the second year in a row, and our program drew a great deal of interest. The Fair is hosted by the university's chapter of the American Medical Student Association.

## STUDENT RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

### Baldwin-Wallace College Pre-Medical Society

Michael Patrick, AA-C ('05), and Laura Bishop were honored to be guest speakers at Baldwin-Wallace's Pre-Medical Society meeting on 18 November 2008. The MSA Program was invited back this year by Brian Morningstar, student vice president, and Jenny Jamison, student president. Despite a sudden snowstorm on the evening of the presentation, attendance was remarkably good. We enjoyed our visit and would like to thank the Pre-Medical Society for their warm welcome. Thanks also to Dr. Joseph Yavornitzky, faculty advisor, for inviting us to share in the wonderful homemade dinner of pasta and salad, courtesy of his wife. We would be happy to provide a tour of our facilities or shadowing opportunities for anyone interested in learning more about our program.

### John Carroll University Visit

Laura Bishop joined Michael McDermott and Jenna Saraniti, MSA students and John Carroll University alumni, on a local recruiting visit to the highly ranked Jesuit institution. On 20 November 2008, our team mingled and partook of pizza and pop with JCU students, then Mike and Jenna delivered a short PowerPoint presentation about our program. The presentation was enhanced by the personal reflections of our two student leaders, who had much to share concerning their paths to the MSA Program, their experiences of the past two years, and their plans for the future.

**MSA students and alumni volunteers can assist the MSA Program in recruiting students. Alumni can get involved by representing the MSA Program at college fairs outside of the Cleveland area, or they could attend recruiting visits and college fairs to assist Program staff. For more information about these activities or to volunteer, contact the MSA Program office.**

## STUDENT NEWS

### Notes from The Student Chiefs: Amanda Kroll and Michael McDermott

*Written by Amanda Kroll*

Season's Greetings to all!! The fall semester has gone by very quickly. The second year class is currently on rotation number 8, which will end just before Christmas. Many of us are thinking about board exams and job prospects, in addition to the holiday season. Good luck to all second year students with board preparations. Our exam is January 31, 2009.

I have recently returned from St. John's Mercy Medical Center in St. Louis, MO. While my experiences were good, I'm glad to be home after many months of traveling. We continue to receive wonderful feedback about the first year class. Keep up the good work!

November 29<sup>th</sup> was the annual MSA Holiday Party. It was fantastic to see so many students, instructors, and anesthesiologists this year. Many instructors from outside the Cleveland area were able to join us. The party was held at Claddagh Irish Pub in Lyndhurst, OH. The food and drinks were almost as good as the company for the evening. Thank you to our office staff for all of their planning and hard work to kick off the holidays!

The program's administrative team is preparing to start interviewing for the class of 2011. We look forward to meeting each applicant selected for the interview process. Mike and I are anxious to be on the other side of the interview table. We will have the opportunity to meet each applicant during their daytime interview and will then share dinner with them in the evening. We look forward to being part of this very important process. Good luck to all applicants!



In other news, our new student lounge is nearly complete. It is incredibly nice. Our computers, with desks and chairs, are all up and running, as is the new television. We all agree that it is very nice to have a space to call our own. The lounge is intended for students only, so we can study, check e-mail, and relax. A huge thanks to all involved in this project.

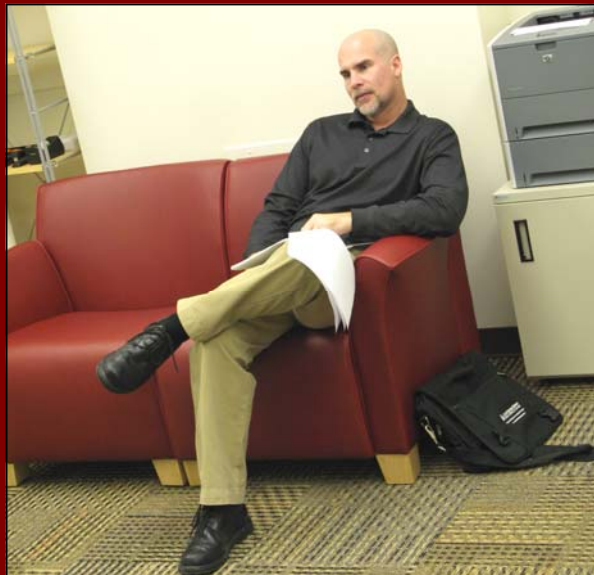
**It has been an extraordinary 2008! Happy Holidays to all!!**



## HOLIDAY PARTY 2008 AND THE NEW STUDENT LOUNGE



**MSA Holiday Party 2008**  
To see more pictures, click the **VIEW PHOTOS** link on our home page, [www.anesthesiaprogram.com](http://www.anesthesiaprogram.com)



The New Student Lounge

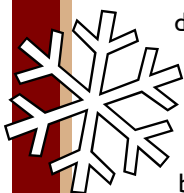
**NOTES FROM THE 2ND YEAR AAAA STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:  
CHRISTEN DONOHOE AND JENNA SARANITI**

Seasons greetings MSA students, AAs, and beyond! As promised in the last issue, we would like to update you on our experience at this year's ASA Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida. We were fortunate to be a part of the Anesthesiologist Assistant Programs booth, which represented all of the AA programs as well as the AAAA. Our display included brochures with information about our program, pens, candy, photos and our newsletter. The conference was a great opportunity for us to meet students from other programs and hear about their experiences. It was most inspiring to see all the programs and students working together as a team at our booth. We hope we can continue this collaboration as we all strive to better the AA profession.

Staffing the booth gave us great hope for the future. We spoke with several anesthesiologists from many states who were wondering what they needed to do to be able to hire AAs. This is a huge step, because in years past many people were not even familiar with the profession. We also spoke with several people, including anesthesia techs, who were interested in information on how they could apply for the program. It was both fun and motivating to talk about our program, profession, and plans for the future, as well as to learn more about the AAAA and about how to continue to promote AAs throughout the U.S.

The convention hall was a sight to see. There were hundreds of booths with eye-catching displays from anesthesia machines, LMAs, and airway equipment to monitors and drugs. Many included fun, free giveaways. It was very fascinating to see all of the new products and to glimpse the future of anesthesia. We were even able to collect a few new gadgets for our simlab.

While in Orlando, we were able to meet with fellow AAAA student representatives from other programs. We discussed several ideas for the future, including fundraising for the AAAA and improvements for the website. We had a nice lunch, hosted by AAAA President Deb Lawson, where we continued to discuss how students could become more involved in the AAAA. We have come to realize how important it is for all students to continue to be a part of the AAAA after graduation. It is because of our AAAA members that we are able to continue working on legislation to open new states to AA practice. We hope that our excitement about the future will be contagious and help AA practice grow across the country. Have a safe and fun holiday season!



# Our Alumni Leading The Way At The American Society of Anesthesiologists 2008 Annual Meeting



Deborah Lawson, AA-C (Class of 1977) & Pete Kaluszyk, AA-C, M.Ed. (Class of 1975)



Michael Nichols, AA-C (Class of 2000) & Joseph Rifici, AA-C, M.Ed. (Class of 1982)



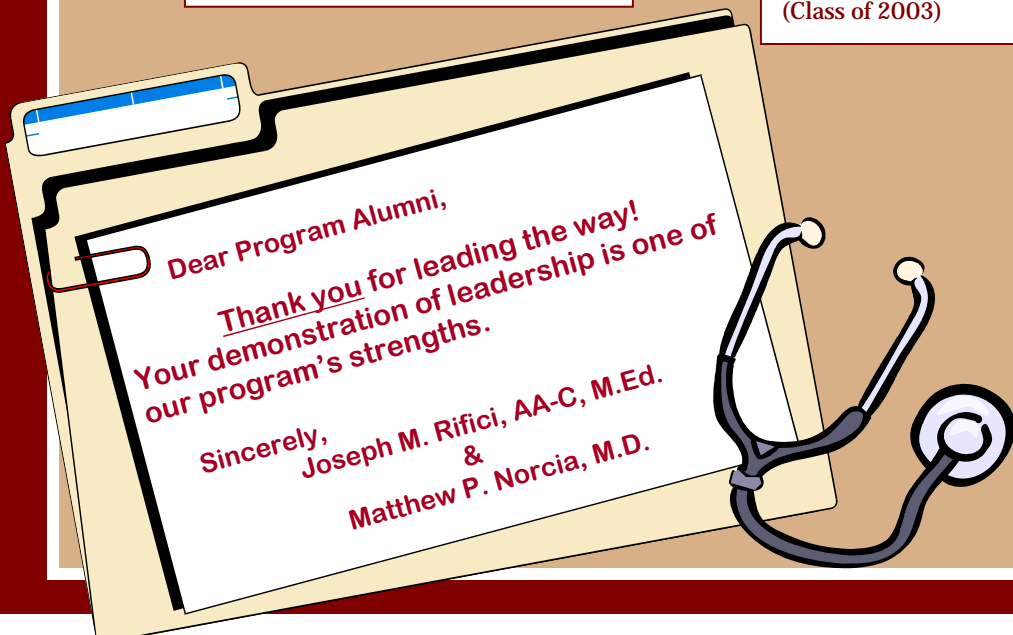
Shane Angus, AA-C (Class of 1999) 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year & Claire Chandler, AA-C (Class of 2004) 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary year



Melanie Guthrie, AA-C (Class of 1997)



Lauren Hojdila, AA-C (Class of 2003)

Dear Program Alumni,  
 Thank you for leading the way!  
 Your demonstration of leadership is one of our program's strengths.  
 Sincerely,  
 Joseph M. Rifici, AA-C, M.Ed.  
 &  
 Matthew P. Norcia, M.D.

## OUR ALUMNI: THE PRIDE OF THE MSA PROGRAM

Here are some of our alumni who will be celebrating an anniversary year in 2009:

**5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Class of 2004**

Daniel Belko  
 Claire Chandler  
 Elizabeth Decker  
 Charles Shawn Duvall  
 Jennifer Pulizzi Golden  
 Yelena Demurova Goyzman  
 Trent Harris  
 Bridget Kerner Johnson  
 Doug Marsh  
 Jeff Scavelli  
 Glenn Soldan  
 Jamie Varca

**10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Class of 1999**

Shane Angus  
 Lama Coudsi  
 Amy Douglas  
 Gary Jones  
 Matthew J. McKinney  
 Jennifer Moon  
 Charlene Keane Porter  
 Jeffrey L. Ratino  
 Carie M. Twichell

**JOIN OUR CELEBRATION!**

**How can you help us celebrate the  
 MSA Program's proud past and promising future?**

**Come back!**

Return on May 16, 2009 to rendezvous with classmates and friends  
 at the MSA Program Honors Dinner.

**Announce what's new in your life!**

Your significant other, your job or a milestone in your career, a baby, or a puppy!

Submit news and share your ideas and memories  
 in the "Alumni News" section of *The Anesthesiologist Assistant*.

The deadline for the March 2009 issue is March 1st.

E-mail your submission to [jennifer.puin@uhhospitals.org](mailto:jennifer.puin@uhhospitals.org).

**Update your contact information!**

Make sure the MSA Program has your  
 e-mail address since our communications will be electronic.

**Make a gift!**

Consider giving a gift to the MSA Program during 2009.

Your donation will support student enrichment activities, clinical instructor  
 development workshops, student scholarships, and simulation laboratory renovation.

## ALUMNA PROFILE: DEBORAH A. LAWSON, AA-C, '77



What will Deb Lawson do after she passes the baton to Pete Kaluszyk in 2009 and steps down as President of the American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants? Take a vacation, expect fewer e-mails in her in-box, or perhaps go home at night and leave work behind? I doubt it! Deb has been and will continue to be a tireless advocate of the AA profession. Over the years she has been intimately involved in the activities of the AAAA and Ohio Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants (OAAA). She has served as profession representative of the MSA Program at Case Western Reserve University for over six years.

Deb received her B.S. in Health Sciences specializing in Anesthesiology from Case Western Reserve in 1977. After graduation she worked in a number of hospitals, spending brief periods of time as a staff anesthetist at Mount Sinai Hospital of Cleveland, Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago, and West Paces Anesthesia Associates in Atlanta. For eleven years, Deb held a university appointment as Clinical Instructor in Anesthesia at the highly ranked University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics in Madison. We are fortunate, though, that she has spent the longest period of her professional life here at University Hospitals of Cleveland, joining the team in 1995.

As our alumna, clinical instructor, and profession advocate, the MSA Program would like to deeply thank Deb Lawson for her service in 2008 as President of the American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants. Here are some of Deb's accomplishments during her service as AAAA President:

**Facilitated** the licensure of AAs in Oklahoma

**Strengthened** AAAA's relationship with the Texas Society of Anesthesiologists in the interest of developing AA involvement in that state

**Appointed** to the ASA Committee on Physician Resources

**Served** as faculty for the Society of Academic Anesthesiology Associations 2008 Annual Conference

**Served** as a member of the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation's Committee on Education and Training

**Initiated** Clinical Instructor Development Workshops, with the first being held at Case Western Reserve University on November 12, 2008

**Directed** AAAA through the transition of management firms

**Directed** the redesign of AAAA's web site

Deb has been the perfect example of the engaged professional, the impassioned yet circumspect spokesperson for the AA profession. As Deb says, the "keys are in our hands, ready or not." Let's be ready to step up, join the team, and drive our profession forward. Just as Deb has done.

#### **AAAA Leaders Forging A Path Towards Success:**

Deborah Lawson, AA-C ('77),  
President

Pete Kaluszyk, AA-C, MEd ('75),  
President-Elect

Michael Nichols, AA-C ('00),  
Immediate Past-President



## OHIO ACADEMY OF ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANTS ELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP



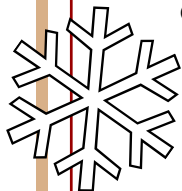
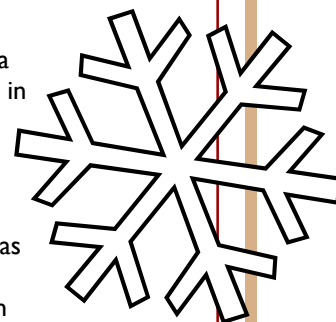
*Written by David Zagorski, AA-C*

I am happy to have this opportunity to introduce myself and the new officers of the Ohio Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants. I am the incoming president and look forward to working with Patrick Bolger, Vice President; Michael Patrick, Secretary; and Janice Douglas, Treasurer.

My respect and admiration for the individuals who started the OAAA are immense. I graduated from Case Western Reserve University's MSA Program in May 2000 at a time when the anesthesiologist assistant profession was in the midst of a legal battle in Ohio. As a new AA I made many trips to Columbus in support of the OAAA's efforts and did what I could to help, from writing letters to stuffing envelopes. After years of battle our hard work was rewarded by the Ohio Supreme Court's ruling in favor of the AA profession.

As the newly elected board, my colleagues and I endeavor to maintain the excellent work the OAAA has done thus far, while expanding on the ground work done by its founding officers. Our first order of business is to become a component society to the American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants. In doing so we will solidify support and negotiating power to be prepared when issues arise. We plan to improve employment opportunities in Ohio by marketing our profession to hospitals who do not know enough about AAs and what we have to offer. We will expand educational opportunities for MSA students, enabling them to rotate at more Ohio hospitals, and continue to spread the word. We hope to hold a meeting that coincides with one of Case Western Reserve's biannual clinical instructor meetings in order to optimize attendance.

Please do your part to support the OAAA by paying your dues and being an activist in the AA cause. In turn we will work for you by keeping a watchful eye for emergent issues and by working to expand AA marketability across Ohio. If we have no voice we cannot be heard! Now is the time to take the next important steps that will move our profession forward. I welcome your support, suggestions and comments.



## CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT

Faculty and clinical instructors are the heart of our program. Through inspired teaching and mentoring, they promote challenging standards for academic achievement and personal growth.

### **First Clinical Instructor Workshop**

*Written by Michael Patrick, AA-C*

It seems just like yesterday that I finished my training, completed boards, and began practicing as an AA. Even though a steep learning curve exists your first couple years out, I felt that the MSA Program and strong clinical instructors had prepared me well for my profession. After two full-to-the-brim years of learning, now I was in the clinical instructor role.

I have always felt that being an instructor was like a right of passage for our profession. You finish, and then you teach. Sounds pretty simple, right? To this instructor, not so much. It is a tough job! I have always appreciated and looked up to my instructors, especially the patience and skills that they possess. I was only able to fully appreciate them after being in their shoes. That is when I began to truly realize how much thought and work goes into being a clinical instructor.

I am always looking for ways to improve. From talking to peers, former teachers, and attending MSA clinical instructor meetings, I pick up advice. Helping Joseph Mader, RN, AA-C, with his clinical instructor enrichment efforts within the AAAA Education and Practice Committee was naturally a great way to dive right in and learn.

Helping Joe to create a clinical instructor workshop presentation for the Fall MSA Instructor Dinner was an invaluable experience for me. Just after meeting with him a few times over the phone and developing slides into the night, on following days I was already applying what I had learned to my clinical instruction.



## CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED

That is just the thing a newer clinical instructor like me could use, some direction from a seasoned pro. The presentation went well, sparked good conversation, and received good positive input.

The recent presentation is just the beginning of the clinical instructor workshop ideas by Joe Mader and his committee. The AAAA has an initiative to enrich our already strong clinical instructors and help support newer instructors like me. This program will be expanded to future MSA instructor meetings, and eventually the AAAA annual meeting. The future of our profession lies within our students and the people who instruct them; our future continues to look bright.

## GIVE TO THE MSA PROGRAM

**Investments in the Master of Science in Anesthesia Program** enable us to help students directly, remain competitive, advance our goals and priorities, and position the program for growth. The MSA Program remains focused on its mission to graduate skilled and compassionate anesthesiologist assistants. Philanthropic investments are important because we believe the world needs more of our program's graduates, who will enhance our tradition of quality education, strength, and excellence.

Currently, the MSA Program is seeking philanthropic support for the following:

**MSA Program Scholarship Initiative** – The Scholarship Initiative is designed to raise scholarship support for highly qualified incoming students. One component of our recruitment effort involves merit scholarships for the brightest, most promising students. These merit-based scholarships will allow the MSA Program to continue to compete for the best students.

**Simulation Laboratory Renovation** – With your help, we can renovate our Anesthesia SimLab to allow for more space for movement and for stocking the lab with the supplies that are currently in use in the hospital's operating rooms. To further improve training and bring our students up to advanced skill levels faster, we are also seeking funds to purchase additional mannequins and new lab equipment.

**Annual Support for Program Goals** – Support student enrichment activities, clinical instructor development, and our work to increase our program's national and international prominence.

Individuals or organizations interested in making an investment in the Master of Science in Anesthesia Program should visit our web site for more information. Click the MAKE A GIFT link on our home page, [www.anesthesiaprogram.com](http://www.anesthesiaprogram.com). You may also contact the MSA Program office for assistance, and we will be happy to discuss gift options in person or over the phone.

**We would like to thank Cook Medical for its recent gift to the MSA Program for Clinical Instructor Development Workshops. We greatly appreciate Cook's support of this worthy initiative.**



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The Oklahoma Society of Anesthesiologists support the concept of AAs and are excited to have them helping us care for our patients in the future.

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**Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C. is Seeking Several Anesthesiologist Assistants for Immediate Openings**

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For more information contact Abby Lipsitz, human resources recruiter, at [Abby.Lipsitz@Medstar.net](mailto:Abby.Lipsitz@Medstar.net) or Eileen Begin, M.D. at [Eileen.V.Begin@Medstar.net](mailto:Eileen.V.Begin@Medstar.net)



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