

# RVU MISSION STATEMENT

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ROCKY VISTA UNIVERSITY  
PROVIDES QUALITY HEALTHCARE EDUCATION  
WHILE INSPIRING STUDENTS TO SERVE WITH  
COMPASSION, INTEGRITY, AND EXCELLENCE.

# PA PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

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THE MISSION OF THE ROCKY VISTA PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT  
PROGRAM IS TO PREPARE CLINICALLY COMPETENT,  
COLLABORATIVE, AND COMPASSIONATE PHYSICIAN  
ASSISTANTS TO PROVIDE PRIMARY CARE.



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Class of 2023, families, faculty, and members of the RVU community,

Today is a celebration, not only for our graduating students, but for everyone who has played a foundational role in their lives. They wouldn't be here today if not for your support and love.

Students: Today, you take the next steps in your career, entering the healthcare workforce as a provider; ready and prepared to take your place alongside the rest of the medical team of which you have earned the right to be a part.

You came to Rocky Vista University with a goal and a dream to become a PA – to become the kind of PA that patients want to see – filled with confidence and capabilities, empathy, integrity, compassion, thoroughness, excellence, and efficiency. We hope you will provide the type of care that leads with humanism and caring. We believe you are well positioned to serve the needs of the communities where you will serve.

While at RVU, you have learned anatomy and physiology; biochemistry, pharmacology, and pathology – you have achieved competency and proficiency in patient care. And you have cultivated your humility and humanity – placing the patient at the center of the process and prioritizing their values and preferences. You have achieved your goal, and for that, we are all very proud.

The national shortage of healthcare providers is profound and getting worse. In Colorado alone, 61 of 64 counties are designated as health professional shortage areas. We are all looking for caregivers willing to step up, to step in, and say, "I am here to help". Not only do your future patients need you, but your future colleagues need you as well. Now is your time to answer that call, to honor your calling to be a Physician Assistant and to walk onto the front line with your eyes open, with your mind open, and with your heart open.

You have trained for this. The communities are waiting. Your patients are waiting. You are ready for this. You are prepared to help!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David G. Forstein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. It is set against a light grey rectangular background.

David Forstein, DO, FACOOG (dist.)  
President and CEO  
Rocky Vista University

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Chelsy Gentry graduated from Rocky Vista University's Physician Assistant Program in November of 2022. During her time there, she was exceptionally lucky to have worked with the cohort of 2023 - hosting Jeopardy review sessions, skills labs, and one-on-one tutoring. As a former English teacher, Chelsy loves to find ways to share knowledge and support others. She is currently working in behavioral health, primarily in adolescent psychiatry and adult detox.

Chelsy is originally from Maryland, and has loved raising her family in Colorado. She is married and has two daughters who are much cooler than she is. Her and her family love finding local hikes and camping spots, and spend many hours perusing used bookstores, playing board games, and drinking chai tea.



# COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

## PROCESSIONAL

### WELCOME

Cathy Ruff, MS, PA-C

### GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

David Forstein, DO, FACOOG (dist.)

### GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Beth R. Smolko, DMSc, MMA, PA-C, DFAAPA

### STUDENT COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Jaime Short, MPAS

### COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Chelsy Gentry, PA-C

2022 Alumni

### AWARDS

Cathy Ruff, MS, PA-C

### PRESENTATION AND HOODING OF THE MPAS CLASS

David Forstein, DO, FACOOG (dist.)

David Eckhardt, MS, PA-C

Sarah Neguse, MS, PA-C

Cassidy Punt, MS, PA-C

Cathy Ruff, MS, PA-C

### CONFERRAL OF THE MPAS DEGREE

David Forstein, DO, FACOOG (dist.)

### OATH

Darcy Solanyk, MS, PA-C

### CLOSING REMARKS

Cathy Ruff, MS, PA-C

## RECESSIONAL

# MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES CLASS OF 2023

MELANIE ADAMS

BONNIE LIN

JACOB BLUMENFELD

MATTHEW LITTLETON

KATHARINE BRONSON

GAGE LOVERN

RYAN CARROLL

MEGAN MERTZEL

DESMOND CHEE

MACKENZIE OLIVER

MEGAN CLEEK

GANNON PARKER

SARA DEVINE

JOHNATHAN PUHALLA

GRACE FERDOWSKI

COURTNEY RAINWATER

ALLYSSA FUNK

SARAH RUDO

GIANNA GEHRKE

AVERY SHEINER

JESSICA GUILLAUME

JAIME SHORT

CORBIN HALL

PRISCA TO

ALEXANDRIA HILLESHEIM

TEVIN TRINH

LOUISE HILL-STIRLING

DALLIN TROUT

PAIGE JOHNSON

KRISTEN VALENTE

CHAD KELLER

BRYTANI WHITE

KATERINA KRIEGER

# THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSIONAL OATH

I PLEDGE TO PERFORM THE FOLLOWING DUTIES  
WITH HONOR AND DEDICATION:

I WILL HOLD AS MY PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY THE  
HEALTH, SAFETY, WELFARE, AND DIGNITY OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS.

I WILL UPHOLD THE TENETS OF PATIENT AUTONOMY, BENEFICENCE,  
NON MALEFICENCE, AND JUSTICE.

I WILL RECOGNIZE AND PROMOTE THE VALUE OF DIVERSITY.

I WILL TREAT ALL PERSONS EQUALLY WHO SEEK MY CARE.

I WILL HOLD IN CONFIDENCE THE INFORMATION SHARED IN THE  
COURSE OF PRACTICING MEDICINE.

I WILL ASSESS MY PERSONAL CAPABILITIES AND LIMITATIONS,  
STRIVING TO ALWAYS IMPROVE MY MEDICAL PRACTICE.

I WILL ACTIVELY SEEK TO EXPAND MY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS,  
KEEPING ABREAST OF ADVANCES IN MEDICINE.

I WILL WORK WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH CARE TEAM  
TO PROVIDE COMPASSIONATE AND EFFECTIVE CARE OF PATIENTS.

I WILL USE MY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE TO  
CONTRIBUTE TO AN IMPROVED COMMUNITY.

I WILL RESPECT MY PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP  
WITH THE PHYSICIANS

I WILL SHARE AND EXPAND KNOWLEDGE WITHIN THE PROFESSION.

THESE DUTIES ARE PLEDGED WITH SINCERITY AND UPON MY HONOR.

# STUDENT AWARDS

## COMPASSION AWARD

This award is for a student who exemplifies the qualities of graciousness and humility, advocates for social justice, and works for the betterment of all members of their community whether internal or external to RVU.

## COLLABORATIVE AWARD

This award is for a student with an outstanding contribution to their class or the PA program as a whole through their leadership, character, collaboration, and service endeavors.

## EXCELLENCE AWARD

This award is for a student who exceeded the expected level of competency in all competency domains and relative to their cohort

## PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S AWARD

This award is given at the discretion of the PA Program Director to a student who exemplifies all aspects of the Mission of the program.

## PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The award is for an outstanding student that embodies the University's core values of integrity, collegiality, compassion, diversity, excellence, service, and innovation.

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# PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM FACULTY AND STAFF

## CARRIE CHANOS, PA-C

Assistant Professor of PA Studies

## TERESE LARSON

Program and Didactic Services Coordinator

## ALISON COVAK, MSPAS, PA-C

Director of Clinical Education;  
Assistant Professor of PA Studies

## LIN MA, MA

Senior Data Analyst

## MEGHAN DAY, MS, PA-C

Assistant Director of Clinical Education;  
Assistant Professor of PA Studies

## SARAH NEGUSE, MS, PA-C

Assistant Professor of PA Studies;  
Director of Admissions

## DAVID ECKHARDT, MS, PA-C

Director of Simulation;  
Associate Professor of PA Studies

## CASSIDY PUNT, MSBS, MPAS, PA-C

Assistant Professor of PA Studies

## CHRISTY HARDT

Program Outreach Coordinator

## CATHY C. RUFF, MS, PA-C

Program Director and Chair;  
Associate Professor of PA Studies

## JENNIFER HELLIER, PHD

Director of Basic Science and Research;  
Associate Professor of PA Studies

## KATIE SHAW, MS, ATC

Operations Manager

## KRISTEN HUNTER

Clinical Rotations Coordinator

## KANDACE SHEPHERD, MS, PA-C

Student Success Facilitator

## DARCY SOLANYK, MS, PA-C

Associate Professor of PA Studies;  
Director of Curriculum