



# Deans' Assistants Group

## *Quarterly Newsletter*

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## Chair's Corner

Happy New Year!

I'm trying to stay upbeat for 2022 – it's year three of the pandemic and I know I am not alone in feeling pandemic fatigue. I'm tired of hearing about it, weary of thinking about it and, oh yeah, I even got sick FROM it! It finally caught my husband and I after Christmas – I blame my dad, who tested positive but, at the age of 77, was symptom free while Kenny and I suffered (now how fair is that?!). We are all vaccinated and boosted, it just slipped through our defenses.

Northeast Ohio got hit hard with Omicron cases, though at this writing, our numbers are dropping. One of our basic science chairs, and a resident infectious disease expert, feels we have seen our peak and that by spring everything will be quiet...until the fall. That sounds so ominous.

On a happier note, we are moving ahead with an in-person spring meeting, right here in Cleveland! If you recall, we were scheduled to visit CWRU in 2020 and allow me to show off our new Health Education Campus, where our medical, dental, nursing and physician assistant students all learn together. I can't promise sunshine or even warm weather (it is Cleveland after all), but I can promise we are very excited to host and, personally, I know I am excited to see you outside of a computer screen! Our new Vice Dean for Medical Education started in July 2020, and when we came back to campus for in-person meetings last summer, her first words were "you have legs! I'm so excited to see legs!"

And while we plan for the spring meeting, don't forget to get involved in other ways: join a committee, run for a board position, and look for our coffee breaks and speaker series that will continue in 2022. Don't forget that we are a huge resource: Diane Gromelski remarked that, when she asked for help regarding interview questions, she received so many responses with amazing suggestions she didn't have to start from scratch, and she easily created the questions she needed for her search. I'm always impressed, and humbled, by the vast amount of knowledge our group possesses, and how we are willing to share what we know.

So as we continue to wait for Covid-19 to become endemic, let's not forget to stay in touch. Share pictures of your

vacations, let us know of significant events in your lives, send pictures of your schools or your city – we want to celebrate with you! (and if you show off your sunshine and beaches I promise those of us up north, in the throes of winter, won't hold it against you!)

Susan

PS. Don't forget to renew your membership by March 1st; we waived the annual fee again this year. And if you know someone who would benefit from joining, encourage them!



## Getting to Know You

DAG has gained many new members, but due to the global pandemic, in-person meetings were canceled in 2021. DAG has had virtual meetings, webinars, and professional development sessions. The program planning committee is moving forward with organizing an in person meeting in Cleveland, Ohio April 28-30, 2022. Please watch for more information to come.

## Welcome New Members!

### Adriana J. Basurto, MBA

A native of Los Angeles, California, Adriana Basurto has always been action-oriented, combining a deep respect for education with a life-long fascination with the ability of medical professionals to positively impact the lives of everyone in her community. With a bachelor's in Business Administration from California State University, Fullerton (2010), and an MBA from Southern New Hampshire University (2021), in her role as Manager, Business Affairs and Assistant to the Interim Vice President for Medical Affairs and Chief Business Officer at the Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin, she facilitates the processes and functions of a new, and growing, academic health system that serves one of the nation's most dynamic cities.

"Healthcare is a complex and demanding system," she says of her work. "We have a broad and talented mix of experts in multiple disciplines working together in a range of interrelated ways. Though I'm not a clinician, by orchestrating the skills of our senior leadership team in a way that maximizes their effectiveness and efficiency, I can make my own personal contribution to helping our team achieve its larger goal of transforming how healthcare services are delivered to our community."

And community is of particular importance to Adriana who, as President of the Eat Austin Youth Foundation, and a committee member of the Dell Med Creating Leaders in Medicine and Beyond program, spends a lot of her time promoting the importance of leadership and the value of self-worth through academics and athletics.

"Personal integrity, and a respect for hard work are fundamental to building a personal skill set that will serve a person throughout their life," she says. "I find working with younger people invigorating because I can help tomorrow's leaders discover and cultivate their own personal strengths today. Working well with others, the ability to set and reach your goals, and the emotional fortitude needed to overcome adversity, these are the life skills that

have worked for me; and I know they can make a real difference in the lives of my professional colleagues, and the people in my community.

## Colleen Case

Colleen Case is the Executive Assistant to the Senior Associate Dean of Medical Education at The Robert Larner, M.D. College of Medicine at the University of Vermont. She has over 20 years' experience in administration. She supports several committees of our Senior Associate Dean including the Medical Education Anti-Racism Task Force as well as committees for the governance of the college. She served as the administrative support for the Larner College of Medicine's recent successful accreditation with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. She is most proud of her mentorship to members of the Office of Medical Education and enjoys participating in professional opportunities to successfully support the delivery of our college's medical education programs which includes admissions, curriculum at both our Vermont and Connecticut campuses, medical student services, our Clinical Simulation Lab, Teaching Academy and Continuing Medical and Interprofessional Education. Colleen expressed excitement to collaboratively work with the professional members of the Dean's Assistant Group to further support each other in the important work of supporting the delivery of a great educational program to our future physicians.

## Michele Fitzgerald

Michele currently assists the Executive Vice Dean of Chicago Medical School (CMS) of Rosalind Franklin University of Health and Science as well as the Office of Medical Education. She started with CMS in November 2020 after five years with a NYSE-traded corporation where she supported the Chief Information Officer and a team of 200 IT professionals. Prior to that, she had a career in fundraising for arts and cultural organizations in Chicago, Baltimore and Waukesha, Wisconsin. She intentionally transitioned to executive support from fundraising, feeling so much of her work with nonprofits and boards could be valuable to a new role. She started her career in Chicago, spending six years as an art director for B2B multimedia communications. After an interlude as a stay-at-home mom, she re-entered the professional world as a fundraiser. She earned her BFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has three adult children; two daughters in Chicago and a son in Austin.

## Denisha Jenkins

Denisha has worked in the Higher Education Industry for going on 19 years. She is now the Executive Assistant to the Dean of the College of Medicine at Charles R. Drew University (CDU). Denisha began her journey working in higher education on a 2-week assignment in 2003. Over these 19 years, she served in key university positions, from assisting the Financial Aid Department to supporting 3rd and 4th-year medical students in her position as Sr. Rotations Coordinator. Denisha excelled in helping faculty with their teaching needs, but it was her dedication and hard work as the Sr. Administrative Associate to the Associate Dean of Clinical Programs at Western University of Health Sciences that prepared her for the role as an Executive Assistant.

Denisha is passionate about higher education and working with medical students, faculty, and university leadership. She genuinely believes that supporting medical education is a great way to contribute to the greater good of public health.

## Kimberly Schmuki

Kimberly has 21 years of administrative assistant experience and a proven ability to excel in customer service, organization, problem-solving and multi-tasking in fast-paced work environments. In her current role as the Executive Assistant to the Provost, Executive Vice President, and the Julia A. Uihlein, MA, Dean of the School of

Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), she manages to utilize her skills to keep the inner workings of this busy office on track. Kimberly's positive attitude, sense of humor, and "glass is half full" approach bring a respite of smiles and humor to everyone's day.

As a strong advocate for the benefits of mentoring, Kimberly's proudest professional accomplishment was her instrumental role in starting an Administrative Professional's Mentoring Program (AMP) at MCW. Together with four other dynamic and innovative administrative professionals from diverse backgrounds on campus, she formed the AMP Committee to strategize, plan, and implement the program in July 2019. The mission of the program is to share knowledge and skills and to foster personal and professional growth among AMP participants. The AMP program started out with 24 mentors and even with the start of the COVID pandemic in early 2020, we managed to increase our ranks to 57. Since July 2019, there have been 84 mentoring relationships established. Feedback from a few of the mentees in the AMP program included: "Kimberly's willingness to share knowledge and resources so others can excel is remarkable and very much appreciated... She recognized a disconnect and has been integral in creating a network that supports individuals in these roles..." "I never feel alone or unsupported and am proud to be a part of a group of professionals who support each other."

Kimberly is also a member of the MCW Council for Women's Advocacy (CWA), a part of the Center for Advancement of Women in Science in Medicine (AWSM). The joint mission of CWA and AWSM is "that MCW will be a destination for women leaders, cultivating an inclusive and vibrant culture that supports all genders to grow and thrive in the health sciences."

"Every day I get to come to MCW to a job I love surrounded by supportive colleagues that have helped me grow professionally," Kimberly notes. "I'm excited to be a part of the Dean's Assistant Group to exchange information and ideas with others at a national scale so we all can improve together."

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## Member News

Send any professional or personal pictures or updates that you would like to share with our group.



Watch for upcoming Coffee Break and Speaker Presentation schedule. Looking forward to seeing you soon.

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## Helpful Tips/Tricks

If you have any tips and tricks please share. Click on the button below for shared tips and tricks

[Find Tips and Tricks](#)

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