

FALL 2023

# NEWSLETTER

Healthcare Programs  
Concordia University Irvine

## Welcome Fall 2023!

Happy Fall to you all! The weather is starting to get cooler, leaves are changing colors, and a new semester is underway. We wanted to warmly welcome our new MHA and MPH students who began their graduate journey at CUI this semester and are honored to partner with you during the next two years.

Your faculty, staff, and administration are proud of your growth and enjoy getting to know you more both in and out of the classroom. We are all here for you and do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Have a blessed semester!

Sincerely,

Melissa Holmes

Assistant Director & Academic Advisor

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# Dr. Catherine Sinardi's Sabbatical

## Enhancing Healthcare Administration Education through Program Evaluation and Continuous Quality Improvement

During my sabbatical in the Spring 2023 semester, I embarked on a unique endeavor dedicated to program improvement, something I am deeply passionate about. My sabbatical project focused on the Master of Healthcare Administration (MHA) program evaluation and continuous quality improvement process in response to feedback from the Commission on Accreditation of Health Management Education (CAHME). During this time, a comprehensive assessment plan was developed, and a systematic course evaluation process was implemented that examined the alignment of the curriculum with the MHA competency model and the integration of effective teaching and learning methods. The outcome led to the re-evaluation of the current competency model, the development of an extensive mapping exercise, and a framework for restructuring the MHA curriculum.

I am immensely proud of the progress made during this sabbatical, and I am excited to continue my journey of program improvement, armed with the valuable lessons and experiences gained during this enriching time.

Dr. Catherine Sinardi, Ed.D. M.F.T.



# 2023 GRADUATES

Dion Chung, MPH  
Summer 2023

William Goh, MHA  
Summer 2023

Tamika Mocello, MPH  
Summer 2023

Benjamin Read, MHA  
Summer 2023

Paige Houldin, MPH  
Summer 2023

Jaqueline Banuelos, MHA  
Summer 2023

Andrew Harrison, MHA  
Summer 2023

December Shore, MHA  
Summer 2023

Corena Gregorio, MHA  
Summer 2023

Katherine Santiago, MHA  
Summer 2023

Chanelle Bowers, MHA  
Summer 2023

Kyley Demshki, MHA  
Summer 2023

Ani Azariannamagardy, MHA  
Summer 2023

Samantha Del Toro  
Healthcare Management  
Summer 2023

Samantha Cuesta, MHA  
Summer 2023

Ilnaz Ojagh  
Healthcare Management  
Summer 2023

## Congratulations to our Grads!



## Alumni News

LAUREN WILLIAMS, MHA '22

Lauren Williams graduated from Concordia University Irvine August 2022 with a Master in Healthcare Administration. After graduating with her degree, Lauren was chosen for a prestigious healthcare fellowship. Read her interview to learn more about her fellowship!

- **Tell us about your healthcare fellowship. What company is it with? How long is it for? What are some of your responsibilities? What do you like about it the most?**

- I am currently the Physician Network Administrative Fellow for Maimonides (Pronounced My-mon-i-dee-s) Health in Brooklyn, New York. This fellowship is a yearlong rotational, project based fellowship specializing in the Medical Affairs department. I mainly work with the outpatient departments in various projects and roles determined by their senior leadership. Some of my projects so far have included opening a new clinic, creating a data dashboard to track metrics, hosting an event to showcase our new surgical robots, and clinic workflow analysis. I am enjoying that I am making a difference in the healthcare system and creating information that can be used for years to come. It has been amazing to get into large leadership meetings to understand how a healthcare system runs.

- **Do you have any tips for finding a healthcare fellowship? (continue page 3)**

**“CONCORDIA  
SUPPORTED  
MY  
AMBITIONS  
AND GAVE ME  
THE TOOLS  
TO BE  
SUCCESSFUL”**

LAUREN WILLIAMS,  
MHA '22



- Many fellowships use the NAFCAS portal to submit materials but there are others that post their fellowships online to apply. For me, location was a big thing. So, finding a fellowship near a coast as well as in a larger city was important to me. I researched different hospital systems in major cities and looked if they offered Administrative Fellowships. Look for places you see yourself ending up living for a couple of years and the experiences that the fellowship can provide.
- **Do you have any advice for applying for a healthcare fellowship?**
  - Start early! Most fellowship applications require letters of recommendations and essays on certain topics. The more time you give yourself before applications are due, makes it less stressful. Connecting with the current fellows is also helpful. Find the current fellows on LinkedIn or the company's website. If the fellowship offers an informational discussion, attend those as well. The more you talk to the current fellows or the hiring team, the higher chance you have making it through the first round interviews. Another piece of advice is be prepared to travel for interviews. Many fellowships are now doing in person interviews which can have you traveling back and forth to different areas across the country.
- **What set you apart from other applicants?**
  - I think being my authentic self had set me apart. I showed my creativity and knowledge in my interview which attracted the hiring team. I think also connecting with the current fellows after my interview and keeping up my contact with them showed my interest. The more the team gets to know you personally, the higher chances of standing out.
- **How did an MHA at Concordia prepare you for your fellowship?**
  - Concordia gave me the tools to be successful in my interviews. I reached out to Dr. Sinardi and asked lots of questions about these types of opportunities. I also got involved with Concordia during my schooling which gave me good resume builder material. I highly recommend participating in the ACHE SoCal Case Competition. I got to use this type of process mapping in my interviews. Concordia supported my ambitions and gave me the tools to be successful. My classmates and Concordia also gave me the encouragement to go after this opportunity. I could not have made it this far without the support from Concordia and the leaders at the university.

**For any of those interested in a fellowship or would like to connect, feel free to add me in LinkedIn  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/laurenzwilliams09/>**



## Alumni News

KEYA GUPTA, MHA '22

Keya Gupta graduated from Concordia University Irvine May 2022 with a Master in Healthcare Administration. Here is her interview about her experience with a healthcare fellowship!

- **Tell us about your healthcare fellowship! What company is it with? How long is it for? What are some of your responsibilities? What do you like about it the most?**

- Absolutely! I am completing an administrative fellowship at CalOptima Health. CalOptima Health is Orange County's health plan, or otherwise known as a County Organized Health System. The plan offers government health insurance programs for children, adults, seniors, and individuals with disabilities that qualify as low-income (Medi-Cal, Medicare Advantage Special Needs Plan, and PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly)). We are the county's largest insurer, serving 1 in 3 in Orange County. NCQA recently rated CalOptima Health a 4 out of 5 stars, as one of the top health plans in the state. I am honored and proud to be one of three fellows in the inaugural fellowship class at CalOptima Health. It is a 12-month limited term position like most fellowships, with the potential of an opportunity to continue with the organization in another role afterwards. The first 6 months rotates through various departments under Medical Management (e.g. Population Health, Behavioral Health, Case Management, Utilization Management), with the second half rotating through Finance, Medi-Cal/CalAIM, HR, and other departments. (Continue page 7)

**“Not only is the program robust, but the real-life application is what helped me to succeed when being interviewed for the fellowship program.”**

KEYA GUPTA,  
MHA '22



- All in all, the program is set up to rotate through every major department and is project-based. Currently, I am supporting the roll out of a new, organization wide, care management system, am supporting the development of strategy around Star-rating improvements, and am getting more involved in work in collaboration with OC Healthcare Agency's (OCHCA) initiative to address needs from the most recent Community Health Needs Assessment. I have learned so much in such a short time, and coming into the office every day is thrilling because I can feel the tangible impact from the work that we are doing to improve the health of our community.

- **Do you have any tips for finding a healthcare fellowship?**

- Three things: Infuse your 'why' into your application. When hiring committees read your application, your story will speak for itself in showing your passion for wanting to become a healthcare leader, and should align across all the different elements that make up your submission (personal statement, application). Make sure your references know you well, and have worked with you in a professional, and/or academic capacity. Most fellowships ask for a professional reference, as well as one from your program director. My advice is to continue cultivating connections and relationships with your program director and those who you want to potentially identify as a reference. Do not wait until the last minute to ask for a reference, as you want to give your referees enough time to cultivate something that really speaks to the work that you have done and who you are as a person. In addition to relaying your story, it is important to convey a want for growth and further learning.

- **Do you have any advice for applying for a healthcare fellowship?**

- Think about what you want from a fellowship. If you don't have any specifications, and don't mind moving, apply to as many as you can. If you care about location and type of organization, do your research. The ACHE website has a comprehensive directory of postgraduate fellowships and is a great tool for filtering for location of program as well as application requirements and deadlines.

- **What set you apart from other applicants?**

- If I had to guess, part of it was my personal journey and how that aligned with the organization's mission, vision, and values.

- **How did MHA at Concordia prepare you for your fellowship?**

- I am so grateful for the CUI MHA program for taking a chance on me two years ago. Prior to starting the program, I was not sure if healthcare management was for me, but taking the classes, interacting with passionate professors, and motivational cohort culture solidified that I was in the right place. Not only is the program robust, but the real-life application is what helped me to succeed when being interviewed for the fellowship program. Moreover, I had the support of our beloved program director, Dr. Cathi Sinardi, who takes a vested interest in every student's journey – which is rare in an academic program. Last but not least, the coveted CAHME accreditation is a requirement for many administrative fellowships which will boost and bolster your application.

# Student Events & Student Council

The Student Council put together a bowling night for local students this past summer! Look out for future events and opportunities to join Student Council. They will be speaking at the upcoming Professional Development day and will be at the fall graduation party.



## Congratulations, Dr. Tayah Wozniak!

Good News from the Healthcare Programs!  
We are very happy to announce that Dr. Tayah Wozniak and her husband, Jordan, welcomed their first baby boy, Lev, this August! Congratulations on your beautiful blessing, Dr. Wozniak. We could not be more happy for you!







# Events & Connect

## **MHA Professional Development Day**

November 4, 2023

9am-12pm PST

Zoom

## **Graduation Party and Networking Event**

December 15, 2023

5pm-8pm PST

Concordia University Irvine

## **Graduation**

December 16, 2023

Concordia University Irvine

## **CUI Connect**

[Cuiconnect.com](http://Cuiconnect.com)

Healthcare Connect

## **Facebook**

[facebook.com/cuihealthcare  
programs](https://facebook.com/cuihealthcareprograms)

[facebook.com/concordiairvine](https://facebook.com/concordiairvine)

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