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Buzzard Business

Happy Holidays 2025
From: Missouri State School of Anesthesia







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Greetings!



Happy Holidays!

We have had another busy semester! I keep thinking things will slow down, especially since we hired another faculty member, (Welcome to Savannah Clark!). However – that has not yet happened. (maybe next semester :-)
SOA Cliff notes: - Our newest and largest cohort began this summer – and they are amazing! Two semesters down and ready for the Holidays!
-Our Juniors are rocking in clinical; they all completed the Regional and Point of Care Ultrasound course with Maverick Medical Education last August and started their Scholarly Work. They are very ready for a Holiday Break!
-Our Seniors are taking the SEE this month – and then graduation countdown begins! I am sure they are all looking forward to May 8th! (Commencement). They are shaping into incredible CRNAs. I get all verklempt remembering their early days, and how much they have grown in a short amount of time!
-Our May 2025 graduates passed boards in record time! One student passed the Saturday after Friday graduation, and every-one had tested and passed by May 28th!! (Graduation was May 9th)
-Our Completion program continues to thrive, 12 new students started in June, and 8 in August. The program is very flexible – it is 9 distance courses that can be taken in one to three years; whatever works for the working CRNA. https://www.missouristate.edu/Anesthesia/DNAP/crna-to-dnap-completion-program-degree-plans.htm

We welcome our newest faculty member Savannah Clark. She will be helping Dr. Kati Morgan with clinical assignments and evaluations since we will have 60 students in clinical at any one time (juniors and seniors) along with multiple clinical sites visits, etc. She will also be helping in the SIM and Skills lab for multiple classes. We are so honored and excited to have her!

On another note, we are preparing for our Spring accreditation visit. A self-study is in process for re-accreditation. Our last visit we received the maximum of 10 years. It is a huge process, with piles of documents showing what we are doing and how we are doing it. It includes evaluations of all sorts (please fill them out if you receive one :-). Course syllabi, etc. It is like cleaning out your house; feels so good to look through everything and make sure all is in order and up to date. Looking forward to their visit and evaluation.

2027 will mark the 75th anniversary of our program! We are in the beginning planning phase of a 75-year Reunion Celebration. We have University approval and are looking at Fall 2027 semester – stay tuned for email and Newsletter updates. If you are interested in helping to plan the Reunion, please let Mary Kate or myself know! (MaryKateCherry@Missouristate.edu) – We would like a committee for ideas! It will be a fun time to re-connect with classmates and our School.

I am so humbled and honored to lead such an amazing faculty and staff team and Anesthesia Program. To remember having class in the St. Johns Cafeteria at 6 am every day before clinical. Going to clinical for a month after graduation. No Holidays off – the schedule just marched on …. There was no SIM or Skills lab and we only did clinical at St. Johns. Then, attempts to close our program. I am forever grateful to the alumni that stepped up to become clinical sites – and to MSU for being willing to become sole owners! We are truly blessed for how we have grown. Our goal is to produce the most amazing CRNAs that can hit the ground running with exceptional, safe patient care. I think our students are the absolute best!

I encourage you to take a moment to be thankful this Holiday season. We have an incredible profession, we are needed, we make a difference.
Thank you to all of our clinical sites and clinical preceptors! We can't make it without all you do!

Happy Holidays to you and your family!
Celebrate your art!
Monika



Student Spot

Welcome New Freshmen!

Our First Cohort of 30 Students-Class of 2028!



Senior Students Attended Advocacy Day

Senior students and School of Anesthesia faculty, Shawnee Glenn, attended a fundraiser for Alex Riley, one of Springfield's representatives and the majority house leader. He will be speaker of the house in 2027. He also supports CRNAs in Missouri.



Student Spot

Senior Students win Second Place in the University 3 Minute Thesis Competition







School of Anesthesia Students Hosted Tailgate at MSU Homecoming 2025





Student Spot

Fall Semester Freshmen Activities

Mu Kappa Delta Sponsored Fall Family Night at Rutledge Wilson Farm



Freshmen named team the “Mac Daddies” participated in Sand Volleyball and Basketball intramurals





Completion Student Spotlight

Eric Roberts will receive his DNAP degree from MSU School of Anesthesia this month. Here is a small glimpse of his CRNA story.



Where has the CRNA road led you?

- The CRNA road has led me all over the world! I joined the Army Reserve as a RRNA in Florida. My wife and I moved back home to Texas when I graduated, and the Army was kind enough to send me straight to Iraq. I would later have the opportunity to go to Afghanistan in 2013, back to Iraq in 2019 at the US Embassy in Baghdad, and most recently, Northern Syria. It also allows my wife the ability to pursue some of our favorite passions, adopting senior and hospice dogs from local shelters, and travel!

Do you work currently and how long have you been there?

- I currently work at the University of Texas Hospital in Tyler, Texas. We are a Level 1 Trauma Center serving the residents of East Texas. I took this job straight out of school and have remained in it ever since! I do mostly trauma and OB, and have the privilege of practicing to our full scope of practice. I also teach with the UT School of Medicine and the School of Nursing with the nursing program, our newly opened nurse anesthesia program, and our critical care transport program. On the Army side, I am with a Forward Resuscitative Surgical Detachment, which primarily deploys to austere locations to support the special forces community in a surgical capacity.





Completion Student Spotlight

Do you have any memorable events/cases associated with anesthesia from school or during your career?

- I have been fortunate to practice in nearly all aspects of anesthesia, performing pretty much everything that falls under the anesthesia umbrella, all over the world! I remember every one of the soldiers I've had



the privilege of providing anesthesia for. I was in Syria during the 12-day war, which was interesting and exciting. Serving at the Embassy in Baghdad was incredible, as it allowed me to see our government function behind the scenes and gave me the privilege of meeting several of our nation's and coalition partner nations' leaders. The most memorable unique cases have been providing anesthesia for our military working dogs while serving in combat zones!



Anything else you would like to add about your anesthesia journey?

- I started as a paramedic in the 90s, working 911 ground transport in Waco and Tyler for a few years while I attended Baylor University and UT Tyler as an undergrad. I had the privilege of working as a flight paramedic in Houston and Dallas for several years, and that is where I went to nursing school. I continued working as a flight nurse/medic while also working in the ICU to complete my ICU time requirement for application to CRNA school. I took the long road to get to anesthesia and where I am today, and I wouldn't change any of it. It has made me a better, more well-rounded practitioner and has served me well, particularly in the military, where much of my time is spent in austere conditions that require thinking outside the box. Anesthesia has opened up a world of opportunity and life experiences that I would never have had otherwise.



Department Updates

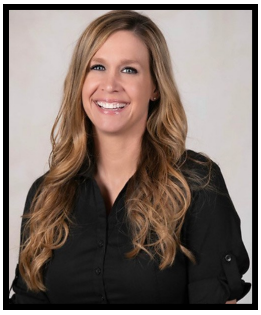


Expanding Simulation & Skills

Dr. James Keaton

The addition of a second lab space, 4 more anesthesia machines, and additional airway equipment, plus 25 eager students all contributed to a successful Simulation for Clinical Anesthesia course in Spring 2025. All students were able to pass/perform the "Basic Anesthetic" simulation that is required before starting clinicals in the summer. They did this in record time, with everyone passing by mid semester, rather than finals week.

After doing the trial course in Spring 2025 , we are now able to make it a permanent part of the curriculum starting in Spring 2026. With the addition of new faculty (Savannah Clark, CRNA) to the course, we are confident we can have the freshman cohort even better prepared to start clinical practice in their second year.



New IV Rotation Introduced in First Year

Dr. Kati Morgan, Clinical Site Coordinator

We are proud to report that MSU SRNAs continue to excel and grow across all clinical experiences. Their professionalism, skill development, and unwavering commitment to high-quality patient care are consistently recognized. We are deeply grateful to our clinical sites and preceptors, whose expert mentorship and guidance are integral to their success.

A key priority for our program is the continued enhancement of our assessment processes through both formative and summative evaluations. Thoughtful and consistent evaluation is essential to support student development and ensuring clinical competency. To this end, we are continuing our collaboration with CarePath, our evaluation platform. CarePath Version 2, expected to launch soon, will provide expanded capabilities to streamline and improve our evaluation system, further supporting both students and preceptors in the clinical learning environment.

Intravenous (IV) access is a critical skill for anesthesia providers, supporting fluid management, medication administration, and rapid intervention during critical events. CRNAs are expected to demonstrate expert-level IV skills due to prior ICU experience; however, feedback from our clinical sites and SRNAs indicates that this expectation is not always being met. Contributing factors include the increasingly high acuity of ICU patients, which often necessitates the use of central lines or PICCs rather than peripheral IVs, as well as the growing reliance on dedicated IV or PICC teams for vascular access—both of which reduce bedside ICU nurses' opportunities to place peripheral IVs.

To address this gap, we are excited to introduce a new IV rotation for our freshman class. This early, hands-on experience provides students with increased exposure to peripheral techniques in a controlled setting, helping them build and advance their competency. The rotation also incorporates ultrasound guided IV insertion, ensuring that students develop both traditional and advanced vascular access skills early in their training.

Once again, we sincerely thank our clinical sites and preceptors for their ongoing support and dedication. Your mentorship is invaluable in shaping the next generation of anesthesia providers, and we deeply appreciate the essential role you play in our students' clinical education and success.

Department Updates

Welcome New Faculty Member, Savannah Clark



Savannah Clark graduated in 2013 from Missouri State University's School of Anesthesia as part of the first cohort to rotate outside of Mercy Springfield for clinical training. She earned her BSN from Missouri State University in 2009. Throughout her career, Savannah has practiced in a variety of rural settings and currently serves as a CRNA at Citizens Memorial Hospital (CMH) in Bolivar, Missouri, as well as Ellett Memorial Hospital in Appleton City, Missouri. Her husband, Ryan, is the chief CRNA at CMH. Together they have four daughters—Ella (11), Landry (10), Addy (7), and Gracie (7)—and a variety of pets including two dogs, three cats, and sixteen chickens. The Clarks love the small-town charm of Bolivar and its close proximity to several lakes, where they spend their free time boating and fishing. They also enjoy weekends at their family lake house in Arkansas, hosting small-group gatherings for their church, and cozy Friday nights at home with pizza and movies. Savannah is honored to be a part of the SOA and hopes to be a light to students as they progress through the program!

Special Thanks to Anesthesia GAs



Mitch Larsen **(left) and** ***Krysnel Beharrie*** **(right) for helping in the McQuery College of Health and Human Services Simulation Lab.**

Clinical Highlights

Clinical Site Coordinator Spotlight

Drew Gooden

Mercy Joplin



Where and when did you graduate CRNA school?

I graduated from Truman Medical Center School of Nurse Anesthesia in 2013.

How long have you been a site coordinator?

I have been a site coordinator since joining Mercy Joplin in 2019. Previously, I was the site coordinator for programs rotating through Dayton Children's Hospital from 2015-2019.

What do you like best about having students?

The thing I like best about having students, is seeing either the "ah ha" moments when the pieces come together or seeing their confidence grow when performing procedures.

What is a strong attribute you bring to the table in teaching students?

I think a strong attribute I can offer is calm under pressure. I've been blessed to practice across a lot of different specialties, on patients, from neonates to the elderly, and have always tried to challenge myself in whatever way I can. This has enabled me to experience a lot of different scenarios, and afforded me the opportunity to learn to just take a breath.

What are some of your favorite things to teach students?

One of my favorite things to teach students is TEE. The chances for them to be hands on with this seems rare, so its's fun to show them the clinical information that will be gained when performing that exam. I enjoy teaching regional as well, and helping the students see how patients can benefit from a multi-modal pain approach and narcotic sparing effects of a well placed block.

What do you enjoy in your spare time?

In my spare time, I enjoy being outdoors or spending time with my family. Whether it's hiking or mountain biking, swimming or being at the lake, I've always enjoyed the peace that can be found in nature and thus sharing that with my kids. Colorado is our home away from home and we try to spend as much time there as possible!



Student Spotlight

Brandon Mills, Class of May 2027



Where did you graduate from nursing school, and in what areas have you worked since?
I graduated from Seminole State College in Seminole, Oklahoma, in 2018. After completing my degree, I returned home to Ada, where I worked at Mercy Hospital and the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center. These experiences provided a strong clinical foundation and exposed me to a wide variety of patient populations and cultural backgrounds.

Why did you decide to become a CRNA?
I chose to pursue the CRNA profession out of a desire to advance my education and broaden my clinical capabilities. I have always gravitated toward caring for critically ill, intensive, and emergent patients. I genuinely enjoy exploring pathophysiology and managing high-acuity situations, and I felt that anesthesia was the specialty that most aligned with my interests, values, and long term goals. Becoming a CRNA allows me to be a more comprehensive provider while advocating for patients at some of their most vulnerable moments.

Was anyone instrumental in your decision to become a CRNA?
My decision was shaped through many conversations with my wife, my family, and several supportive colleagues back home. I am especially grateful to Dr. Philipson, Dr. Lynch, Dr. Yates, and Dr. Ahrend, among others, for their mentorship and encouragement. Each played a meaningful role in guiding me toward advancing my education and pursuing a career in anesthesia.

What do you like to do in your spare time?
I enjoy spending time with my wife and our children, Jett (6), Jase (4), and our soon to arrive daughter, Jadyn. Growing up in southern Oklahoma, I love all things country and outdoors, family time, and watching Oklahoma football.

What would you tell future students entering your program?
Deciding to pursue graduate school is easy; the j journey through, demanding. However, the rewards are immeasurable. With discipline, hard work, and a positive attitude, you can achieve far more than you imagine. Embrace the experience, stay committed, and above all, study!

Anything else you'd like to share about your story?
My journey to and through CRNA school has been anything but simple. I experienced the loss of family members, numerous relocations, and moments of self-doubt about whether I was truly capable of pursuing this path. Throughout it all, my faith, my family, and the unwavering support of the faculty and staff in this program have been instrumental to my success. I am grateful for the lifelong friends I have made and for those who believed in me along the way.



We are looking for these alumni. Do you know where they are?

Donald Anderson
Phyllis Ballard
Lowell Barker
Alice Blanner
Lisa Blevins
R. Michael Boedeker
Deborah Boehne
David Boehne
Dennis Boulware
Betty Braden
Michael Brown, III
Cheri Buchanan
Dawn Campbell
Carl Caple
James Claridge
Willliam Cox
Elaine Cramer (Sims)
Scott Doyle
Ida Edgmon (Wine)
Glenda Falls
Connie Freeman
Jill Fullp (Barker)
Patricia Gallagher
Gregory Golter
Leslie Goolsby
Carol Graves
Judith Gullett
Robert Haasl
Carla Hache-Kluender (Ford)
Janice Heller
Jean Hood (Larson)
Joanna Inglove
Louvema Jackson
Dave Jones
Rita Keating
Richard Keppler
William Kiek
Michelle Kinsella
John Kirk
Kathem Knapp
Donald Leak
Kenneth Leimkuehler
Randell Luttrell
Joseph Martin
Luana Mathis
Gary Mattingly
Jack McCroskey
Robert Miller
Elmer Monson Jr.
Nancy Moye
Kelley Munroe
Nancy Murdock
Dave Nelson
Virginia Nicholson
K. Maureen O'Reilly
Lisa Osborn
Merrill Parks
Mary Patterson (Hein)
John Paulsen
Kimberly Peacock Green
James Pettyjohn
Darla Pobst
Lenace Prudhomme
James Randell
Russell Rayburn
West Reaves
Chris Regier
Diane Rehagen
Elizabeth Rich
Carol Robb
Evelyn Roberson
James Roller Jr.
Carrolyn Rouse
Carole Sartain
Judith Sayer (Hanna)
Robert Schedel
Beatrice Schneider
Carl Scott
Matt Sharpe
Mary Smith
Doris Smith
Alan Stephens
Wanda Street
Steve Street
Joyce Swinney
Thomas Tavenner
John Thompson
Michael Thompson
Patricia Utlaut

Please email:
marykatechery@missouristate.edu
with any info.

Important Dates

December 5th –Last Day of Class & Clinical Rotations
December 7th-Jan 4th- Clinical Rotation Break
December 6th-11th -Finals week
December 12th –Graduation
December 22nd-Jan 2nd–Winter Break (No Classes/Offices Closed)
January 5th - New Clinical Site Rotations begin
January 20th - CRNA Advocacy Day Jefferson City
March 14th-22nd- Spring Break
April 30th– Awards Banquet
May 8th – Spring Commencement

In Loving Memory



Henry Lang, DNAP, MSN, CRNA
October 15, 1969– November 21, 2025
Henry Lang received his DNAP degree from MSU School of Anesthesia in December 2023.

Stay Social

Please send any stories, pictures, alumni updates, and special event information to Mary Kate Cherry, Assistant to the Director