Volume 15, Issue 1
Spring 2026

Buzzard Business



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Greetings!

Welcome Spring!

I must say we had a lovely Spring Break – Snow the first few days, then 80 degrees – you get winter and summer all in one week! 😊

A lot is happening in our program. We implemented a new simulation class after multiple student evaluations and requests. We now have time for more ultrasound practice, machine practice in our 2nd floor graduate lab, and hands on time in the Simulation lab.

Our freshman are plowing through their third semester with strong effort and success. They all survived our very first "Draft Day" where they were awarded their clinical sites for their first year in clinical. The juniors are finishing up their final seated course and gleaning much anesthesia art from our amazing clinical preceptors. They are preparing to take their first SEE (Self Examination Exam) on Thursday May 7th. Our seniors can see the light at the end of the tunnel – and are doing weekly exams preparing for the NCE. We have six new completion students that began in January, and 10 graduating in May.

Joey Fisher did a great job in Kansas City at the 2026 MAGS 3MT Three Minute Thesis Regional competition, he presented for his group Ben Allemang, and Landon Kozlowski on Multimodal Anesthesia for patients with Opioid Use Disorder under the guidance of Dr. Jill Layman. We are very proud to again win the University competition and move on to Regionals!

Our Awards banquet is right around the corner – and this year for the first time we will hood the Seniors, along with our traditional White Coat Ceremony, and Junior Clinical Scholarships.

Next week we will have a re-accreditation visit from the COA, we will share the results in our Fall Buzzard Business. A self-study is a monumental amount of work, and I must say thanks to all of our faculty for their help and support over the last year preparing hundreds of documents about our program.

A huge thanks to all of our clinical sites – without you we wouldn't be! We cannot say thank you enough, and we are so glad that you are part of us! Dr. Morgan and Professor Clark are now able to spend more time at each site – observing the students and sharing with our preceptors.

As we move towards graduation and summer break please take a moment to pause and be thankful for all that we are blessed with. Our new cohort will begin the end of May, we welcome them as we are somewhat teary to see our Seniors fly away – but we wish them the best and we are so happy and proud of their growth over the past 3 years.

Celebrate your Art!,
Respectfully,

Monika

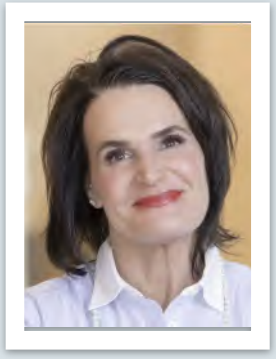


Program Director, Dr. Monika Feeney

Introducing our 2026-27 Advisory Board

Purpose of the Board:

The Advisory Board provides guidance to the administrative committee in developing and maintaining the highest standards for the School of Anesthesia. The goal of the Advisory Board is to improve program outcomes and address any areas of decline or weakness from the previous academic year. We welcome comprehensive ideas that promote educational excellence, leadership development, fundraising initiatives, and the advancement of safe and effective anesthesia care for the future. The Board is composed of multi-disciplinary members including our administrative committee, clinical CRNA's, Surgeons, Administrators, current students, and a public representative. The term of service is a two or four year commitment. The participation of the Board plays an important part in shaping the future of anesthesia education as we advance our clinical doctorate degree on the MSU campus.

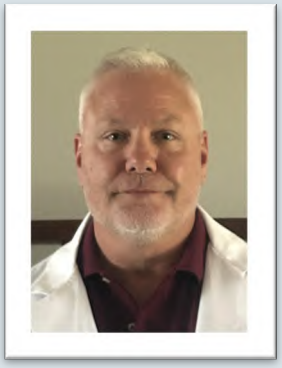


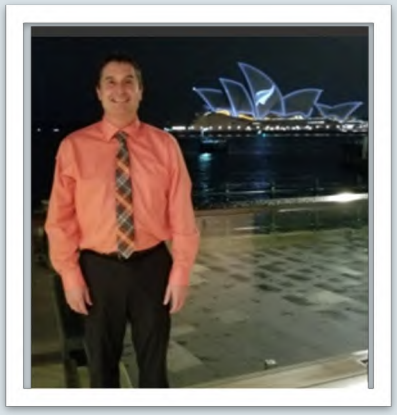
Tina Lehr

Tina Lehr, MHA, BSN, RN, serves as Vice President of Procedural Operations at CoxHealth Springfield. She leads strategic oversight of procedural services to support operational excellence, patient safety, and high-quality clinical outcomes. In this role, Tina partners with interdisciplinary leaders to optimize performance, strengthen care delivery systems, and support teams across procedural service lines. With a strong background in nursing leadership and healthcare administration, Tina is dedicated to advancing patient-centered care while fostering collaborative, high-performing clinical teams. Tina earned a Master of Health Administration (MHA) from Missouri State University (2020) and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from Southwest Missouri State University (1998). She began her nursing career after completing a Diploma in Nursing, building a strong clinical foundation that continues to shape her leadership philosophy.

Chris Green

Chris Green has over 35 years in the healthcare industry with 29 of those years practicing Anesthesia care. He earned a Master of Science of Nurse Anesthesia from Southwest Missouri State University. Before joining Cox Health Systems critical access hospital in Monett, Missouri, he worked at a Level 1 Trauma Center. There, he provided high-quality anesthesia care to critically ill adults and children. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his wife and daughter, enjoying the outdoors, hunting, and fishing.





Paul Durham

Paul L. Durham, PhD, is a distinguished Professor in the Biology Department at Missouri State University and is serving as Provost Fellow for Research. He manages a multidisciplinary laboratory utilizing cellular/molecular, microbiological, biochemical, and chemical techniques. Dr. Durham is a frequently invited guest lecturer and the author of >100 peer-reviewed research articles and > 200 published abstracts. He has served on numerous National Institute of Health study sections and pharmaceutical company advisory boards and is currently a reviewer > 10 scientific journals. Dr. Durham is a member of the AHS, IASP, AAOP, and AAAS.



Charlie Wilson

Charlie Wilson is a CRNA who currently practices at Citizens Memorial Hospital in Bolivar MO. He also resides there with his wife Sarah and their four children Vivian, Hattie, Tripp and Theo. He enjoys providing clinical education to current MSU CRNA students, especially teaching regional anesthesia. Outside of work he enjoys playing golf with his family and helping coach his children's multiple sports teams.

Introducing our 2026-27 Advisory Board



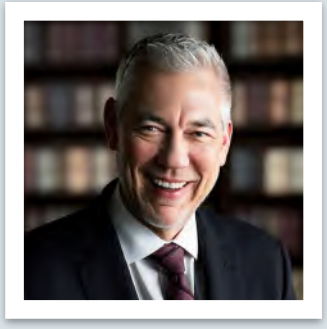
Kevin Rash

Kevin Rash is a Managing Director at Forvis Mazars, a Healthcare Performance Improvement practice, leading the Operational, Labor, Staffing, and Margin Transformation initiatives. He applies extensive clinical and executive experience to help healthcare organizations enhance performance, improve operational efficiency, and manage major initiatives without disruption. Before joining Forvis Mazars, Kevin served in hospitals, trauma centers, integrated health systems, and physician clinics. His 30+ years in healthcare include roles as a physical therapist, service line program leader, and vice president of operations for a large integrated system, where he oversaw surgical services, supply chain, rehabilitation operations, surgical clinics, and anesthesia, in addition to leading systemwide improvement initiatives. He is an active member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and is board-certified in healthcare management as a Fellow (FACHE).

Kathryn Patterson



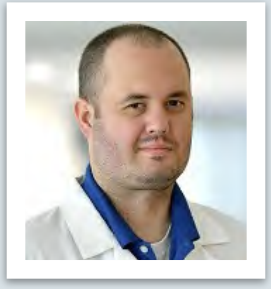
Kathryn Patterson is a Doctor of Nursing Practice–prepared nurse with extensive experience in nursing education and advanced practice. She earned her DNP from Missouri State University in 2017, along with recognition for Nursing Academic Honors and the Outstanding DNP Project Award. Dr. Patterson also holds a Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Missouri–Kansas City, with specialized board certification as a Family nurse Practitioner, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Drury University, and a nursing diploma from Jewish Hospital School of Nursing. Dr. Patterson teaches mainly in graduate curricula. She currently serves as the Director for the School of Nursing at Missouri State University and maintains her clinical practice as a family nurse practitioner at the MSU Care clinic which serves the uninsured and underserved population.



David Geisler, II

David Geisler has been a real estate attorney since the beginning of his career. He joined Husch Blackwell's real estate team as a new law school grad in 2002. He then went on to accept an in-house role with a restaurant franchisee, working with hospitality properties nationwide. He became general counsel for one of southwest Missouri's largest residential and commercial contractors before moving into the vertical farming and controlled environmental agricultural space. David rejoined Husch Blackwell in 2024 and currently focuses his practice on commercial real estate sales, acquisitions, leases, and other transactions.

Dr. Zachary Beam



Dr. Zachary Beam, DO, MBA, FACOS, FACS is a general, trauma, and burn surgeon at Mercy Hospital in Springfield, Missouri. He is an Army National Guard medical officer, humanitarian surgical volunteer, and currently serves as a Vice Chair within the Missouri Chapter of the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma. He is an Oklahoma native along with his wife Andrlynn and four children. He enjoys spending his free time shooting sporting clays, being outdoors with his family, and playing the drums.

Not Pictured:

Justin Reading, CRNA, Pittsburg, KS
Makaya Baker, MSU School of Anesthesia Senior Student
Liz Massey, MSU School of Anesthesia Junior Student
Tanner Haugen, MSU School of Anesthesia Freshman Student

Congratulations to our December 2025 Completion Student Graduates!

December 2025 Graduates:
Nadia Alanis, Patrick Greene, Casey Martin, Lane Morris, Eric Roberts and Kimberli Sandberg
Nadia Alanis and Lane Morris (pictured below) walked in the December 2025 Commencement.





Senior Students Share about the DNAP Program During CRNA Week 2026



Student Spot

MOANA Advocacy Day 2026
Students and Faculty Met with Missouri Legislators in Jefferson City











Student Spot



Our First Clinical Site Draft Day was a success! First clinical assignments for the 30 Freshmen-soon to be Juniors– were given according to North, South, East, West regions. These clinical assignments will begin in June.



3 Minute Thesis Competition

Senior student, Joey Fisher, represented his group at the Midwest Regional 3 Minute Thesis Competition in Kansas City.



Life EVENTs

New Babies

Welcome to a new Column in our Newsletter! Our anesthesia family grows and changes with each issue! For this Spring here are the sweet babies born since our Senior Class began in May 2023.

Congratulations to each family and welcome babies!



Joey Fisher (pictured left) with daughter Evangeline born June 2023 and Ben Allemang (pictured right) with daughter, Maggie,born November 2023.



Everleigh Ann Koch, daughter of Brooke Koch, born December 8, 2025.



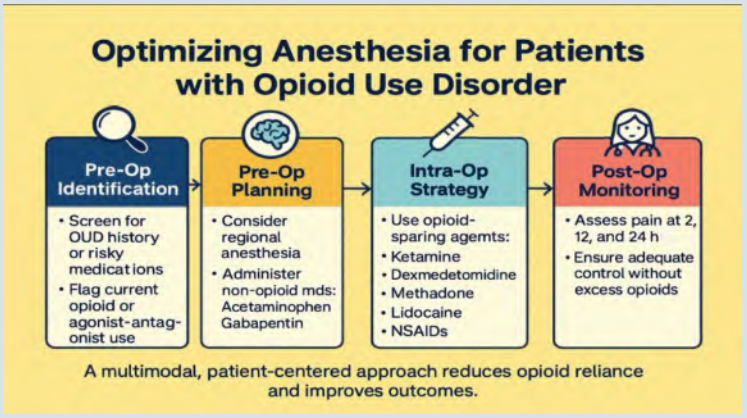
Charlotte Ann Seedall, daughter of Nicholas Seedall, born November 11, 2025.

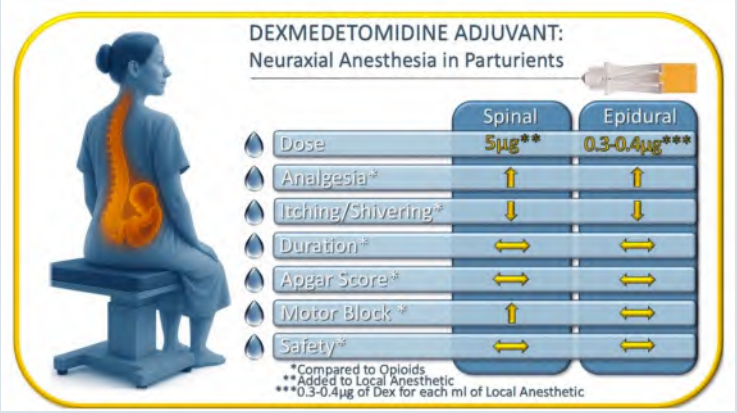


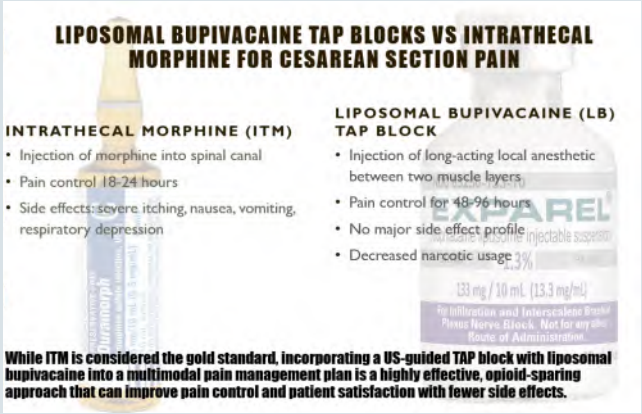
Jadyn Mattie Mills, daughter of Brandon Mills, born December 31, 2025.

Senior Class Scholarly work



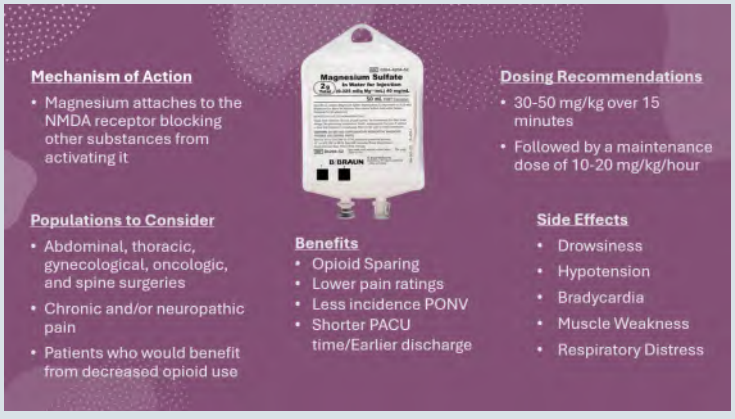












In Loving Memory



LaDonna O'Brien

LaDonna Lynn O'Brien, a Springfield medical practice executive for 40 years, passed away March 21, 2026, after a courageous battle with cancer. She was 71.

LaDonna was a founder of Ozark Anesthesia Associates, which has served the CoxHealth system since 1986. She was OAA's administrator and vice president.

Born on January 7, 1955 in Springfield to Jesse David Mitchell and Alice Lucile (Malady) Mitchell, LaDonna was the eldest of five siblings. She shouldered family responsibilities from an early age after the death of her father and due to hospitalization of her mother.

Following graduation from Springfield Central High School in 1973, LaDonna began a series of office jobs at local businesses, and by the early 1980s was executive secretary to Neil Wortley, chief administrator for Lester E. Cox Medical Centers (today's CoxHealth). When St. John's Health Center (now Mercy) terminated a longstanding arrangement to share anesthesia services between the two hospitals, Cox was forced to contract with a Kansas City anesthesia group and LaDonna was assigned to oversee its business office here.

After about two years, the physicians and CRNAs installed by the Kansas City group sought LaDonna's help to organize as an independent practice. Ozark Anesthesia Associates was incorporated in August of 1986, and LaDonna led OAA's business and other administrative operations here ever since.



Walter Alan Johnson

Walter Johnson, 79, passed away peacefully on March 10, 2026, in Springfield, Missouri.

Walter was born on November 7, 1946, in Patterson, New Jersey, to John and Mary Johnson. He proudly served his country in the United States Air Force before pursuing his education. Walter graduated from Southern Illinois University with a degree in Nursing and later continued his studies at the **Southwest Missouri School of Anesthesia, where he became a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA).**

Walter dedicated nearly 40 years of his life to caring for others, working at St. John's Hospital and later Mercy Hospital in Springfield before retiring. His work in healthcare touched the lives of countless patients and colleagues.

On September 19, 1987, Walter married Joyce Renshaw. Together they shared many happy years filled with love and companionship.

Walter enjoyed the outdoors, especially hunting and fishing. Those who knew him will remember his gentle nature, kind heart, and quiet strength.

Walter is survived by his loving wife Joyce, son David (Karen) Johnson, and step son Charles Swinney.

Important Dates

May 8– Commencement 1:00 p.m.
June 1- Welcome new students Orientation and Lunch
July 16-17– Interviews for New Cohort to begin Summer 2027
Aug. 15-16 - Maverick Anesthesia
Aug. 21-25 - AANA Annual Congress, Boston
Aug. 18 - Fall Semester begins
Sept. 12 - ACLS/BLS/PALS offered at the School of Anesthesia

Dates to Remember

Missouri State

SCHOOL of ANESTHESIA

www.missouristate.edu/anesthesia

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