



WELCOME TO THE DIVISION OF CLINICAL ASSOCIATES

Quarterly Newsletter

Message from the Head of Division of Clinical Associates

The first semester of the year has been full of activity for both staff and students. The staff in the Division of Clinical Associates continue to produce commendable work as they shape clinical associate education and strive for excellence in their teaching and learning practices.

This semester included exciting developments such as curriculum mapping on the LOOOP platform, ongoing engagements aimed at strengthening the undergraduate curriculum, identifying and developing new postgraduate opportunities for clinical associates, and a growing focus on research activity within the Division

As I embark on a 6-month sabbatical, I'm pleased to share that the Division will be led by three rotating Acting Heads who will continue to guide and support our work going forward.

Tumi Msimang (1 July - 31 August)

Raabiah Noorbhai (1 September - 31 October)

Valentine Bilankulu (1 November - 31 December)

We are entering a new era in clinical associate education, marked by a shifting landscape of employability and the rise of diverse workplaces for clinical associates. This evolving context leads us to reflect on whether our undergraduate curriculum is adequately aligned to meet the demands of a dynamic, digitally driven world marked by persistent inequalities. The critical discourse on curriculum relevance, adaptability, and social justice must continue.

In this spirit, let us remain steady in our commitment to delivering educational experiences that not only equip clinical associates with clinical competence but also cultivate their capacity to be socially responsive and transformative in the communities they serve.

May the next semester be fruitful!

Warm regards,

Aviwe Mgobozi

Head of Division of Clinical Associates



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This newsletter was
made by the Division
of Clinical Associates





FEATURE ARTICLE

Mentor-Mentee Day: Bridging the Gap, Building the Future

On a vibrant afternoon filled with connection, curiosity, and camaraderie, the Clinical Associate Student Council (CASC) hosted a much anticipated Mentor-Mentee Day – a powerful initiative aimed at fostering supportive relationships amongst Clinical Associate students across all years of study.

Whether you're a wide-eyed first year still getting used to the hospital corridor or a seasoned final year student navigating complex patient care, one truth holds: *you don't have to walk this journey alone.*

The event was designed to pair junior students with more experienced peers in a relaxed and engaging environment. Through guided discussions, interactive games, and honest Q&As, students opened up about everything from study habits and coping with assessments to clinical tips and how to navigate the BCMP journey.

In the fast-paced world of medical education, mentorship offers more than just academic guidance – it offers emotional support, professional growth, and a sense of community.

For Mentees: It's about feeling seen, heard and supported. It helps ease the transition into the demands of clinical training and inspires confidence.

For Mentors: It reinforces leadership, empathy, and the satisfaction of giving back – whilst also sharpening their own knowledge and communication skills.

BCMP students are not just future clinicians – they are future educators, leaders, and collaborators. Initiatives like Mentor-Mentee Day remind us that excellence in healthcare begins with kindness, connection, and lifting each other up.

At the heart of it all is this simple truth: *when we support each other, we all rise together*



Wellness & Well Being: Staying Well in the Chaos of Clinical Training

Here's the truth: you can't pour from an empty cup – taking care of yourself is a non-negotiable part of becoming a compassionate, effective healthcare provider.

Quick Wins for Your Wellness

- **The 5-Minute Reset:** Close your eyes. Inhale for four counts, hold for four, exhale for four. Repeat.
- **Hydration Station:** Fatigue and headaches often stem from dehydration. Keep a water bottle on you at all times.
- **Make Movement Mandatory:** Movement boots endorphine, helping with stress and sleep. So stay active – take the stair, do some jumping jacks before a study session, just MOVE.
- **Say No to Superhero Syndrome:** It's okay to ask for help, admit you're tired, or need a break. Being vulnerable doesn't make you less professional – it makes you human.
- **Protect Your Joy:** Whether it's watching series, painting, journaling, or singing in the shower – schedule time for what makes your soul smile.

Just for You: A Wellness Mantra

"I am learning. I am growing. I am allowed to rest. I am enough."
Take a moment to say this aloud before your next big day ♥

Edu Tech Updates: Reimagining BCMP



From 27th to 29th May, the Division of Clinical Associates came together for a much-needed retreat centred on LOOOP (Learning Opportunities, Objectives, Outcomes, and Practice) – an innovative online tool that enables educators to visualize the curriculum. The retreat provided a dedicated space to realign with our teaching and learning goals, collaboratively reimagine the future of our programme, and explore innovative strategies to enhance the training of Clinical Associate students. Over three days, we helped identify gaps, redundancies, and areas for improvement within our curriculum and ensures alignment with programme exit level outcomes and the Entrustable Professional Activities (EPA's) of Clinical Associates.

As we move forward, the ideas and energy generated during the retreat will guide our ongoing mission: To map the Clinical Associate undergraduate curriculum and to identify gaps and strengths of the existing curriculum. This exercise will assist the Division to effectively communicate the curriculum to students and stakeholders.



The Study Scoop: Reflections from our Students

Hands, Heart and Purpose: What BCMP Means to Me

If you were to ask the people who know me best to describe me, they'd probably say I am fun, outgoing, a natural leader and deeply empathetic - someone who cares deeply about others and finds joy in connecting with people. I can say with confidence that no degree aligns more perfectly with who I am than the BCMP. But what makes the BCMP program special is that it is not just designed for people like me. It is a degree where anyone, introvert, or extrovert, can thrive. That is because BCMP opens doors to a wide range of roles in the healthcare system, all focused on making a difference in people's lives.

From the very first day of the program, it felt like we were thrown into the deep end, the challenging theory, the practical sessions, and time in the wards felt as if we were already qualified clinical associates. But that is exactly what I love about BCMP. It is not just about sitting in a lecture hall or memorizing textbooks. Every part of the learning process is engaging, practical and rewarding. You're not just a student, you're part of the healthcare team, learning in real time. The workload doesn't feel overwhelming, because what we're learning is fascinating and every skill we acquire brings us closer to becoming healthcare professionals.

One of the most remarkable aspects of BCMP is how early and often we step into the clinical environment. In district hospitals we get a hands-on experience that prepares us for the realities of healthcare in South Africa, especially in under-resourced settings where clinical associates are vital. Working alongside other healthcare workers, we learn to apply our knowledge to real-life situations and make decisions that matter. There is no better way to discover whether you are meant for this field. For me, every patient I meet, every skill I master, confirms that I have chosen the right path.

Along the way, I've had the privilege of observing a few clinical associates working in hospitals across South Africa. The work they're doing is extremely amazing and inspiring. Meeting them and hearing their stories showed me the true value of this profession and how clinical associates are essential in the clinical space. Hearing about the exciting procedures that they perform and what their daily shifts look like will shock you.

The BCMP degree is more than just a qualification, it's a calling. It prepares us to be part of the solution to our country's healthcare challenges. It gives you the heart to serve communities and those who face the difficulties in our healthcare system. If you're someone who wants to make a difference, who wants to be part of a team that brings hope, then BCMP is the degree for you. It will challenge you, inspire you and shape you into the kind of healthcare worker our country needs. I would recommend BCMP without hesitation to anyone with a passion for helping others. It is not just a career, it is a journey of growth and purpose.



– by Zea Aucamp (BCMP Year 1 Student)

From Nervous to Notable: My Final-Year Transformation

As I reflect on my journey through BCMP, one thing that stands out to me is how much I've grown in terms of my confidence within the clinical space.

Now that I'm in my final year, it feels surreal introducing myself as a final-year student. It honestly feels like just yesterday when I was a first-year student, nervously sanitising my hands before walking into my first OSCE station. Fast forward to now: I'm part of a clinical team, seeing my own patients, presenting them to senior doctors, performing minor procedures under supervision, and even assisting in major procedures that I never even imagined I'd be part of!

Third year, however, comes with that constant reminder: "I'm in final year now—I have to know this, I have to prove that all these years of studying have shaped me into someone who can be trusted with a patient's life." One of our lecturers always says, "Work as if you are being scouted for employment," and that's really become my personal motto. It's completely shifted how I approach clocking in for work—I don't just show up to get things done, I show up to grow. And honestly, that mindset has paid off. The compliments I've received from preceptors for going the extra mile have become a real motivation—especially on those cold mornings when getting out of bed feels like the hardest part of the day.

One of the biggest lessons I've grown to learn this year is to never silence my own questions. I wish I had realised this in second year on how important it is to ask questions, even if you think they sound silly. That's how you learn. No one actually expects you to know everything; it's usually just that inner voice whispering, "Don't embarrass yourself—just Google it later." You can Google facts, but you can't Google experience and clinical reasoning from a knowledgeable senior.

Over time, I've especially grown to love working and learning in the emergency department. I enjoy diving deeper into acute conditions- the ones that drive people to rush to the healthcare space- and not just for exams, but because what's not tested is often just as important to know. Growth takes place when you lean into curiosity, not when you shy away from it!



– by Amelaine Manuel de Faria (BCMP Year 3 Student)



The Study Scoop: Reflections from our Students

Scrubs, Stumbles and Small Wins: First Steps to Living My Dreams

After nine weeks of clinical rotations, I can confidently say this has been one of the most demanding – yet rewarding – chapters of my life so far. It's difficult to put the full scope of this experience into words, but I'll try to do justice to what has been a transformative journey, both professionally and personally.

The early mornings were easily the most jarring adjustment. There's something uniquely painful about waking up before sunrise, trying to look vaguely alive every day at 5am. The scrubs started to feel like a uniform and the stethoscope felt heavy around my neck. But each day brought something new – a new patient, a new finding, a new moment of clarity (or confusion). And somewhere in all that, I started to understand the rhythm of things.

One of the most powerful realisations I had was how much of a difference knowledge can make – not just for passing exams, but in the real lives of real people. In class, it's easy to see information as just that...information. But in the hospital, knowledge is power. It's the difference between understanding a deteriorating patient and standing there helplessly. It's being able to explain a diagnosis in a way that eases someone's anxiety. It's catching a subtle sign that could change the outcome of everything.

With that being said, these nine weeks also humbled me in ways I didn't expect. There were moments I felt completely out of my depth – standing there, in maroon scrubs, not really knowing what I was doing. At first, I found this uncomfortable but over time, I learned to lean into that uncertainty. I learned that being a student is as much about asking the right questions as it is about having the right -answers. I learned that it's okay to say "I don't know" – as long as you follow it up with, "but I'm willing to try."

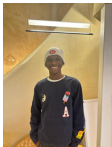
I learnt that it's only human to forget things, feel lost and question myself but none of that disqualifies me from being a good clinician. In fact, it's where growth begins. You don't owe yourself perfection. You just need to keep learning, keep showing up, and keep caring – even when it's hard.

Another major challenge was learning to balance clinical responsibilities with the rest of my life. Studying, eating, doing laundry, replying to texts – it all became part of a very tight juggling act. Of course, I didn't get all of it right but I did learn that sustainability isn't just about academic success – it's about preserving your energy, managing your time, and being realistic with yourself. Some days were incredibly productive; others were just about getting through.

What helped the most, I think, was staying grounded in why I started this journey in the first place. At the heart of it, this profession is about people – about being there for them when they're vulnerable, scared, and unsure. It's about translating knowledge into care. During these past weeks, I had the privilege of doing just that, even in small ways.

These nine weeks reminded me that dreams are instruments and they come to life when sharpened. It was tough, yes, but I wouldn't trade this experience for anything.

Be curious, take yourself seriously and watch the growth happen. The journey to brilliance is a marathon, not a sprint.



– by Yongama Msimelelo Duva (BCMP Year 2 Student)

Critical Moments, Lasting Growth

Emergency Medicine is full of adrenaline—it's about making critical decisions in a matter of seconds. Over the past two years of furthering my studies, I've found myself in the midst of many high-pressure situations that have offered invaluable learning opportunities.

The Honours program has not only helped me grow clinically, but also encouraged deep reflection on what it truly means to be a clinical associate in practice. It hasn't been without its challenges—balancing part-time studies with work is no easy task. But if you stay connected to the reason you started, the journey becomes incredibly rewarding.

Since beginning this degree, I've been challenged, questioned, and pushed far beyond what I thought I was capable of. And yet, I'm more motivated than ever. I look forward to discovering just how much further I can go.



– by Emugene Botha (BCMP Honours in Emergency Medicine Student)

Student Snapshots

A glimpse into the lives of our BCMP students.



CASC 2025






Upcoming Events



Clinical Associate Webinars: Pulse of Practice

Join us for an exciting series of Clinical Associate Webinars, designed to enhance your knowledge about the Clinical Associate profession. These sessions will feature expert speakers, informative discussions, and practical insights on key topics relevant to Clinical Associates.

Whether you're a student or a practicing Clinical Associate, these webinars offer a valuable opportunity to engage, learn, and connect with peers and professionals in the field.

-  **Dates:** 28th July, 25th August, 29th September
-  **Online Platform:** MS Teams Online
-  **Link & presenter info** will be shared closer to the date

We look forward to seeing you there! 😊

International Academy of Physician Associate Educators (IAPAE) Conference

-  **Date:** 29-31 October 2025
 -  **Venue:** Future Africa Campus, University of Pretoria, Hillcrest, Pretoria, South Africa
 -  **Conference Theme:**
Coming Together to Advocate for Physician Associate, Clinical Associate and Analogue Education for Expanding Clinical Practice
 -  **Register now:** <https://lnkd.in/gW2ebFfp>
 -  **Submit your abstracts by 07 July:** bit.ly/submit-abstracts
- Join us to shape the future of clinical education globally!

Staff Spotlight



Dr Wessel du Toit Physiology Lecturer and Researcher

This quarter, we are delighted to highlight Dr Wessel du Toit, a dedicated and passionate academic who joined the Division of Clinical Associates as a Physiology Lecturer and Researcher in April 2025. Dr du Toit obtained his PhD from North West University, with a thesis titled *"Profiling Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors Using a Targeted Metabolomics Approach: The African-PREDICT study"*. Following his doctoral studies, he pursued a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Witwatersrand, where he continued his research into cardiovascular health and disease.

Dr du Toit's passion for making a meaningful difference in the world has been a consistent driving force behind his academic journey. His commitment to understanding human health and physiology is matched by his enthusiasm for teaching and inspiring future healthcare professionals.

A Message from Dr du Toit:

"I am truly grateful to be part of a community that values both curiosity and compassion. My passion lies in the pursuit of knowledge and its transfer – in learning more about human health, and in helping others understand and apply this knowledge to improve lives. It is a privilege to contribute to the development of future health professionals, and I look forward to growing and learning alongside my students every day."


Upcoming Health Awareness Days

 July
Mental Illness
Awareness Month

 August
National Women's
Month

 September
Heart Awareness
Month

 18th July
Nelson Mandela
International Day

 1st - 7th August
World Breastfeeding
Week

 25th September
World Pharmacist
Day



at the Future Africa Campus, University of Pretoria,
Hillcrest, Pretoria, South Africa

Register and Pay for the 16th Annual IAPAE Conference in Pretoria, South Africa here
bit.ly/16th-IAPAE-Conference