NEW FACULTY 2011-2013
Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to Des Moines University (DMU)! I am thrilled that you have made the decision to join the DMU team. This is an exciting time at the University. I am confident that you will find working at DMU to be both rewarding and professionally fulfilling.

Des Moines University is a great place to begin or continue your career as a faculty member. A variety of resources are available here to support faculty career development. Your success is essential to the success and growth of the University. We have invested heavily in you and will continue that investment through the years, because we know that a dedicated faculty makes this university even stronger.

A significant key to the growth and success of DMU is our current university strategic plan – Vision 2015. Through the collective efforts of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and Board members, the plan was drafted and finalized, with an implementation date of January 2013. I encourage you to read the plan thoroughly—you can find it under the Leadership tab on Pulse. Develop a familiarity with the themes and strategies and identify areas where you can contribute.

Once again, welcome to DMU and to what is sure to become a rewarding experience in teaching, research and community engagement.

Sincerely,

Karen McLean, Ph.D.
Provost, Des Moines University
Suzanne Bohlson, Ph.D.
Microbiology and Immunology
Associate Professor

A native of Southern California, Suzanne Bohlson received her B.S. in biology from the University of California Irvine (UCI) in 1995. She entered the graduate program in immunology at Washington University in St. Louis and transferred to the University of Notre Dame in 1998 to complete her thesis work involving the immune response to *Mycobacterium*. She earned her Ph.D. at Notre Dame in 2001 and returned to UCI for postdoctoral work. In 2005 she was appointed to UCI’s professional research track. Dr. Bohlson accepted her first faculty position as an assistant professor at Indiana University School of Medicine-South Bend (IUSM-SB) on Notre Dame’s campus. In addition to teaching, she developed a research program in innate immunity that was funded by the American Heart Association and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She joined the DMU faculty in July 2013, bringing with her an NIH grant to continue her work in innate immunity. She also continues teaching medical microbiology.

Michelle Brown, M.S.P.T.
Doctor of Physical Therapy
Physical Therapist

A 1999 graduate of Des Moines University, Michelle Brown joined the DMU Physical Therapy Clinic in 2012 after working on the staff of Allen Hospital in Waterloo, Iowa. There, she participated in a medical service trip in Jamaica that evolved into a three-year stint in the Caribbean island nation in which she worked in a reduced-fee clinic and went on house calls. She first worked with DMU physical therapy students who traveled to Jamaica to provide treatment during a “camp” for stroke patients.
Kevin Carnevale, M.D.
Microbiology and Immunology
Academic Pathologist

Kevin Carnevale received his M.D. degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Following a National Institutes of Health postdoctoral fellowship there, he completed residencies in anatomical and clinical pathology. Dr. Carnevale spent the next nine years in various research positions at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, including manager of the cardiovascular diagnostic research lab and director of research for PeriTec Biosciences Ltd. Six years ago, he became a clinical assistant professor in the pathology, microbiology and immunology department at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. He currently is chair of strategic planning for the Group for Research in Pathology Education (GRIPE), a national organization of pathology educators whose purpose is to promote and facilitate excellence in pathology education. In 2014 he will serve as GRIPE’s president-elect. An active researcher on the pathology of cardiovascular disease, he has published more than 30 peer-reviewed articles.

Shannon Crout, D.O.
Osteopathic Manual Medicine Instructor

Shannon Crout joined the clinical faculty of Des Moines University’s osteopathic manual medicine department in July 2013. She recently graduated from a neuromusculoskeletal medicine/osteopathic manipulative medicine (NMM/OMM) residency at Mercy Health in Muskegon, Michigan. She earned her doctor of osteopathic medicine degree at DMU in 2010 and her bachelor of science degree at Oral Roberts University in 2003. Dr. Crout enjoys applying osteopathy to all disease states, with additional interests in headaches, any type of trauma (new or old), visceral causes of somatic complaints, physical manifestations of stored emotions, newborns/children, pre- and post-partum mothers, to name a few. She listens to each body’s story as exhibited in the anatomy and desires to optimize functionality in each patient.
Rachel Dunn, Ph.D.
Anatomy
Assistant Professor
Originally from Austin, Texas, Rachel Dunn earned a B.A. in anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin in 2003. She then earned her master of arts degree in anthropology from Washington University in St. Louis in 2005 and her Ph.D. in 2009. From 2009 to 2011, she was a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Functional Anatomy and Evolution at Johns Hopkins University and the following two years as a lecturer in anatomy at the University of Missouri in Columbia. A vertebrate paleontologist and anthropologist, Dr. Dunn focuses her research on how ecology, including habitat preference, locomotion and other behaviors, influences the shape of the mammalian appendicular skeleton, and how postcranial evolution responds to environmental change. In particular, she is interested in what the shape of modern mammalian ankle and wrist bones can tell us about the habitat in which they live, and how we can use that information to reconstruct the habitat and behavior of extinct mammals.

Vanja Duric, Ph.D.
Physiology and Pharmacology
Assistant Professor
Vanja Duric grew up in Zagreb, Croatia, and moved to Anchorage, Alaska, in 1993. He earned a bachelor’s degree in both biochemistry and chemistry at Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota in 2000. He then received a Ph.D. in pharmacology from the University of Kansas Medical Center in 2006. In 2007, Dr. Duric moved to New Haven, Connecticut, to train as a postdoctoral fellow in the Yale University School of Medicine. His postdoctoral work focused on studying neurobiology of mood disorders, including genetic analysis of brains from human subjects suffering from depression. He joined the DMU faculty in 2012. In addition to teaching and research, Dr. Duric enjoys playing soccer and ice hockey. He played hockey competitively at the collegiate level in the U.S. and at the international level as a member of several Croatian national teams. He played for Team Croatia at the 1998 World Junior U20 Championship in Romania and at the 1999 Winter University Games in Slovakia.
Mindi Feilmeier, D.P.M., FACFAS
College of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery
Assistant Professor

A 2005 graduate of DMU, Mindi Feilmeier completed her surgical residency at Trinity Regional Medical Center in Fort Dodge, Iowa, and then joined Tri-mark Physicians Group (UnityPoint). She practiced in northwest Iowa for five years and joined the DMU faculty in June of 2012. Board-certified by the American Board of Podiatric Surgery in Foot and Rearfoot/Ankle Reconstruction Surgery, Dr. Feilmeier is a fellow of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, an active member of the American Podiatric Medical Association and the young physician liaison to the American Podiatric Medical Association Board of Trustees. She also serves on the Iowa Podiatric Medical Society (IPMS) Board and on the Iowa Podiatric Licensure Board. In addition, she is a member of the IPMS Heartland Committee that plans the annual Iowa Podiatric Scientific Conference and serves as committee chair for the conference’s assistants’ portion. An active researcher, Dr. Feilmeier recently had two papers published in the Journal of Foot and Ankle Surgery.

Angela Grundmeyer M.S.PA, PA-C
Human Patient Simulation
Clinical Coordinator

Angela Grundmeyer joined Des Moines University in 2011 as clinical coordinator in its Iowa Simulation Center. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Buena Vista University and her master of science degree in physician assistant studies from DMU in 2007. Ms. Grundmeyer practiced in rural Iowa in family practice and emergency medicine and then worked in the emergency room at Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines before joining DMU. She currently continues to practice at Mercy Urgent Care.
Katherine Heineman, D.O.
Osteopathic Manual Medicine
Instructor
Katherine Heineman joined Des Moines University in June 2013 where she serves as both a clinician and faculty member in the osteopathic manual medicine (OMM) department. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Carleton College and a doctor of osteopathic medicine degree from DMU in 2009. Dr. Heineman also completed the University’s one-year OMM fellowship. She completed her residency in neuromusculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine (NMM/OMM) at Mercy Health Partners in Muskegon, Michigan, where she was chief resident during her final year. She has a special interest with OMM in treating neck and arm pain, children, pregnant and post-partum women, headaches and low back pain and in helping patients improve their overall health.

Norma Hirsch, M.D., FAAHPM, FAAP
Behavioral Medicine
Assistant Professor
Prior to her appointment at DMU, Norma Hirsch was vice president and chief medical officer of Hospice of Central Iowa (now HCI Care Services). She brings to her current work the experience of 40 years of teaching, clinical practice and research, and health care administration. She is a frequent speaker and workshop leader on palliative medicine and hospice care, ethical issues in end of life care, and caregiver wellbeing. A native Iowan, Dr. Hirsch earned her B.S. at Iowa State University and her M.D. at the University of Iowa. She completed postgraduate work in pediatrics at Parkland Memorial Hospital and Children’s Medical Center, Dallas, and a fellowship in neonatal-perinatal medicine at the Baylor College of Medicine, Houston. She completed the four-year education for ministry (EFM) program in the School of Theology, University of the South, in 1998 and was granted her ethics degree from Monash University, Victoria, Australia, in 1999.
James Lang, Ph.D.
Doctor of Physical Therapy
Assistant Professor

In DMU’s physical therapy program, James Lang has a teaching emphasis in exercise physiology and research methods. His research focuses on using human thermoregulatory mechanisms to investigate neural and microvascular pathways and how they are altered by primary aging or cardiovascular disease states. Prior to joining DMU, he earned a doctorate in kinesiology from Penn State University, was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Missouri, and had a tenure track position at Grand Valley State University.

Julie Meachen, Ph.D.
Anatomy
Assistant Professor

Julie Meachen grew up in Tampa, Florida, and attended the University of Florida for her undergraduate education and her master’s degree in zoology. After earning her Ph.D. in biology at the University of California-Los Angeles, she spent three years in a postdoctoral position at the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center at Duke University. Prior to joining the DMU faculty, she held a one-year gross anatomy teaching position at the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. Dr. Meachen’s research focuses on vertebrate paleontology and functional morphology. She specializes in mammalian carnivores and is interested in how climate change and the extinction events at the end of the Pleistocene (10,000 years ago) have affected the morphology and ecology of living and Pleistocene species.
Karin Nowicki, B.S.
Surgical Education
Specialty Medicine Coordinator

Karin Nowicki grew up in Minneapolis and earned her bachelor’s degree in management and marketing at Iowa State University. She then earned her nursing degree at Mercy College in Des Moines. As a nurse in Iowa Methodist Medical Center’s surgery department, she cross-trained in multiple surgical specialties as both a scrub and circulating nurse. She was also a preceptor and taught dozens of new employees and students. In 2011, she received the ACE Award for excellence in nursing. Ms. Nowicki became the surgical education coordinator at DMU in April 2012. In addition to teaching, she helps with research projects and workshops, serves as faculty adviser for the Student Osteopathic Surgery Association, and helps students prepare for surgical rotations.
J.D. Polk, D.O., M.S., MMM, CPE, FACOEP
College of Medicine
Dean

Dr. J.D. Polk became dean of DMU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine in August 2013. Previously, he was the assistant secretary (acting) for health affairs and chief medical officer of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), assuming that post after serving as the principal deputy assistant secretary for health affairs and deputy chief medical officer. Prior to his work at DHS, Dr. Polk was the deputy chief medical officer and chief of space medicine for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s (NASA) Johnson Space Center and an assistant professor in the departments of preventive medicine and emergency medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch. He is the former medical director of the state emergency medical services of Ohio, and former chief of metro life flight in Cleveland. He also was a member of the State Trauma Committee for Ohio. In addition, he is a member of the American Osteopathic Association’s Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation, a fellow of the American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians, and an associate fellow of the Aerospace Medicine Association.

Dr. Polk received his degree in osteopathic medicine from the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine of the A.T. Still University in Kirksville, Missouri. He completed his residency in emergency medicine with the Mount Sinai hospitals and the Ohio University system. He also holds a master of science degree in space studies with a concentration in human factors from the American Military University, and a master’s in medical management from the University of Southern California’s Marshall School of Business.

Dr. Polk is well published in the fields of emergency medicine, disaster medicine, space medicine, and medical management. He is a clinical associate professor of emergency medicine at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine and affiliate associate professor and senior fellow in the School of Public Policy at the George Mason University. He has received numerous awards and commendations including citations from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, White House Medical Unit, Association of Air Medical Services and the U.S. Air Force, and he has received the NASA Center Director’s Commendation, the NASA Exceptional Service Medal, the National Security and International Affairs Medal and the NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal.
Bret Ripley, D.O., FACOFP
Family Medicine
Chair

Bret Ripley joined Des Moines University in 2013 where he serves as both a clinician and chair of the family medicine department.

He earned his doctor of osteopathic medicine degree from Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine of the A.T. Still University in 2001 with a fellowship in manipulation. He then completed a dually accredited family practice residency at United Health Services in Johnson City, New York. Prior to joining DMU, Dr. Ripley served as the chief academic officer at the Appalachian Osteopathic Postgraduate Training Institute in Pikeville, Kentucky, and as the osteopathic residency director and osteopathic director of medical education at the Shenandoah Valley Family Practice Residency in Front Royal, Virginia.
Rebecca Shaw, M.D.
Surgical Education
Assistant Professor

A native of Decorah, Iowa, Rebecca Shaw earned her B.A. at Luther College there and then completed her M.D. at the University of Iowa College of Medicine. After a residency in obstetrics/gynecology at the University of Iowa, she joined the faculty of its obstetrics/gynecology department as adjunct clinical associate professor. Dr. Shaw also has been in private practice in Pascagoula, Mississippi, and with UnityPoint Obstetrics/Gynecology Clinics. She brings to DMU’s department of specialty medicine more than 30 years of clinical experience in obstetrics and gynecology. During those years she has taught students at several levels of medical education, including undergraduates, medical students and residents.

Lisa Streyffeler, Ph.D.
Behavioral Medicine
Assistant Professor

Lisa Streyffeler earned her bachelor’s degree at Harvard College and her master’s and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Iowa. She joined the DMU faculty in August 2012.
Muhammad Spocter, Ph.D.
Anatomy
Assistant Professor

From South Africa, Muhammad Spocter completed his undergraduate and graduate training in biological anthropology at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. In 2007, he became a lecturer and project scientist at the University of California-Santa Barbara, followed by postdoctoral training at George Washington University. He joined the DMU faculty in fall 2011. His main research interests are in comparative neuroanatomy, human evolution, human biological variation and science education. As a comparative anatomist, in his research he explores the diversity of mammalian brain architecture to help better understand the emergence of the human brain and the biological basis for variation in brain function and disease liability. Committed to fostering both student and public interest in science, he works with students enrolled in the Des Moines Public Schools as well as students at DMU and from South Africa, through continued research links with his alma mater.

Lilian Yuan, Ph.D.
Physiology and Pharmacology
Associate Professor

Lilian Yuan graduated from Beijing University in China and then obtained her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She received postdoctoral training in the Baylor University College of Medicine. Prior to joining DMU faculty, she was an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota. Her research focuses on understanding mechanisms of neuronal connectivity and plasticity in the brain, how these processes are modulated by environmental and genetic factors, and how they are altered in human diseases and under drug conditions.