



Welcome to the first edition of the ACGC Messenger! Our goal is to keep you informed with updates on our projects throughout the year and introduce you to some of the many volunteers who help support ACGC's mission. We look forward to what 2021 will bring! Please contact communications committee chair, Andrea Moon (axharbis@texaschildrens.org) with any comments or suggestions for future topics.

COVID accreditation impacts

Tahnee Causey

The effects of the global pandemic have been felt in all areas of genetic counseling, with genetic counseling education particularly affected. Just as accredited programs had to quickly pivot to adjust to the restrictions of the pandemic, ACGC had to revise its standard processes for self-study and visitation for programs up for reaccreditation. Recognizing the increased workload encountered by programs as a result of the pandemic, ACGC provided the nine programs up for reaccreditation increased flexibility to select one of two dates for the completed self-study to be submitted.

Additionally, ACGC and the Program Review Committees realized that conducting onsite reviews was not feasible nor safe in the current environment. ACGC therefore adapted the traditional onsite review to an entirely virtual visit. Currently, virtual site visits for some programs are complete, while others remain in progress. Thanks to the hard work of both ACGC and programs, feedback thus far is that the virtual onsite process has overall been smooth. Given current pandemic-related circumstances, it is likely that onsite visits continue in this virtual format for the next six months. ACGC is, of course, committed to returning to onsite visits in the future when it is safe for all involved. Additionally, the ACGC Board of Directors remains committed to timely turn-around of applications presented by the Program Review Committee. While some delays may be encountered, ACGC continues to conduct business operations as usual. ACGC expresses many thanks to the volunteers and the programs that have made this reaccreditation cycle a success even under such challenging circumstances.

Communications Committee

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Spotlight on a Volunteer

Megan Hinton received her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina in 1998 and her master's degree from the Graduate Program in Genetic Counseling at Northwestern University in 2000. She was certified by the ABGC in 2002. Megan has been a prenatal genetic counselor in the Division of Clinical Genetics at Northwestern Medicine since 2001. She currently holds assistant professor faculty appointments at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine and the Center for Genetic Medicine. Megan has been an active volunteer for genetic organizations throughout her career; she participates as a site visitor for the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling.

How did you first become involved in being a site visit volunteer?

When I was looking at opportunities to volunteer with ACGC, the option of site visitor appealed to me because I thought I could use my years of experience to assess GC programs. I understood what was expected of programs, so the questions and evaluations came easily. I also thought it would be a great way to connect with other genetic counselors outside of my Chicago circle.

What has been most rewarding about being involved in site visits?

I am constantly impressed with how hard each program works to ensure they have a quality program. Every program has challenges to overcome (geography, clinical site availability, faculty burnout, to name a few), and each program develops creative solutions to ensure that they are graduating competent genetic counselors. Each site visit is a lot of work; both for the visitors and obviously for the program as well! It has been rewarding to see that all our hard work, both the site visitors and the programs, results in a process that works.

What would you say to others who are considering volunteering for site visits?

The amount of work in a short period of time seems daunting, but it really is worth it. I truly enjoy talking to programs about their unique processes, how they have overcome challenges, and discussing aspects of their program that they are particularly proud of. I also think it is important to remember that the graduate programs put in an inordinate number of hours into the accreditation process. Site visitors should be cognizant of how stressful the process can be.

What have you learned about ACGC by being involved with site visits?

The amount of work that goes into the accreditation process is astounding- from the ACGC staff, the site visitors, and the programs being evaluated. I just had no idea how much time and dedication the process took! And with the number of programs increasing, the need for more volunteers will only increase. I urge people to consider volunteering; my interactions with programs, fellow site visitors, and ACGC have been immensely rewarding.



Megan Hinton

Megan is a prenatal genetic counselor at Northwestern Medicine. She holds assistant professor faculty appointments at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine and the Center for Genetic Medicine.

Programs Accredited and Reaccredited in 2020:

Programs Accredited:

University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, CA
Kean University, Piscataway, NJ
Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI
University of Washington, Seattle, WA
Washington University – St. Louis, St. Louis, MO
Wake Forrest University, Winston-Salem, NC

Programs Reaccredited:

University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI