

# Lambda Beta Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2021



The National Honor Society for the Profession of Respiratory Care

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## A Message from the President

by Susan Blonshine, BS, RRT, RPFT, AE-C, FAARC



*Susan Blonshine*

academic excellence. We need each of you to support our students as they apply for these scholarships that will be awarded at the 2021 AARC Congress. We are happy to answer any questions concerning this process.

There are several new feature articles in this newsletter. Have you ever wondered where are scholarship winners are in their professional journey? You will find these individuals featured in this and upcoming publications. Follow the interview of Kelly Fiorino, by Amanda Dexter, and her professional journey along with the impact of Lambda for her.

Max Eskelson's Respiratory Care program is featured in this edition. Max is also a new member of our board.

In an effort to highlight the specialty areas of our profession for both students and educators, we have started with an Ecmo Specialty article, by Claire Aloan. Claire also recently joined our board.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for each of our educators who have diligently encouraged and mentored our students through the challenges of the past year. It is through our collaboration together as professionals that we can raise the awareness and understanding of the Respiratory Care profession.

Lambda Beta thanks you for your continued support.

## Where Are They Now?

Winner Spotlight Q & A, by Amanda Dexter, MS, RRT, RCF, CHSE



*Kelly Fiorino*

### ***Kelly Fiorino, MS, RRT, RRT-ACCS, RCP*** ***2013 Frederick Helmholtz, MD Scholarship Winner***

Kelly Fiorino graduated from Rush University in 2014 with a Master's degree in Respiratory Care. Following graduation, Fiorino worked as a bedside staff therapist at Michigan Medicine in the adult ICUs. She transitioned into her current role as a Respiratory Care Clinical Specialist for the Cardiovascular ICU & Coronary ICU at Michigan Medicine almost three years ago.

**Q:** Why did you choose a respiratory therapy education/educational program?

**A:** I was interested in healthcare, but I was unsure which specific area I wanted to pursue. Respiratory therapy interested me because of how specialized the field was and the critical thinking required in the everyday work. Respiratory therapists make a difference in so many patients' lives, from ICUs to outpatient clinics.

**Q:** What piece of advice would you give to current respiratory therapy students?

**A:** Try to get as much out of your clinical experience as possible. Every day in clinicals is an opportunity to learn something new from a respiratory therapist & to use your didactic knowledge in real-world situations. Do not be scared to ask questions!

**Q:** What was most memorable to you about your experiences in a respiratory therapy education program?

**A:** I really enjoyed being involved in research. My educational program me provided the opportunity to conduct an independent research study, and it made me realize how much more there is to explore in the field of respiratory therapy. The experience motivated me to learn more & continue to be involved in research after graduation.

**Q:** How has your education impacted your professional life?

**A:** My education has allowed me to advance to my current position & gave me a solid foundation of respiratory care knowledge.

**Q:** What is the most valuable information you learned while you were in respiratory therapy school?

**A:** My respiratory therapy program emphasized the importance of working as a multi-disciplinary team member & strongly encouraged interactions with nurses, doctors, & other allied healthcare workers. We even had a short-term clinical ro-





## Where Are they Now?, continued

*Winner Spotlight Q & A, by Amanda Dexter, MS, RRT, RCF, CHSE*

tation where we attended rounds with a pulmonary consult team. It was through these interactions & experiences that I learned the significance of communication & teamwork in the healthcare setting.

**Q:** What do you enjoy the most about the respiratory therapy field?

**A:** There is always something new to learn in respiratory therapy. It is interesting to see how much the field has grown, as well as the new areas that are still being discovered & explored.

**Q:** Where has your job taken you? Describe your career path.

**A:** My role as a Respiratory Care Clinical Specialist allows me to be involved in multidisciplinary education, develop departmental policies & procedures, as well as serve as a liaison between the multidisciplinary staff in the ICUs & the respiratory care department. I round with the physician-led team in my units to ensure patients have quality respiratory care plans & continuous quality improvement measures are being met. Also, this position has given me the opportunity to be involved in multicenter research trials as well as conduct my own research.

**Q:** How did you hear about the Lambda Beta Society? In your opinion, what are the benefits of a Lambda Beta Society membership?

**A:** I learned about the Lambda Beta Society from my professor at Rush University, Dr. Ellen Becker. I believe being a member of the Lambda Beta Society is beneficial to students for both scholarship & networking opportunities.

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## *Important 2021 Dates*

***May 31, 2021***  
*Scholarship Applications Due*

***September 30, 2021***  
*National Honorary Member  
Nominations Due*

# Respiratory Therapy Program Highlight

by Max Eskelson, MS, RRT, FCCP



## Utah Valley University

Utah Valley University is the largest public university in the state of Utah and one of a few in the nation offering a dual-mission model that combines the rigor and richness of a first-rate teaching university with the openness and vocational programs of a community College.

Utah Valley University was established in 1941 as Central Utah Vocational School (CUVS) with the primary function of providing war production training. After World War II, the school gradually transitioned to a state-supported school and began to grow and add more programs. It now offers everything from certificates to master's degrees.

## Respiratory Therapy Program

UVU's Respiratory Therapy Program is relatively new. A Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy (BSRT) program was granted Provisional Accreditation by CoARC in November 2017 and started accepting its first cohort of students in Spring 2018. The program is scheduled for a Continuing Accreditation visit in 2022.

The BSRT includes five semesters of course study after completion of the first two years of undergraduate curriculum. The program is designed to provide students with educational and clinical competence by emphasizing advanced clinical knowledge, critical thinking, and versatility. Students are engaged in the theoretical, practical, and clinical aspects of adult, pediatric, and neonatal respiratory care.

The overall objective of UVU is to produce high quality respiratory care professionals who will function as clinicians (not technicians) to care for patients both in the intensive care units and those on the medical/surgical wards. It is my feeling that the 'floor' person often has an important position. The 'floor' person has the responsibility to be able to identify "sick", make the appropriate suggestions, perform the correct therapies, and keep that patient out of the ICU.

The Program Goals are to prepare graduates with demonstrated competence in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains of respiratory care practice as performed by registered respiratory therapists (RRTs). And to prepare leaders for the field of respiratory care by including curricular content that includes objectives related to acquisition of skills in one or more of the following: management, education, research, advanced clinical practice (which may include an area of clinical specialization).

Student research is among the priorities of the program. The bar has been set to have each student who graduates UVU with an abstract or poster presentation on their resume. The program is also in the process of creating courses for an associate to bachelor's advancement degree. We hope to have this in place and have a double accreditation process in 2022.

## Staff

Currently serving as the Program Director, I was personally involved in the development of this program and this new challenge excited me because I have always wanted to make a difference. As a clinician, only a finite number of patients are helped. But as a teacher of eager young students, I can expand my reach and help an exponential number of patients. This opportunity also allowed me to take an existing program and modify it to meet both the demands and expectations of

# Respiratory Therapy Program Highlight, continued

by Max Eskelson, MS, RRT, FCCP

myself and of the medical community.

Kelly Rose is the Director of Clinical Education for the program. Kelly helped start the Respiratory Therapy Program. She has passion and skills necessary for didactic education and high-quality clinical experiences.

The program is very lucky to have two skilled medical directors who have a passion for respiratory care, Dr. Stephen Minton, and Dr. Brian Moench. Dr. Minton is well known throughout the neonatal intensive care world. We value his knowledge, devotion, and skills for both the neonate and the student. Dr. Moench, an anesthesiologist, is a prolific writer of articles and op-eds in local newspapers. Dr. Moench is head of the Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment (UPHE).

Kelly and I have been adding numerous adjunct instructors to the program. These people are superior and well known in their areas of expertise. The addition of these people brings additional depth to the subjects and gives the students an opportunity to “learn the ropes” from different perspectives.

By adding this diverse population of skilled clinicians to our teaching stable, we are confident that our students will have the well-rounded education, lab simulations and clinical experiences that will ensure both the continued success of the graduate and the program.

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## Lambda Beta Memorabilia

We offer two ways to proudly display your membership in the Lambda Beta Society.

Gold Plated Honor Pin (Lambda Beta Logo).....\$20

Honor Cords (Lambda Beta Colors).....\$20

(Prices do not include shipping charges)

Go to [lambdabeta.org](http://lambdabeta.org) or click [HERE](#) to order.



## 2021 LB Scholarships & Awards Program

The Lambda Beta Society is pleased to announce the 2021 Scholarship and Awards program. Any student currently matriculated in a respiratory care program at a CoARC accredited school can apply for any of these awards. Students do not have to be a member of the Lambda Beta Society to apply for any of these scholarships. We currently offer three (3) scholarships/awards. Each has a different set of criteria and dollar amount.

These awards also include \$750 in travel expenses and a full registration to this year's AARC International Congress being held in Phoenix, Arizona, November 6-9, 2021. All awards will be presented during the Lambda Beta Reception held in conjunction with the Student Survivor Hour at the International Congress. It is not necessary to be present to receive an award, however, you will need to attend the International Congress in order to receive the travel expenses and full registration.



### ***H. Frederick Helmholz, MD Scholarship***

This scholarship is presented on the merit of an independent, original narrative review of literature related to the practice of respiratory care and must comply with the application requirements and deadline. The Lambda Beta Society may award up to \$2500.

### ***CoARC Stephen P. Mikles, EdD, RRT, FAARC Media Award***

This \$2000 award is sponsored by CoARC and is presented on the merits of an original presentation electronic slides in Power Point or other presentation format, video presentation, or other presentation on a CDROM or DVDROM relevant to respiratory care and must comply with the application requirements and deadline.

### ***NBRC/Hill Leadership Award***

This award will be presented to a student who has shown exemplary leadership in their educational career as well as volunteer and community service. The Lambda Beta Society may award up to \$2000.

All nomination packets must be sent **electronically** no later than May 31, 2021, to [Debbie.Farrow@nbrc.org](mailto:Debbie.Farrow@nbrc.org).

Applications, rubrics and more information can be found at [lambdabeta.org/scholarships/](http://lambdabeta.org/scholarships/).

# Professional Growth: Be an ECMO Specialist!

by Claire Aloan, MS, RRT, RRT-NPS, FAARC

Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) is a complex form of extracorporeal technology used for patients with severe respiratory and/or cardiac failure refractory to conventional treatment. ECMO can be a life-saving therapy for patients of any age. This life support system circulates blood through an oxygenating system, similar to a heart-lung bypass machine used during open heart surgery. Over the past several years, the use of ECMO has grown rapidly. Worldwide, registered ECMO centers have grown from 83 centers in 1990 to almost 1000 centers today, with about half located in the US. With the expansion of ECMO centers and the growth of ECMO in the adult population, the need for specialists who are trained in ECMO continues to rise. Many of the trained specialists are respiratory therapists. These health care team members are often referred to as ECMO Specialists. According to the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (ELSO), the ECMO Specialist is “a registered nurse (RN), respiratory therapist (RT), or perfusionist who has had special classes and training in running the ECMO machine. One of these people will be at the bedside, in the general unit, rounding within the hospital, or on-call 24 hours a day to help manage the ECMO circuit and its effect on the patient.” ELSO is an international non-profit consortium of health care institutions whose primary mission is to maintain a registry of, at least, use of extracorporeal membrane oxygenation in active ELSO centers.



At Crouse Hospital in Syracuse, New York, Respiratory Therapy Manager Wendy Fascia MA, RRT, RRT-NPS has a little over 30 of her 56 staff members trained for ECMO. She schedules staff trained in ECMO every day for their respiratory therapist position, and then shifts them to ECMO if needed, while backfilling their RT position. There is no on-call required as an ECMO specialist. Crouse Hospital has both an adult and a neonatal ECMO team and works closely with the faculty of the Upstate Medical University’s program in Cardiovascular Perfusion (CVP), located right next door. When a patient needs ECMO, one of the Upstate perfusionists comes in to start the case, along with Wendy or her designee, while the ECMO specialist transitions their RT workload to another RT. Wendy says that her staff love their ECMO time, where they are able to focus on one patient and use their critical thinking skills. They also receive bonus pay when working as an ECMO specialist. The department adds people to their ECMO teams as needed, with two days of intensive training from the Upstate CVP faculty. There are different classes for the adult and neonatal teams. Both teams include nurses as well as RTs. The Upstate faculty also provide three or four competency sessions for crisis management each year. Wendy and the Clinical Supervisor, Jennifer Pedley, BS, RRT are both ECMO specialists and relieve the staff for breaks as needed.

Down the highway a few miles, the staff at Rochester General Hospital, part of Rochester Regional Health, are enjoying their newly expanded role in ECMO for adults. ECMO is staffed by both RTs and RNs who put their ECMO time in on call above their regular scheduled shifts. There are always two ECMO specialists on call. ECMO staff can cover up to 2 patients on the same unit. All staff are volunteers. In addition to overtime pay when called in, ECMO staff also receive an added hourly bonus. RT Director Tara Bossarte, BS, RRT, RRT-NPS says they add one or two per year to the ECMO team and have been very busy this year with the high volume of Covid-19 patients. About 10 of her 85 staff members are on the ECMO team.

At Upstate University Hospital, adjacent to Crouse Hospital, ECMO Specialist Mackenzie (Mack) Leonard, BSRC, RRT, RRT-NPS, RRT-ACCS, CES-A is one of three full time therapists who have transitioned to their new job title as an ECMO Specialist (ES), with 3 more open positions to be filled. In addition, several RT’s and RN’s are trained and on call for ECMO. The Upstate CVP program faculty provide training here as well as at Crouse. On-call staff receive additional pay when called in. ECMO is primarily used for adults at Upstate, as the hospital does not have a NICU. Upstate does provide



## Professional Growth: Be an ECMO Specialist, continued

by Claire Aloan, MS, RRT, RRT-NPS, FAARC

high level pediatric care for the region through its Golisano Children's Hospital. The ECMO Specialist position requires that RN or RT staff have at least two years of ICU experience and have ECMO experience through the on-call system. Mack sees the ECMO Specialist as a continuation and expansion of his role as an RT and thinks the bridge from RT to ES is a very logical path. He enjoys the multidisciplinary team approach and often consults with physicians including cardiac surgeons, cardiologists, intensivists and infectious disease specialists about his ECMO patients. He also enjoys the ability to focus on one or two patients at a time. Mack has completed the requirements and obtained his certification as an Adult Certified ECMO Specialist (CES-A). This certification is offered by the American Society of ExtraCorporeal Technology (AmSECT) and the International Board of Blood Management (IBBM).

Respiratory therapists have a strong foundation in cardiopulmonary physiology and critical care that makes becoming an ECMO Specialist a great way to enhance the therapist role. While the job can be stressful while dealing with the sickest patients, being part of the ECMO team can be a very rewarding way to expand your horizons as a respiratory therapist.

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## Welcome New 2021 Chapters

Welcome and thank you for forming a new Lambda Beta chapter at your institution!

### **Concord Career College – Dallas**

12606 Greenville Ave, Suite 130  
Dallas, TX

### **Concord Career College – Garden Grove**

12951 Euclid Street, Suite 101  
Garden Grove, CA

### **The University of Montana – Missoula College**

1205 East Broadway Street  
Missoula, MT

**If you are interested in nominating students and faculty at your school, you must first have an active Chapter. Get your Chapter Charter [here](#).**



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10801 Mastin Street, Suite 300  
Overland Park Kansas 66210  
Phone: 913.440.4475  
Fax: 913.712.9283