

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

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Many factors contribute to a growing need for more licensed health care providers to treat patients. Physician Assistants (Associates) are one of the fastest-growing professions in this country with continued high demand for PA graduates. Admissions, matriculation and job market are all highly competitive. Our program is the first established in the State of Maryland and one of the older programs in the USA. We have evolved as the profession has matured and are now exclusively housed here at Towson University, College of Health Professions.

Physician assistants are highly skilled health care providers. This program is a graduate program that requires matriculants to have completed bachelor's or master's degrees. Full-time, continuous enrollment is required throughout the 98-unit, 26-month program.

PA Program Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals

The Physician Assistant Studies Program revised its Mission, Vision and Goals for 2021-2022 as of November 4th, 2021. Outcomes from the prior 2019-2020 goals included integrating interprofessional educational experiences into the PA curriculum. PA students participated in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Towson University Open School Chapter learning events where they applied principles related to quality improvement, leadership and team building to improve patient safety and health outcomes. For additional information on our achievements, please see the updated Mission, Vision, and Goals (PDF).

Mission

Our PA Program educates and empowers resilient graduates to practice collaborative, evidence-based medicine in the ever-changing and diverse health care environment.

Vision

Our PA Program is renowned for excellence in PA education, leadership, and innovative approaches to interprofessional practice.

Values

Our PA Program values are:

- cultural humility
- collegiality
- integrity
- interprofessionalism
- life-long learning
- leadership

Goals

- **Goal 1:** For each student cohort, the program will provide the highest level of PA education, medical competencies, and professionalism. This is benchmarked by results on the 5 program learning outcomes.
- **Goal 2:** The program will maintain a PANCE 1st time pass rate at or above the national average with each graduating class. This is benchmarked by students' mean performance on each content area and the mean performance on all organ systems and task areas.
- **Goal 3:** With each admissions cycle, the program will continue to enhance and strengthen the admission process to create a diverse student population that is reflective of the communities we serve. This is benchmarked by current region census data, reflective of diverse student population admission.
- **Goal 4:** The program will provide each student with opportunities for interprofessional collaborative experiences (IPE) and a foundation for leadership, clinically oriented research, and continued life-long learning. This is benchmarked by participation in at least 2 IPE educational activities per year, participation with the Institute of Healthcare Improvement (IHI), collaborative learning simulation with other healthcare students, and student-lead volunteering.

PA Program Competencies

1. **Medical Knowledge:** demonstrate core knowledge about biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care.
2. **Interpersonal and Communication Skills:** demonstrate verbal, nonverbal and written communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients and all other persons regarding the health care system.
3. **Patient Care:** demonstrate care that is effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient and equitable for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of wellness.
4. **Professionalism:** demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse patient population and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements.
5. **Systems-Based Practice:** demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that is of optimal value. Also incorporated within this goal is that students will use technologies to identify, retrieve, and apply relevant information.

Professional Accreditation

The program is accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant Inc. (ARC-PA).

At its **September 2023** meeting, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) placed the **Towson University Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **Towson University** on **Accreditation-Probation** status until its next review in **September 2025**.

Probation accreditation is a temporary accreditation status initially of not less than two years. However, that period may be extended by the ARC-PA for up to an additional two years if the ARC-PA finds that the program is making substantial progress toward meeting all applicable standards but requires additional time to come into full compliance. Probation accreditation status is granted, at the sole discretion of the ARC-PA, when a program holding an accreditation status of Accreditation - Provisional or Accreditation - Continued does not, in the judgment of the ARC-PA, meet the Standards or when the capability of the program

to provide an acceptable educational experience for its students is threatened. Once placed on probation, a program that fails to comply with accreditation requirements in a timely manner, as specified by the ARC-PA, may be scheduled for a focused site visit and is subject to having its accreditation withdrawn.

Specific questions regarding the Program and its plans should be directed to the Program Director and/or the appropriate institutional official(s).

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website.

Faculty

Clinical Professor: Daniel O'Donoghue (Chairperson / Graduate Program Director)

Clinical Associate Professor: James McGinnis (Associate Program Director)

Clinical Assistant Professors: Alyssa Barbush, Brittany Berna, Timothy Capstack (Medical Director), Suzanne Castner, Melecia Helwig-Henson (Director of Clinical Education), Cheryl Kinnard, Mark Lashley