**New Academic Program Pre-Proposal Process**
New academic program pre-proposals are initiated and developed by the faculty. Approval of the pre-proposal must be obtained from department chairs and college deans or equivalent administrators before submission for USF System level review and consideration for inclusion in the USF Annual Work Plan. Details of the pre-proposal **process and a timeline** can be found on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Academic Program Planning and Review website.

Original copies of completed pre-proposals (including required signatures) must be submitted by **October 1st** to Kelly Bergquist, BEH 339. (For questions: kbergqui@usf.edu 4-2450)

**Pre-proposal Application Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Program/Proposal Information</strong></th>
<th><strong>Type/Print Information</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree Program Title (e.g. M.A. In Biology)</td>
<td>Master in Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIP Code</td>
<td>51.0912</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are any other academic programs at USF offered under this CIP code? If yes, list them.</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>USF Institution</td>
<td>USF Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>College/Division</td>
<td>Morsani College of Medicine</td>
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<td>Department</td>
<td>Internal Medicine</td>
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<td>Proposed Mode of Delivery (% online if applicable)</td>
<td>80% -100% face-to-face; &lt; 20% on-line/distance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target date for submission to USFBOT (Must be either May or October meeting)</td>
<td>May 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment Projections (FTE): Year 1 and Year 5</td>
<td>Year 1: 20 Year 5: 90</td>
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<td>Proposed Implementation Date (e.g. Fall 2012)</td>
<td>May 2015</td>
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Please provide a succinct, thorough response to each of the following:

Program Summary: *(Briefly describe the proposed program)*

1. What is the overall rationale for the new academic program?

   1. With the impending physician shortages and the new health care reform plan, there is and will be a greater reliance on the services of mid-level providers such as Physician Assistants (PA). As such, PA employment is expected to grow significantly between 2008–2018. A PA program at the USF Morsani College of Medicine (MCOM) will help increase the number of licensed medical providers in Florida allowing for improved access to quality medical care for more Floridians.

2. List other state institutions that have similar programs (use the 4-digit CIP as a guide).

   The University of Florida is the only state institution currently offering a master’s degree in Physician Assistant Studies.

3. What is distinctive about this program within the USF System and the State University System (4-digit CIP)?
The USF System does not currently have a Physician Assistant Studies Program. Within the Florida SUS, there is currently only one other SUS institution offering a Masters level Physician Assistant degree (the University of Florida).

The proposed USF PA program will be distinctive in that our goal is to specifically attract and recruit US military veterans, active duty military as well as civilian students to the program. The PA profession has a long history within the military with the initial cohort of PA students being a group of medics from the military who were trained to offer medical services under the supervision of a physician. For current US active duty military personnel, there is currently only one Inter-service PA education program (IPAP). The IPAP enrolls between 120-150 candidates each year. The USF MCOM PA program will actively recruit qualified members of the military as well as veterans with appropriate qualifications.

In addition, we would like to develop a “bridge” program for qualified applicants lacking necessary prerequisites as well as a pathway for incoming USF freshman to apply to a 4 + 2 program. This type of program will allow for a direct path for qualified freshmen to acquire the necessary academic prerequisites as well as obtain hands-on clinical experience that will prepare them for the rigors of the program.

The PA program at USF will emphasize primary care and offer elective sequences in primary care, mental health management and technical and procedural based interventions. The USF program will also target students who are geographically bound to the Tampa Bay area and pending approval from ARC-PA (the accrediting agency for PA programs) we will also explore the ability to offer a decompressed first year curriculum offered via face-to-face and blended learning methodologies.

The USF Morsani College of Medicine (MCOM) Physician Assistant Studies program will offer an integrated curriculum focusing on advanced academic and clinical learning, community outreach, and patient advocacy. Students will learn and develop the necessary skills and knowledge to provide exceptional patient care and improve accessibility for patients in a variety of primary care settings including geriatrics where there will be a significantly increased demand for medical providers in the coming years. The USF MCOM PA program will build upon the already strong foundations of the medical, pharmacy, physical therapy and nursing curriculums to provide the most advanced and focused PA education possible. The program will recruit qualified Florida residents as well as out-of-state students who may decide to reside in Florida upon graduation to help build our health care workforce for the coming years.

Our curriculum will respond to the need to increase access to primary care providers and we will also leverage USF Health's unique opportunity to use simulation for training in technical and procedural based specialties.

Students will be educated side by side with medical, physical therapy, pharmacy, nursing and other health care students to develop inter-professional collaboration and communication skills that will allow them to develop into the health care providers for our next generation. Our affiliations with Tampa General Hospital, two VA hospitals (James A. Haley and Bay Pines) and our new partnership with Lakeland Regional Medical Center (the fifth largest hospital in Florida and the state’s largest single-site emergency department) will provide many clinical rotation opportunities for these students. Further, the USF MCOM’s close partnership with The Villages Health System will allow students to dedicate time to learning about the unique issues affecting health care in the elderly.
4. How does this program support the institutional, USF System, and SUS Strategic Plans?

The USF MCOM PA program will support many of the SUS Strategic Planning Goals as well as the University's goal to increase the number of graduates in high work force demand fields — particularly STEM disciplines. Further, this program will contribute to the Board of Governors' and USF goals to increase levels of community and business engagement. This program will broaden our partnerships with our local VA affiliates, enhance our Veterans Reintegration and Resilience initiative, and will strengthen our commitment and ties to the Villages Health System, Tampa General Hospital, and our new ties with Lakeland Regional Medical Center.

Student Demand:

5. Briefly describe the demand for the proposed program. In the narrative, include data that will support your request. Consider as applicable:
   - Recognizing that programs at different levels may require different degrees of justification (e.g., greater duplication may be warranted at undergraduate and graduate levels), indicate why duplicative programs should be warranted. (If applicable)
   - Numbers of students enrolled at similar programs in the SUS (online and face-to-face)
   - Place-bound learners
   - Underserved populations in the field/profession
   - Professional credentials requirements

Policy makers have identified the critical value of PAs in providing greater patient access to primary care. While the absolute number of PAs in primary care continues to MCOM will help increase the number of licensed medical providers in Florida offering improved access to quality medical care for more Floridians. There is currently only one other SUS institution offering a Masters level Physician Assistant degree (University of Florida — enrollment 60/year). Since 2007, the University of Florida PA Program has consistently had over 1000 applicants annually for its 60 available seats. Further, research suggests that PAs are especially likely to practice in rural communities, and may be more likely to care for low-income patients.

Florida is similar to most other states in that in order to be licensed, PAs must have graduated from an Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) accredited program and passed a proficiency examination established by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

6. Does this program offer collaborative and/or interdisciplinary opportunities at other institutions in the USF and SUS systems? If so, what efforts have been made to initiate collaboration?
The USF MCOM MPAS program will build upon the already strong foundations of the medical, pharmacy, physical therapy and nursing curriculums and inter-professional training to provide the most advanced and focused physician assistant education possible. The patient-centered medical home is a model of practice based upon providing comprehensive primary care using a team-based approach. In the patient-centered medical home model, each patient has a relationship with a primary care provider who manages care for that patient. Care is provided by an integrated team of professionals and support staff. With physician oversight, each team collectively takes responsibility for the ongoing care of a patient. The team member assuming lead responsibility for various aspects of patient care is determined by matching individuals’ competencies and skills with patient needs. Ideally, each member of a team practices to the highest level of his or her education, knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Since PA education is rooted in providing team-based care, PAs are particularly suited to the patient-centered medical home. As key members of the team, PAs can help to ensure continuity, comprehensiveness, and coordination of care, working with primary care physicians and other health care professionals.

One specific opportunity for collaborative and/or interdisciplinary opportunities with other institutions in the USF and SUS systems is with a “bridge” program for qualified applicants lacking necessary prerequisites as well as a pathway for incoming USF freshman to apply to a 4 + 2 program. This type of program will allow for a direct path for qualified freshmen to acquire the necessary academic prerequisites as well as obtain hands-on clinical experience that will prepare them for the rigors of the program.

**Workforce and economic development needs**

7. Describe how the proposed program meets workforce and economic development needs. If applicable, include the following in your discussion:
   - Impact of this program (local, state, national, international)
   - Impact of research funding
   - Changing professional credential requirements
Nationally, employment of PAs is expected to increase 30% from 2010 to 2020 — much faster than the average for all occupations. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services maintains the National Provider Identifier (NPI) dataset, which listed approximately 70,000 practicing PAs in 2010. The estimate represents approximately 10,000 fewer practicing PAs than projections by the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) in a 2008 survey. For job potential, Forbes rated physician assistant No. 1 and nursing No. 7 among master's degree programs. Physician assistant and nursing made the U.S. News and World Report list of the top 50 best careers, and physician assistant was ranked No. 9 among top jobs for working parents by CNN Money. Further, the median annual wage for physician assistant in May 2010 was reported as $85,410 by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

According to Lisa Shock, CEO of Hillsborough-based Utilization Solutions in Healthcare, “As millions more become insured through the efforts of healthcare reform, the question of who will treat these patients is a real concern. The United States has a deficit of nearly 40,000 primary care physicians, and this situation is expected to worsen as the population continues to age and as more patients enroll in healthcare exchanges. Upcoming PA students will be viewed as valued professionals in the nation’s future healthcare workforce and therefore eligible for increased financial support through the National Health Service Corps’ scholarship and loan repayment programs. Tapping these health professionals’ expertise and ability in a primary care capacity will undoubtedly improve access to care and also promote workforce diversity.” This, coupled with research that suggests that the number of and availability of PA programs drives where a PA workforce is geographically distributed, leads to a compelling argument to add a PA educational program in the Tampa Bay area.

The Standards for Physician Assistant Educational Programs will require that programs must confer a graduate degree upon all PA students who matriculate into the program after 2020. The USF MCOM Physician Assistant Program will confer a Master’s degree on candidates who successfully complete the requirements of and graduate from the program. Currently there is only one other SUS institution offering a Master’s level Physician Assistant degree (University of Florida — enrollment 60/year).

8. Provide information on the available resources and capacity for your program. In your response, include

The program will be delivered by a number of existing USF Health faculty together with the recruitment of selected new faculty. These faculty will compliment an already thriving mix of clinical sites, a robust patient mix and strong Graduate Medical Education program with more than 700 residents.

A full complement of student support services which serves all students within MCOM will also be available for the new PA program.

Programmatic costs will be recovered through student tuition which will be used to compensate faculty and administrative personnel and cover operating expenses.

The USF Libraries provide access to more than 2 million volumes and an extensive collection of electronic resources including approximately 25,156 e-journal subscriptions, 736 aggregator databases, 256 e-books, and 826,000 digital images. In addition, students have access to over 65,000 audio-visual materials including videos, CDs, and DVDs. We believe the existing library resources are adequate to sustain the proposed program. Even so, we have included some resources in the program budget to permit purchasing access to select on-line journals specially tailored to the profession of Physician Assistant studies that are not currently accessible through the USF library system.
faculty availability and student support resources including the library. How will department/college resources be shifted to support the program?

9. Please list the Learning Outcomes for the program (undergraduate programs must comply with BOG Regulation 8.016 “Academic Learning Compacts”).

Successful graduates of the USF MCOM Physician Assistant Studies Program will have completed a course of study following the guidelines set forth by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) and reflected in the Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession (http://www.nccpa.net/pdfs/definition%20of%20pa%20competencies%203.5%20for%20publication.pdf). The Competencies are a comprehensive document outlining the necessary skills, knowledge, judgment and attitudes developed by representatives from the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), and the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA).

The Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession mirror and parallel the competencies utilized for graduate medical education, in general, and are outlined in “An Introduction to Competency-based Residency Education” by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The objectives and outcomes measured by the USF MCOM Physician Assistant program closely mirror these competencies.

Upon the successful completion of the requirements for the program of study leading to the MPAS degree, the student will be prepared to sit for The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) certification and will be have demonstrated the following knowledge, skills, attitudes, emotional maturity, leadership skills and values across the life span and in multiple settings as part of a medical team.

Medical knowledge

Medical knowledge includes an understanding of the physiological, molecular, biochemical, genetic and cellular systems necessary for normal function and associated with the abnormal function of these systems in various disease states. The successful graduate will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the structure and function of the body, the molecular, genetic, biochemical and cellular mechanisms that are important in maintaining the body’s homeostasis, and the pathogenesis and epidemiology of disease states and conditions.
- Demonstrate the appropriate use of methods and procedures for detection, diagnosis, and treatment of disease states.
- Identify the complex interaction of physical, psychological, social, economic, cultural, and developmental factors that contribute to illness and disease.
- Manage the appropriate methods for prevention of disease and promotion of health.
• Appreciate the impact that illness has on the patient, the patient’s family, the community, the physician and other health care professionals.
• Demonstrate understanding of the theories and principles that govern ethical decision-making and the major ethical dilemmas in health care.
• Understand the components of health care that influence the organization, financing and delivery of health care.
• Understand the methods necessary to engage in lifelong learning to stay abreast of relevant scientific and societal advances.

Interpersonal & communication skills

Interpersonal and communication skills encompass verbal, nonverbal, and written exchange of information. Physician Assistants must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, their patients’ families, physicians, other health care providers, and the health care system. Upon completion of the Physician Assistant Program, graduates are expected to:

• Create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients.
• Use effective listening, nonverbal, explanatory, questioning, and writing skills to elicit and provide information.
• Appropriately adapt communication style and messages to the context of the individual patient interaction.
• Work effectively with physician and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group.
• Demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety, and understanding of human behaviors.
• Accurately and adequately document and record information regarding the care process for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.

Patient care

Patient care includes age appropriate assessment, evaluation, and management. Physician Assistants must demonstrate care that is effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of wellness. Upon completion of the physician assistant program, graduates are expected to:

• Work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals to provide evidence-based, patient-centered care.
• Demonstrate caring and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families.
• Gather essential and accurate information about their patients.
• Make informed decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, up-to-date scientific evidence, and clinical judgment.
• Develop and carry out patient management plans.
• Counsel and educate patients and their families.
• Competently perform medical and surgical procedures considered essential in the area of practice.
• Provide health care services and education aimed at preventing health problems or maintaining health.

Professionalism

Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. Foremost, it involves prioritizing the interests of those being served above one’s own. Physician Assistants must know their professional and personal limitations. Professionalism also requires that PAs practice without impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency, or mental illness. Physician assistants must demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse patient population, and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. Upon completion of the Physician Assistant Program, graduates are expected to:

• Understand legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the appropriate role of the physician assistant.
• Develop and maintain professional relationships with physician supervisors and other health care providers.
• Demonstrate respect, compassion, and integrity and responsiveness to the needs of patients and society.
• Be accountable to patients, society, and the profession.
• Demonstrate commitment to excellence and ongoing professional development.
• Uphold ethical principles pertaining to the provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices.
• Demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to patients’ culture, age, gender, and disabilities.
• Display self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative.

Practice-based learning and improvement

Practice-based learning and improvement includes the processes through which clinicians engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purpose of self-improvement. Physician assistants must be able to assess, evaluate, and improve their patient care practices. Upon completion of the Physician Assistant Program, graduates are expected to:

• Analyze practice experience and perform practice-based improvement activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the health care delivery team.
• Locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients’ health problems.
• Obtain and apply information about their population of patients and the larger population from which their patients are drawn.
• Apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical studies and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness.
• Apply information technology to manage information, access online medical information, and support their personal educational needs.
• Facilitate the learning of students and/or other health care professionals.
• Recognize and appropriately address gender, cultural, cognitive, emotional, and other biases; gaps in medical knowledge; and physical limitations in themselves and others.

Systems-based practice

Systems-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which health care is delivered. Physician Assistants must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that is of optimal value. Physician Assistants should work to improve the larger health care system of which their practices are a part. Upon completion of the physician assistant program, graduates are expected to:

• Use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education.
• Effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems.
• Understand the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care.
• Practice cost-effective health care and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care.
• Advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities.
• Partner with supervising physicians, health care managers, and other health care providers to assess, coordinate, and improve the delivery of health care and patient outcomes.
• Accept responsibility for promoting a safe environment for patient care and recognizing and correcting systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care.
• Use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education.
• Apply medical information and clinical data systems to provide more effective, efficient patient care.
• Utilize the systems responsible for the appropriate payment of services.

References:


