

## COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Friday, February 12, 2010

### DECISION ITEM A-2:

#### Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies To Be Offered by Indiana State University at Terre Haute

#### Staff Recommendation

That the Commission for Higher Education approve the Master of Science (M.S.) in Physician Assistant Studies to be offered by Indiana State University at Terre Haute, in accordance with the background discussion in this agenda item and the *Abstract*, January 29, and

That the Commission recommend no new state funds, in accordance with the supporting document, *New Academic Degree Program Proposal Summary*, January 29, 2010.

#### Background

While there are no public institutions that offer programs to prepare Physician Assistants (PAs), two independent institutions – Butler University and the University of St. Francis – have such programs. Butler began preparing Physician Assistants through its baccalaureate program in 1996, but in 2005 implemented a master's program to prepare Physician Assistants. Butler has graduated an average of 33 Physician Assistants over the past ten years. The University is currently admitting about 50 students per year.

Indiana has the third lowest ratio of physician assistants per million population (98 PAs/million population); only Arkansas and Mississippi have lower ratios (54 and 29, respectively). In the 12-state MHEC region, two-thirds of the states have PA-to-population ratios that fall between 235 and 524, well above Indiana's ratio (see table below). MHEC states with ratios closest to that of Indiana's are Missouri (108), Illinois (152), and Ohio (170).

	Physician Assistants per 1 Million Population
Illinois	152
Indiana	98
Iowa	255
Kansas	286
Michigan	291
Minnesota	235
Missouri	108
Nebraska	416
North Dakota	381
Ohio	170
South Dakota	524
Wisconsin	275

In Indiana, licensure as a Physician Assistant requires graduating from an accredited college or university and successfully completing the national certifying examination (PANCE), which is administered by the National Commission of Certification of Physician Assistants.

Physician Assistants have roles that are somewhat comparable to Nurse Practitioners (NPs), especially Family NPs, although Physician Assistants tend to work more directly under a supervising physician and are mostly trained as generalists. Physician Assistants are eligible for certification as Medicare and Medicaid providers, and generally receive favorable reimbursement from commercial payers. They also perform the duties and responsibilities that are delegated by the supervising physician and within the physician's scope of practice, including assessment, diagnosis, patient teaching, prescribing and dispensing medications, and providing referrals.

Nurse Practitioners are typically prepared at the master's level and above. There are 148 accredited Physician Assistant programs, most of which are at the master's level, although there are some baccalaureate level and even a few remaining associate degree programs.

Indiana State University has a strong track record of preparing nursing and health professionals for rural areas. This emphasis will also characterize the PA program, with special attention given to placing students in rural clinical rotations. At the same time, clinical rotations in underserved urban locations will also be sought. The program proposal has the endorsement of the Indiana Primary Care Health Association.

## **Supporting Documents**

- (1) *Abstract – Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies To Be Offered by Indiana State University at Terre Haute, January 29, 2010.*
- (2) *New Academic Degree Program Proposal Summary – M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies, January 29, 2010.*

## Abstract

Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies  
To Be Offered by  
Indiana State University at Terre Haute

January 29, 2010

**Objectives:** To create a student-centered educational environment that engages individuals to become compassionate, competent physician assistants who possess the clinical skills to contribute positively to the dynamic health care needs of rural and underserved populations.

**Clientele to be Served:** Baccalaureate prepared students from a variety of backgrounds who may enroll directly after completion of their undergraduate degree or, after working in the health care fields for a variable length of time.

**Curriculum:** A total of 93 semester credit hours are required to complete the program, distributed as follows:

Didactic Year (45 credit hours)

- Bioscience (4)
- Physical Diagnosis (3)
- Clinical Science (3)
- Intro to Physician Assistant Practice (2)
- Health Behavior Theory (3)
- Clinical Medicine I & II (8)
- Specialty Care I (4) & II (3)
- Pharmacotherapeutics I & II (6)
- Clinical Management I (4) & II (3)
- Applied Research (2)

Clinical Year (36 credit hours)

- Clinical Skills (3)
- Family Medicine Rotation (3)
- Emergency Medicine Rotation (3)
- General Surgery Rotation (3)
- Clinical Project (3)
- Women's Health Rotation (3)
- Internal Medicine Rotation (3)
- Geriatrics Rotation (3)
- Behavioral Medicine Rotation (3)
- Pediatrics Rotation (3)
- Floating Rotation (3)
- Elective Rotation I (3)

Clinical/Didactic (12 credit hours)

- Elective Rotation II (3)
- Clinical Management III (4)
- Physician Assistant Practice Transition (5)

***Employment Possibilities:*** Employment opportunities are available in a wide range of medical settings.

**NEW ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAM PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

January 29, 2010

**I. Prepared by Institution**

Institution/Location: Indiana State University to be offered at Terre Haute

Program: M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies

	Year 1 FY2011	Year 2 FY2012	Year 3 FY2013	Year 4 FY2014	Year 5 FY2015
Enrollment Projections (Headcount)					
Full-Time	30	60	90	90	90
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	0
Total	30	60	90	90	90
Enrollment Projections (FTE)					
Full-Time	30	60	90	90	90
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	0
Total	30	60	90	90	90
Degree Completions Projection	0	0	30	30	30
New State Funds Requested (Actual) *	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
New State Funds Requested (Increases) *	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

**II. Prepared by CHE**

New State Funds To Be Considered For Recommendation (Actual) *	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
New State Funds To Be Considered For Recommendation (Increases) *	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CHE Code: 10-02

Campus Code: 9563

County: Vigo

Degree Level: 07

CIP Code: Federal – 510912; State – 510912

\* Excludes new state dollars that may be provided through enrollment change funding.