

Institutional Approvals and Dates of Approval

FMU Graduate Council	Date of approval – January 21, 2014
FMU Faculty Senate	Date of approval – February 4, 2014
FMU Full Faculty	Date of approval – February 18, 2014
FMU Provost	Date of approval – February 20, 2014
FMU President	Date of approval – February 21, 2014
Board of Trustees	Date of approval – February 28, 2014

Background Information

Provide a detailed description of the proposed modification, including its nature and purpose and centrality to institutional mission. (1500 characters)

Purpose of Program Modification

The Francis Marion University Physician Assistant Program seeks to modify its existing program to better align the content of the first semester courses. After careful faculty assessment using expert curriculum knowledge and student feedback, the faculty re-divided and aligned the content of its first semester courses. Originally, anatomy and physical assessment skills were taught in one course but with the modification, physical assessment will be shifted to the second semester after students have a stronger medical foundation. Additionally, physiology was separated from introduction to pharmacology to provide adequate time for both of these important curriculum pieces. Furthermore, the role of physician assistants and fundamentals of medicine were also separated into two (2) courses to better provide focused instruction. The overall credit hours for the first semester were not changed. These changes will be implemented with cohort two (2) and reevaluated for effectiveness.

ACAP

9/14/17

Agenda Item 3b

Purpose of Program

The Francis Marion University Physician Assistant Program seeks to educate excellent primary care physician assistants by providing outstanding instruction, state-of-the-art facilities and technology, and an atmosphere of collegial academic inquiry. Physician assistants from this program will fill a need in South Carolina for healthcare professionals, particularly in rural and other medically underserved areas with an emphasis on improving access to primary care.

Congruence with Mission

FMU's mission is to make available excellent education programs for the people of the region and the state. The University offers bachelor's degrees in a wide range of liberal arts disciplines, as well as in the health sciences, education, and business. The University also offers professional degrees at the baccalaureate, master's, and specialist levels. The University responds to the needs of its region and the state through its academic programs, and for that reason, FMU has developed a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies. This master's program addresses the need for advanced education of healthcare providers in the region and the state, and will be an exceedingly worthwhile addition to the University's list of graduate offerings.

Expanding the pool of master's-prepared healthcare providers in the Pee Dee region and the state is congruent not only with the mission of Francis Marion University but also with the purpose of the Pee Dee Health Education Partnership (PDHEP). The PDHEP—a consortium that includes FMU, the University of South Carolina, McLeod Health, and Carolinas Hospital System—was approved by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education in October 2008. The Pee Dee Health Education Partnership is intended to provide graduate programs in the health care area for the benefit of northeastern South Carolina and the state. In its strategic plan, the PA program is identified as a priority of the PDHEP. This program will increase the number of master's-prepared healthcare providers possessing the advanced knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to provide quality health care in the region and the state.

Relationship to Other Programs at FMU

Francis Marion University already offers a MSN/Family Nurse Practitioner degree and the students in the PA program will share selected classes and resources with the MSN/FNP program. The interaction between PA students and faculty and Family Nurse Practitioner students and faculty is a positive feature of the PA program as it emulates working conditions in the health care profession, which increasingly emphasizes health care teams. Interprofessional education has been supported by the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC), comprised of 6 professional associations of health education, in a report from an expert panel in 2011. In March 2013 the Institute of Medicine released a report supporting the role of interprofessional education in improving delivery of healthcare.

ACAP
9/14/17
Agenda Item 3b

List the objectives of the modified program. (1500 characters)

Objectives

The specific objectives of this modified program are to:

Provide high quality graduate education that is accessible to students in South Carolina aspiring to become physician assistants (PAs); and
Increase the number of primary care providers (PCP) in the region and the state.

Assessment of Need

Provide an assessment of the need for the program modification for the institution, the state, the region, and beyond, if applicable. (1500 characters)

Need for the Program Modification

The Francis Marion University Physician Assistant Program seeks to modify its existing program to better serve its students within the program. Specifically, the modification works to align first semester courses with needed foundational PA content. The courses were separated so that they were more focused for example pathophysiology was integrated with pharmacology. These two important pieces were taught by two different faculty members and the evaluation of knowledge acquisition was separated in the assessment methods. Separating the two (2) components was clearer to the students and this was brought to faculty attention by student feedback.

ACAP

9/14/17

Agenda Item 3b

Need for the Program

The Association of American Medical Colleges predicts a growing shortage of physicians in the current decade with 45,000 too few primary care physicians by 2020. This shortage will greatly affect the Pee Dee and other rural areas of the state. These areas are already identified as medically underserved by the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, which considers the "continuing physician shortage, especially in rural areas," to be a major problem. Physician Assistants (PAs) are needed to address the growing shortage of primary care and family medicine providers.

According to the SC Health Professions Data Book (2014), there are currently 960 PAs practicing in the State of SC. Within the 12 county Pee Dee AHEC region, there are 158 PAs practicing, with 120 in Florence, Horry, and Sumter counties. Other counties are low in PAs and Lee county does not have any.

As documented by the 2009 I-95 Corridor Study, poverty and high unemployment rates contribute to serious health problems in the northeastern section of South Carolina. Diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and stroke occur at rates higher than national averages. As already noted, much of northeastern South Carolina is rural, a circumstance that tends to limit access to health care services. The Pee Dee region includes large numbers of low-income families and minorities who constitute a medically underserved population. The PA Program at Francis Marion University (FMU) will help alleviate the health care needs of this population.

National statistics show an urgent demand for PAs to assist in filling a current 30% shortage of primary-care physicians. To compound the shortage of primary care physicians, fewer than 10% of medical students are choosing to become primary care practitioners (PCPs) upon graduation (NPR, 2009). Former Health and Human Services Department Secretary Donna Shalala spoke of this service dilemma in a 2009 interview with National Public Radio: "The shortage is related to primary care. We have lots of specialists in the country."

Northeastern South Carolina is affected by the shortage of PCPs. Depending on what classifications are used; rural residents make up 20 to 21% of the total U. S. population and are served by only 10% of the country's physicians. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, South Carolina is 24% rural. Of the 4 AHEC regions in South Carolina, the Pee Dee region has the lowest number of primary care physicians (7.8 primary care physicians per 10,000; 9.6 per 10,000 in the entire state) (SC Health Professions Data Book, 2014). Eight of the 12 counties in the Pee Dee region are classified as Health Profession Shortage Areas (HPSAs) for Primary Care by the US Department of Health and Human Services due to unmet healthcare needs. The other 4 counties, Darlington, Florence, Georgetown and Horry, are classified as partial HPSAs due to geographic or population disparities. The high quality, cost-effective care delivered by PAs in partnership with physicians is part of the solution to the PCP dilemma facing the Pee Dee region and other rural areas of the state and the nation.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook published by Bureau of Labor and Statistics forecasts growth of 38% in PA numbers between 2012 and 2022 which compares to 11% for all occupations. This is in part due to shortage of physicians, the growing need for primary care providers and expansion in the procedure PAs are certified to do. PAs are medical professionals who are nationally certified and state-licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. All PAs are graduates of an accredited PA educational program. PAs obtain medical histories, conduct physical examinations, diagnose and treat illnesses, prescribe

ACAP

9/14/17

Agenda Item 3b

medication, order and interpret lab tests, perform procedures, assist in surgery, provide patient education and counseling, and make rounds in hospitals and nursing homes. “In rural and medically underserved areas, physician assistants may be the primary care providers at clinics where a physician is present only 1 or 2 days per week.” (BLS)

For additional information on medically-underserved populations and primary care provider shortages in the Pee Dee region and in the state of South Carolina, please see the South Carolina DHEC website:

<http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/FHPF/WaiversforHealthcareProfessionalShortages/shortagemaps/>.

Will the proposed modification impact any existing programs and services at the institution?

Yes

No

If yes, explain. (1000 characters)

List of Similar Programs in South Carolina

Program Name	Institution	Similarities	Differences
Masters in Physician Assistant Studies	(MUSC) Medical University of South Carolina	Both work to train PAs to become primary care providers in the state. Both have didactic and clinical instruction elements.	The FMU program will concentrate on developing primary care practitioners for rural areas and providing opportunities for South Carolina residents to obtain this training in compliance with the university's mission. The FMU program includes interprofessional training with our Nurse Practitioner program which enhances the integrated team approach to offering primary care. MUSC's program consists of 114 semester hours. FMU's Program consists of 98 semester hours
Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies	(USC) University of South Carolina	Both work to train PAs to become primary care providers in the state. Both have didactic and clinical instruction elements.	The FMU program will concentrate on developing primary care practitioners for rural areas and providing opportunities for South Carolina residents to obtain this training in compliance with the university's mission. The FMU program includes interprofessional training with our Nurse Practitioner program which enhances the integrated team approach to offering primary care. USC's program consists of 112 semester hours. FMU's Program consists of 98 semester hours
Master of Medical Science - PA Medicine program	North Greenville University	Both work to train PAs to become primary care providers in the state. Both have didactic and clinical instruction elements.	The FMU program includes interprofessional training with our Nurse Practitioner program which enhances the integrated team approach to offering primary care. North Greenville's program consists of 131 semester hours. FMU's Program consists of 98 semester hours.

ACAP
9/14/17
Agenda Item 3b

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Description of the Program

Projected New Enrollment						
Year	Fall		Spring		Summer	
	Headcount	Credit Hours	Headcount	Credit Hours	Headcount	Credit Hours
2016-2017	32	512	32	480	32	480
2017-2018	64	992	64	768	64	768
2018-2019	96	1376	64	768	64	768
2019-2020	96	1376	64	768	64	768
2020-2021	96	1376	64	768	64	768

****NOTE** No new enrollment is expected due to the Program Modification.**

Curriculum

Attach a curriculum sheet identifying the courses required for the program.

Didactic Courses

Semester I 16hrs

- PA 500 Anatomy
- PA 507 Physiology
- PA 509 Introduction to Pharmacology
- PA 511 The Role of the Physician Assistant and Introduction to the PA Profession
- PA 512 Fundamentals of Medical Science
- PA 513 Interpersonal Communication and History Taking
- PA 506/APRN 506 Health Systems and Risk Management

Semester II 15 hours

- PA 521 Integrative Pathophysiology and Pharmacotherapeutic I
- PA 523 Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis and Application I
- PA 525 Clinical Interventions and Diagnostics I
- PA 505/APRN 505 Population Health and Epidemiology

Semester III 15 hours

- PA 631 Integrative Pathophysiology and Pharmacotherapeutics II
- PA 633 Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis and Application II
- PA 635 Clinical Interventions and Diagnostics II
- PA 603/APRN 503 Advanced Research and Evidence-based Practice

Semester IV 15 hours

- PA 641 Integrative Pathophysiology and Pharmacotherapeutics III
- PA 643 Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis and Application III
- PA 645 Clinical Interventions and Diagnostics III
- PA 607/APRN 707 Clinical Decision-Making and Ethics

ACAP
9/14/17
Agenda Item 3b

Faculty

Provide a brief explanation of any additional institutional changes in faculty and/or administrative assignment that may result from implementing the proposed program modification. (1000 characters)

****NOTE** No new Faculty are needed due to the Program Modification.**

Resources

Identify any new library/learning resources, new instructional equipment, and new facilities or modifications to existing facilities needed to support the modified program. (2000 characters)

****NOTE** No additional resources are needed due to the Program Modification.**

Financial Support

****NOTE** No new estimated costs or sources of funding are required due to the Program Modification.**

Estimated New Costs by Year						
Category	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Program Administration	154,000	157,080	160,222	163,426	166,695	801,423
Faculty and Staff Salaries	381,000	623,220	655,684	668,798	682,174	3,010,876
Graduate Assistants	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equipment	400,000	150,000	0	100,000	0	650,000
Facilities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies and Materials	40,000	60,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	310,000
Library Resources	37,000	38,850	40,793	42,832	44,973	204,448
Clerical/Support Personnel	78,000	79,560	81,151	82,774	84,430	405,915
Other* Accreditation and Clinical preceptors	10,000	163,600	240,400	240,400	240,000	894,800
Total	1,100,000	1,272,310	1,248,250	1,368,230	1,288,672	6,277,462
Sources of Financing						
Category	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Tuition Funding	711,360	1,451,174	1,726,898	1,761,436	1,796,665	7,447,533
Program-Specific Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-
State Funding (i.e., Special State Appropriation)*	357,000	357,000	357,000	357,000	357,000	1,785,000
Reallocation of Existing Funds*	-	-	-	-	-	-

ACAP
 9/14/17
 Agenda Item 3b

Federal Funding*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Funding*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,068,360	1,808,174	2,083,898	2,118,436	2,153,665	9,232,533
Net Total (i.e., Sources of Financing Minus Estimated New Costs)	-31,640	535,864	835,648	750,206	864,993	2,955,071

*Provide an explanation for these costs and sources of financing in the budget justification.

****NOTE** No new estimated costs or sources of funding are required due to the Program Modification.**

ACAP
9/14/17
Agenda Item 3b

Budget Justification

Provide a brief explanation for the other new costs and any special sources of financing (state funding, reallocation of existing funds, federal funding, or other funding) identified in the Financial Support table. (1000 characters)

Note: Institutions need to complete this budget justification *only* if any other new costs, state funding, reallocation of existing funds, federal funding, or other funding are included in the Financial Support table.

****NOTE** No new estimated costs or sources of funding are required due to the Program Modification.**

Evaluation and Assessment

Will any the proposed modification impact the way the program is evaluated and assessed?

Yes

No

If yes, explain. (1000 characters)

ACAP
9/14/17
Agenda Item 3b

Will the proposed modification affect or result in program-specific accreditation?

Yes

No

If yes, explain; if the modification will result in the program seeking program-specific accreditation, provide the institution's plans to seek accreditation, including the expected timeline for accreditation. (500 characters)

****NOTE** No accreditation issues are affected due to the Program Modification.**

Will the proposed modification affect or lead to licensure or certification?

Yes

No

If yes, explain how the program will prepare students for licensure or certification. (500 characters)

ACAP
9/14/17
Agenda Item 3b

****NOTE** No certification issues are affected due to the Program Modification.**

The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) is the organization that administers the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE). Only students graduating from programs accredited by ARC-PA are qualified to sit for PANCE. The curriculum and practice standards set by ARC-PA are in place to provide programs that produce students who are prepared for licensure. Individuals who successfully complete PANCE can use the initials PA-C (Physician Assistant-Certified) after their names.

Teacher or School Professional Preparation Programs

Is the proposed modified program a teacher or school professional preparation program?

Yes

No

If yes, complete the following components.

Area of Certification

Attach a document addressing the South Carolina Department of Education Requirements and SPA or Other National Specialized and/or Professional Association Standards.