Northeastern University
Physician Assistant Program Goals Report
2013-2014

Program Goals:

- Attract individuals from diverse backgrounds to the Physician Assistant Program
- Prepare students to become effective members of an interprofessional team and leaders in health care and the community.
- Graduate competent medical practitioners who are in high-demand by employers.
- Prepare students as critical thinkers and lifelong learners.
In 2013, the Program Director initiated a review of the Program Goals. The purpose of this review was to ensure the goals are concordant with the mission and strategic plan of the program as a whole, as well as that of the Bouvé College of Health Sciences.

The program goals are as follows:

- **Attract individuals from diverse backgrounds to the Physician Assistant Program.**

There is a great need for diversity within the PA profession. As the United States becomes increasingly diverse, a diverse health care workforce will be ideally situated to deliver high quality, culturally sensitive health care. At Northeastern University, we acknowledge this need and are proud of the progress we have made in admitting individuals from diverse backgrounds. While students from diverse backgrounds must still meet the University’s rigorous admission criteria and are not given any priority in admission (admissions decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, genetics, nationality, veteran’s status, disability or age), we have been successful in admitting diverse classes over the past 4 years.

**Diversity: Students from Educationally Disadvantaged Backgrounds**

At Northeastern University’s PA program, the number of matriculated students reporting educationally disadvantaged backgrounds on their CASPA applications has increased from 5.8% in 2010 to nearly 40% in 2013.
Diversity: Historically Under-represented Populations

The Northeastern University PA program has maintained a student body with historically under-represented population representation for many years. After identifying diversity as a program goal in 2013, the program has seen an increase in historically under-represented population representation in the admitted class.

We are proud of our success in admitting physician assistant students from diverse backgrounds. Upon graduation, individuals from diverse and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds should be well situated to provide socially and culturally sensitive health care in the communities from which they come.
Prepare students to become effective members of an interprofessional team and leaders in health care and the community.

Effective interprofessional collaboration is an important part of safe, effective clinical practice. Our graduates report very effective interprofessional collaboration upon graduation. In fact, 98% of graduates over the last 3 years report feeling confident in interprofessional practice.*

The vast majority (92%) of graduates participating in the survey strongly agreed or totally agreed that they felt confident in interprofessionalism upon graduation.
To continuously improve the interprofessional competence of our graduates going forward, it is necessary to promote interprofessional competence as an integral component of the curriculum. The vast majority of our didactic year courses (14 of the 22 courses or 64%) either include specific learning objectives pertaining to interprofessional practice or are taught by interprofessional faculty.

New interprofessional curricular components are added on a regular basis to increase the interprofessional competence of our graduates. Recently, the Principles of Medicine course was enhanced with the addition of an Interprofessional Case-Based Clinical Learning Experience, or ICCLE. In this unit, PA students critically analyze clinical patient scenarios with students from other health professional disciplines within the Bouvé College of Health Sciences.
Another example of a new interprofessional experience available to our students as of the 2013-2014 academic year is an oral health examination workshop presented by Harvard Dental School students and faculty.

These changes in our interprofessional curriculum are designed to make Northeastern Physician Assistant graduates competent, effective members of interprofessional health care teams.
Graduate competent medical practitioners who are in high-demand by employers.

Northeastern University Physician Assistant graduates are highly regarded for their medical and professional competence. Our alumni report feeling competent in all measured skill areas upon graduation.*
Perhaps the best measure of the competence of our graduates is reflected in their ease in finding employment after graduation.

100% of our graduates report employment within 1 year of graduation, and the majority report being offered a job prior to graduation.* This high graduation employment rate demonstrates the confidence employers have in the competence of our graduates.
Prepare students as critical thinkers and lifelong learners.

The standard measure of proficiency in medical and professional education and critical thinking for Physician Assistant students is their performance on the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam or PANCE. Northeastern PA students consistently earn high scores on the PANCE, and our first time pass rate has exceeded the national pass rate for four of the last five years.

*Statistics based upon graduate survey conducted in 2013-2014 academic year, (response rate 51%, N=52).