



**WAYNE STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

**Physician Assistant Studies Program**

Strategic Plan  
2021 – 2026

Approved by Faculty: August 31, 2021  
Approved by Advisory Board: November 16, 2021  
Plan Span December 1, 2021-December 1, 2026

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**Physician Assistant Studies  
Strategic Plan 2021-2026**

**WSU Mission**

We will create and advance knowledge, prepare a diverse student body to thrive, and positively impact local and global communities.

**WSU Vision**

We will be a pre-eminent, public, urban research university known for academic and research excellence, success across a diverse student body, and meaningful engagement in its urban community.

**Wayne State University Physician Assistant Studies Mission Statement  
(updated 12/8/2020)**

The mission of the Wayne State University Physician Assistant Studies Program is to develop proficient physician assistants centered in an urban environment who are dedicated to the practice of medicine and service to diverse communities.

**Wayne State University Physician Assistant Studies Vision Statement  
(updated 12/8/2020)**

To advance our accomplishments in research, education and service by cultivating an environment of innovation and excellence. Through these transformative experiences, our students, alumni and faculty will rise to become diverse leaders in the dynamic future of the PA profession.

**Review of Faculty and Staff Changes**

In mid-2018, three of the Program's most senior faculty members departed. Program Director Mr. John McGinnity and Clinical Coordinator, Ms. Lindsey Gietzen resigned from the Program in June 2018. Their exit was preceded by the departure of Academic Coordinator and founding faculty member, Ms. Stephanie Gilkey. Dr. Mary Jo Pilat served as Interim Director until 2019 and accepted the full-time appointment in August 2020. Ms. Bindiya Nandwana and Ms. Aisha Hussein were hired as a 0.5 FTE in October 2018 to assume Clinical Coordinator duties. Ms. Hussein departed WSU in October 2019. Ms. Nandwana was promoted to Director of Clinical Education in October 2020. Faculty member, Ms. Jamie McQueen, was promoted to Director of Academics and Assessment in August 2020.

The WSU-PAS Program also saw the addition of faculty members Ms. Sara Lolar (June 2018), Ms. Courtney Doty (October 2019), and Ms. Corinne Gratson (April 2020). They join Mr. Douglas Howell, Dr. Mary Bee, Dr. Michael Wimmer, and Dr. Philip Pokorski as part of the didactic team. Dr. Mohamed Siddique serves as Medical Director of the Program. The faculty are supported by Ms. Cherri Calhoun (Program Specialist) and Ms. Leslie Coty (Secretary).

The aforementioned position changes occurred over a short period of time, leaving little opportunity for position hand-off. As new faculty entered, it was discovered that there were few formal Program processes and scant details about Program accomplishments. Seeing this as an opportunity for growth, the new Program Leadership developed a variety of committees to not only tackle everyday tasks, but to help the Program reach future goals. The committees are listed below and are set to meet at least quarterly.

- Administrative
- Admissions
- Advisory Board
- Alumni Relations
- CAPP
- Curriculum
- Faculty Development
- Marketing
- Procedures & Policies
- Professionalism
- Scholarship
- Strategic Planning

In addition to faculty/staff committees, step-wise, transparent processes were established, including student manual, clinical year design, and curriculum assessment process. Faculty were also tasked with reviewing and revising the Program's mission and vision statements.

## **Program Evaluation and SWOT Analysis**

In Fall 2020, WSU-PAS formed a Strategic Plan Committee. The group was tasked with reviewing the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan and developing new goals for the 2021-2026 term. The Committee was composed of three faculty members and two alumni. Remaining faculty and the WSU-PAS Advisory Board served as a review panel for the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan.

The Committee started with a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the current WSU-PAS. The results of this analysis were used in developing new Program goals.

### **Strengths:**

- WSU-PAS is located near several large hospital systems in the Greater Detroit Area.
- The Program continues to have high graduation and first time PANCE pass rates.

- The Program has a long history of community involvement.

**Weaknesses:**

- Small percentage of WSU-PAS alumni are actively involved with the program.
- WSU-PAS has been subject to budget cuts and requests for additional funding have been denied.
- Increased faculty to staff ratio.
- Few formal Program processes and procedures are in place.
- Loss of clinical partnerships.

**Opportunities:**

- Increase alumni involvement.
- Increase hands on learning opportunities.
- Increase diversity of faculty, staff and students.

**Threats:**

- Multiple new PA programs in Michigan.
- Leaving of faculty members for other PA programs.
- Health systems aligning with competing schools which could lead to loss of clinical locations.
- Decreasing number of clinical locations.
- COVID-19 has seen a decrease in clinical opportunities for current students and decrease in job opportunities for graduating students.

**Evaluation of 2013-2018 Strategic Plan**

After completion of SWOT Analysis, the Committee moved forward with reviewing the previous Strategic Plan from 2013-2018. The 2013-2018 Strategic Plan contained seven “Strategic Directions”, each of which had multiple goals and objectives. Current Program Leadership has little documentation about Strategic Plan accomplishments prior to Fall 2018. As such, the Committee conducted a review of each goal and objective for completion from 2019 to present. It was then determined whether the goal and/or objective should remain in the strategic plan or was no longer applicable.

## 2013-2018 Master Plan

**Strategic Direction 1:** Student Preparation - Enhance and expand educational experiences that exceed the expectations of students, clinical sites, and the general public.

**Goal 1(a):** *Maximize the enrollment and graduation of WSU PAS students to meet regional and national health care needs within the context of human resource allocation and budgetary constraints.*

Accomplishments:

- 50 students enrolled yearly in compliance with ARC-PA.
- Student retention rates per cohort above 95% yearly.
- 100% on-time graduation rate based on academic readiness since 2016. 99% or higher first time PANCE pass rate.
- Addition of three faculty members: Ms. Sara Lolar, Ms. Corinne Gratson, and Ms. Courtney Doty.
- Increased administrator support with the creation of Director of Academics & Assessments and Director of Clinical Education roles.
- Identified gross program shortfalls and misalignment from our governing bodies (University, accrediting, etc.).
- Realigned budgetary resources to capture missed funding opportunities.

Outstanding/Ongoing:

- Develop a plan with EACPHS administration to allocate human resources to allow appropriate enrollment of students based on market demands.

**Goal 1 (b):** *Enhance PAS Curriculum and student learning.*

Accomplishments:

- Collecting student data with exit surveys.
- Creation of Curriculum Faculty/Staff Committee.
- Faculty development in programmatic assessment knowledge.
- Developed Phase One of a curriculum development proposal.
- Restructuring of clinical year curriculum to better align with University policies and competitive programs.

Outstanding/Ongoing:

- Implementation of data to enhance educational and program experiences.

**Goal 1(c): Expand the number of experiential training sites.**

Accomplishments:

- Identified barriers to obtaining clinical sites.
- Developed goals and long-term strategies for maintaining current clinical sites and recruiting new sites with EACHPS Dean and College Leadership.
- Additional support staff, including Director of Clinical Education, retained to help with clinical year activities.
- Cultivated diverse clinical sites to allow faculty and students to be ambassadors of the WSU PAS program

Outstanding/Ongoing:

- Clinical site communication plan and comprehensive annual clinical site report.

**Strategic Direction 2:** PA Faculty Promotion - Research and Scholarship: Develop WSU PAS faculty as researchers and scholars.

**Goal 2 (a, b, and c): Enhance support for faculty scholarship. Increase success in scholarship/research. Increase WSU PAS faculty contribution to the literature.**

Accomplishments:

- Implemented Microsoft Teams for faculty and staff communication.
- Developed a thorough faculty onboarding process.
- Established various faculty/staff committees.
- 100% participation of all faculty in program committees.
- Faculty members secured over \$100,000 of funding for research activities.
- Increased number of presentations/abstracts/publications by faculty.

Outstanding/Ongoing:

- Provide opportunities for faculty research, journal writing, and lectures.

**Strategic Direction 3:** Enhance the diversity of our academic milieu. Recruitment: Identify and attract qualified students for enrollment.

**Goal 3 (a and b): Increase the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students from underserved communities. Continue the matriculation of highly qualified applicants.**

Accomplishments:

- Wayne State University continues to provide affordable education.
- Creation of Marketing and Scholarship Faculty/Staff Committees.
- Cultivated diverse clinical sites to allow faculty and students to be ambassadors of the WSU PAS program
- Reorganized Admissions Committee to include faculty, staff and Student Affairs Officer in an effort to diversify admissions' process.
- Evaluated the admissions process to create a more holistic and metric based system.

- Incorporated CASPer as a tool to develop a more holistic approach to the admissions process.
- Modified admissions rubric and interview process based on national research trends on admissions' process.
- Incorporated type of medical experience as a factor to increase diversity of matriculated students. Implementation of faculty mentor to all current students in both a group and 1:1 setting.
- Creation of Professionalism and Admissions Faculty/Staff committees.
- Student driven Pre-PA outreach.
- Program faculty and staff continues virtual outreach through university and external organizations

Outstanding/Ongoing:

- Work with the Diversity Advisory Task Force and the College's Cultural Competence Committee to develop a recruitment plan to enhance student mentoring and increase the number of qualified applicants from underrepresented minority and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Marketing

**Strategic Direction 4:** Service Opportunities: Continue our tradition of Service to the Community

**Goal 4: Enhance faculty and student involvement in health related service to the community.**

Accomplishments:

- Service to the community with various health events, including Special Olympics, Cristo Rey "Return to School Safely", Community Health Fairs, Men's Health Fair, PPE donated to frontline workers, Vital signs for Vets, and Apple Days.
- Creation of Student Volunteer Committee.

**Strategic Direction 5:** Develop additional resources to support the advancement of the college's mission.

**Goal 5: *Develop partnerships with industry and health care organizations to expand program initiatives.***

**University Update:** The restructuring of health professional education at Wayne State University has included the addition of a Vice President of Health Affairs. This position is tasked with integrating and expanding resources for all health professional programs within the University, including WSU-PAS.

The Committee determined that this Strategic Direction would not be pursued in the next Strategic Plan due to the creation of the Vice President of Health Affairs position at the University level.

**Strategic Direction 6:** Enhance public awareness of the PA program and EACPHS.

***Goal 6: Work with EACPHS development and administrative offices to create and implement a marketing plan within the next year to promote the WSU PAS program.***

Accomplishments:

- Press releases regarding program accomplishments and community involvement.
- Creation of WSU PAS Facebook page for Program announcements and student/alumni accomplishments.
- Creation of Marketing Faculty/Staff Committee.

Outstanding/Ongoing:

- Collecting and disseminating information on student, faculty, staff, and alumni achievements.

**Strategic Direction 7:** Alumni Development.

***Goal 7: Foster alumni participation in all aspects of the program.***

Accomplishments:

- Establishment of an advisory board primarily composed of alumni in leadership positions.
- Creation of Alumni Relations Faculty/Staff Committee.
- Two alumni on WSU PAS Strategic Plan Committee.
- Adjunct faculty offers to select alumni.
- Sixty percent of principal faculty and 75% of employed instructional faculty are alumni of the Program.
- Increased alumni participation as guest instructors and clinical preceptors.
- Facebook page announcements of alumni accomplishments.
- Email to Class of 2018 and 2019 to update alumni of programmatic changes.
- Yearly Preceptor Appreciation/ Alumni Reception at MAPA.

Outstanding/Ongoing:

- Alumni engagement plan with community outreach.



## 2021-2026 Strategic Goals and Objectives

Using the results of the SWOT analysis and 2013-2018 Master Plan review, the committee developed seven strategic goals. Each goal has specific objectives that will be used to measure the Program's progress. Goals and objectives are listed in order of importance with items listed first deemed to be critical to the Program's future success.

### **Goal 1: Establish a robust assessment process of the Program and curriculum.**

WSU-PAS recognizes that as the Physician Assistant profession evolves, the education of future PAs must adapt accordingly. As such, it is vital that the Program perform regular assessments of its infrastructure, processes, and curriculum.

The above will be accomplished through:

- a. Development of critical assessment tools.
- b. Yearly review of curriculum to ensure alignment with ARC-PA standards.
- c. Yearly review of infrastructure and internal processes for efficiency and effectiveness.
- d. Continued data collection from PACKRAT, PAEA evaluations, student, preceptor, staff, and faculty evaluations.
- e. Cultivate work efforts of the newly formed program driven committees focused on processes and curriculum
- f. Re-instate yearly faculty and staff surveys to determine program needs.
- g. Align program and curriculum with University and National standards.

### **Goal 2: Demonstrate the importance of increased funding to decision makers within EACPHS and Wayne State University.**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment of physician assistants is anticipated to grow 31% from 2019-2029. To meet this anticipated need, several new physician assistant programs are admitting students. With five new programs in the State of Michigan alone, WSU-PAS needs to remain competitive in the Midwest region. Currently, WSU-PAS offers the most inexpensive tuition, \$28,361 less than the next program. The current revenue generated by tuition dollars is not sufficient to maintain the program for the foreseeable future, let alone provide for more aggressive marketing. A budget increase is needed and must be demonstrated to key decision makers within the University.

This above will be accomplished through:

- a. Transparency in fiscal support.
- b. Continuous monitoring and comparison of WSU-PAS resources with peers.
- c. Reporting to decision-makers how curriculum, clinical rotations, hands-on classroom opportunities, and marketing will suffer if additional funding is not obtained.

- d. Demonstrate how additional funding is needed in order to keep program accreditation in terms of human resources, qualified site procurement, and program fiscal support for innovative curricula advancements.

**Goal 3: Establish faculty/staff culture that allows for professional growth, research, and scholarship.**

The WSU-PAS Program recognizes that developing its faculty and staff is an essential means to program success. The Program seeks to provide faculty and staff opportunities beyond the classroom.

The above will be accomplished through:

- a. Use of communication channels to allow free flow of ideas and collaboration on Program happenings.
- b. Opportunities to serve on Program committees.
- c. Establish a programmatic mentoring program.
- d. Encourage scholarly research, publications, professional presentations that enhance student learning and/or contribute to professional development.
- e. Encourage faculty to seek financial resources, both internal and external, to promote areas of research interests.
- f. Encourage faculty to seek outside mentors and/or participate in the college mentoring program.
- g. Establish advancement timelines for faculty interested in promotion.

**Goal 4: Promote a culture of professionalism, service, and community among new and current students.**

Service and community are embedded deep within the physician assistant profession. In keeping with this tradition, WSU-PAS will weave the themes of professionalism, service, and community throughout its curriculum. The Program currently has various service projects and an informal mentorship program between Y2/Y1 students and wishes to expand opportunities for students.

The above will be accomplished through:

- a. Establishing a formal Y2/Y1 mentorship program.
- b. Establishing a community PA/Y2 mentorship program.
- c. Providing additional service project opportunities for students.
- d. Implementation of professionalism lecture into curriculum.
- e. Providing opportunities for student/faculty research and journal writing.
- f. Engage students into public service projects.
- g. Incorporate students into subject appropriate faculty/staff committees.

**Goal 5: Increase awareness of WSU-PAS to prospective students in an effort to recruit both qualified and diverse students.**

With five new physician assistant programs in Michigan alone, it is vital that WSU-PAS increase its marketing and recruitment efforts. The Program seeks to recruit students that are representative of the diverse communities which the University serves.

The above will be accomplished through:

- a. Redesign of WSU-PAS website with updated program information.
- b. Creation of PA School guides for prospective students.
- c. Establish social media presence to include Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.
- d. Regular public announcements of program/student/faculty/alumni achievements on WSU-PAS website, press releases, and social media.
- e. Work to increase the number of qualified applicants from underrepresented minority and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- f. Continued communication with pre-PA programs/societies throughout Michigan and Midwest.
- g. Continued involvement in local community outreach.

**Goal 6: Cultivate alumni involvement throughout the program.**

WSU-PAS has a robust alumni base, however the Program acknowledges that alumni involvement in the program is relatively low. Previously, there has been scant communication from the Program to alumni. To improve relations between WSU-PAS and alumni, the Program will embark on a campaign to re-introduce the Program to alumni, recognize alumni excellence, and to create awareness of opportunities for alumni involvement including guest lecturing, skills demonstrations, precepting students, and grading.

The above will be accomplished through:

- a. Creating a current database of WSU-PAS alumni.
- b. Establishing a quarterly communication schedule.
- c. Developing email updates and Program newsletters.
- d. Hosting regular alumni events.
- e. Continuing efforts by the WSU-PAS Advisory Board
- f. Expand social media efforts of exposure and communication with alumni
- g. Increase alumni outreach

**Goal 7: Evaluate and select highly qualified students for program acceptance.**

The WSU-PAS Program is a rigorous 24-month program. With a class size of 50, it is imperative to select only the most qualified applicants to ensure successful program matriculation and PANCE pass rate. The Program seeks to achieve 100% on time graduation rate as well as first time pass rate on the PANCE of 98% or above.

The above will be accomplished through:

- a. Yearly review of application requirements, application review process, interview format, and student selection.
- b. Data collection from PACKRAT, PAEA evaluations, student, preceptor, and faculty evaluations.
- c. Continued research on nationwide trends and profession demands.
- d. A more robust data tracking of student profiles (i.e. academic site of prerequisite courses, specific work experience, letter of reference, personal statements and supplementary material).

## References

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Physician Assistants, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm> (visited February 8, 2021).