Achieving our Program Goals

This document was created 30 months after the PA program at BU matriculated its first Class of 2016. Most of the outcome data presented below relates to the final outcomes of the first class. The program goals are listed below and the corresponding achievements are italicized.

The goals of the PA Program are to prepare students intellectually and socially to:

Establish a therapeutic rapport with their patient which facilitates an accurate, patient-centered interview and physical examination,
- Review of our curriculum mapping and student evaluations suggests the program has sufficient and effective didactic and skills-related instruction in history taking and physical examination.
- In the last four months of the clinical phase, Class of 2016 preceptors rated our students as consistently effective for history-taking and physical examination skills. Relationships with patients were rated as consistently effective to exceeds expectations using the same scale.
- PA certification exam (PANCE) results revealed our students performed equivalent to the national mean of other first-time test takers on the “History Taking and Performing Physical Exam” Questions.

Order appropriate diagnostic studies, interpret the findings, formulate a differential diagnosis, and in collaboration with both the supervising physician and the patient, develop an appropriate treatment plan,
- Review of our curriculum mapping and student evaluations suggests we have sufficient and effective didactic and skills-related instruction in clinical evaluation, formulating a differential diagnosis and developing treatment plans.
- In the last four months of the clinical phase, Class of 2016 preceptors rated our students as consistently effective in utilizing their knowledge of diagnostic studies, clinical reasoning and development of effective clinical managements plans.
- All students in the Class of 2016 passed the PANCE (PA certifying exam) on the first attempt (100%) and performed at the national mean of first-time test takers on ordering and interpreting diagnostic studies, formulating differential diagnoses and developing treatment plans.

Be effective observers, listeners, communicators and diagnosticians,
- In the last four months of the clinical phase, Class of 2016 preceptors rated our students consistently effective to exceeds expectations in their relationships with patients and interactions with peers, physicians and other health care professionals. Students also were rated as consistently effective to exceeds expectations as clinical problem solvers and critical thinkers.
- Review of our curriculum mapping and student evaluations of the curriculum suggests we have sufficient didactic and skills related curricula to communication.

Use culture sensitivity to maintain empathy while caring for patients
- Prior to starting the clinical phase students are exposed to clinical cases in small group seminars that highlight differences in approach to the patient based on culture and are taught the proper
techniques to work with an interpreter during a clinical encounter.

- Our students are exposed to a variety of cultures at our clinical training sites and learn to communicate with patients of different races, religions, and nationalities including how to properly interact with interpreters. The Class of 2016 reported that 35% of their patients were from African-American or Hispanic-Latino backgrounds, which afforded them the opportunity to practice caring for a diverse population of patients.

Develop a trusting relationship with their supervising physician, while adhering to the concept of team-based care

- Our students learn to interact and work with physicians early on by giving them multiple opportunities to interact with attending physicians and medical students in various ways.

- The BU PA faculty model this goal as our team consists of full and part-time PAs and physicians.

- We provide a medical education fellowship to several rising second year medical students each summer to learn about PA education and to provide teaching assistance to our new PA students.

- PA students spend two semesters in the didactic year in the same classroom as BUSM second year medical students learning medicine, pathology and pharmacology. PA students take the same examinations and participate in the small group sessions with the medical students. Results from the Class of 2016 demonstrate that the PA students achieved mean exam scores comparable to the medical students in each module exam.

- We also provide an interprofessional oral health curriculum where PA students get to learn from dentists and dental students and broaden their understanding of team-based care.

- In a novel primary care interprofessional collaboration, select PA students participate in a longitudinal primary care clinic with medical students, social work students and nutrition students.

Identify and respond to medical emergencies

- Each student completes an EM didactic module in the first year and a mandatory rotation in emergency medicine during the clinical phase. The Class of 2016 was rated consistently effective in the clinical preceptor evaluation of the student by the preceptors.

- All of our students are certified in ACLS before they begin their clinical rotations.

- On average each PA student in the Class of 2016 cared for a mean of 124 patients in the emergency department during their clinical phase.

Advocate for patient safety and participate in quality improvement

- Review of our curriculum mapping and student evaluations suggests we have sufficient and effective didactic and skills-related instruction related to patient safety and quality improvement. In addition, certain clinical rotations have students participate in longitudinal QI projects.

- Our students are invited to join the BU student chapter of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), which is an internationally recognized organization that promotes patient safety and quality improvement.

- Each student successfully completed an analysis of a QI project in their Preventive Medicine course.

Practice medicine in an ethical and professional manner

- All of our students become certified by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (in
in conjunction with the BU Institutional Review Board) in biomedical research ethics as well as both research and clinical HIPAA training.

- Preceptors evaluated the Class of 2016 professionalism mean score as consistently effective to exceeds expectations during the clinical phase of the program.

Identify gaps in the medical and educational literature by critical analysis and propose a novel research project to address the issues

- BU offers a rigorous research curriculum, which includes course work, journal clubs, and culminates in the production of a hypothesis-driven thesis that helps students hone their skills in using medical literature to practice medicine and critical evaluate evidence.

- Each students’ thesis project is archived in the BU Mugar library.

- Preceptors evaluated the Class of 2016 students’ ability to use Evidence-Based Medicine as consistently effective in the clinical environment.

Care for patients from vulnerable populations in all health care settings, including patient centered medical homes and accountable care organizations,

- Our three major teaching hospitals: Boston Medical Center, Veterans Affairs-Boston (and Manchester NH) Healthcare System, and Roger Williams Medical Center care for large proportions of the NE region’s vulnerable patient populations. The VA sites use the patient-centered medical home model and Boston Medical Center utilizes the accountable care organization model.

- According to the class of 2016 student logs of their patient encounters, 22% of the patients seen by students were covered by Medicare whereas 34% of the patients either had no insurance coverage or Mass Health/Medicaid coverage.

- On average each 2016 PA student completed four rotations in the Veterans Health systems which exposed them to caring for veterans and the unique care environment.

- Prior to graduation, 43% of the students had signed contracts for employment.

- While students were educated in an environment caring for vulnerable populations, to date 22% will be caring for underserved patients.

Demonstrate leadership by participation in volunteer and professional organizations.

- Our students established a tobacco cessation booth as well as an oral health screening booth in collaboration with Boston Healthcare for the Homeless. They performed volunteer screenings and education during a homeless women’s health fair in the fall of 2014, 2015 and will do so again in a few weeks (2016).

- One of our 2016 students completed an Albert Schweitzer Fellowship; the student was among the first PA students to be awarded this fellowship. The fellowship is an internationally renowned opportunity for rising leaders in community health. She completed a project called “Health Hearts for the Homeless” at a homeless shelter in Boston.

- Our students participate in the yearly Massachusetts State PA Students on the Hill Day in which students learn about the government and policy side of healthcare. They are given a crash course in lobbying and sent out to meet with state senators and representatives to advocate for the PA profession.

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• One of our students in the Class of 2016 was in the inaugural class of PAEA Future Educators.

• In addition, four students attended the AAPA student lobby event in Washington, DC in order to learn more about leadership and advocating for the PA profession. In spring 2017, another cohort of first and second year students will participate in this conference.

• PA faculty are involved in many professional leadership activities. Drs. Berkowitz and White led the Massachusetts initiative to create PA competencies around safe opioid prescribing. Dr. Berkowitz is a member for the PAEA Research Council. Dr. White is a member of the PAEA End of Rotation Exam committee (women’s health). Ms. Reffel our newest faculty member has attended her first PAEA forum and served as a Moderator. Ms. Warner is a feature editor for the Journal of PA Education, Chair-Elect of the NCCPA Board of Directors and an accreditation site visitor.