

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents

From: Board Office

Subject: Reaccreditation of the Physician Assistant Program,
College of Medicine, University of Iowa

Date: September 5, 2000

Recommended Action:

Receive the report on reaccreditation of the Physician Assistant Program at the University of Iowa.

Executive Summary:

On April 30, 1999, the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Professionals (CAAHEP), through its Accreditation Review Committee on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), granted continuing accreditation of the Physician Assistant Program at the University of Iowa. ARC-PA requested an interim report to provide information on behavioral objectives of several Physician Assistant (PA) courses which are integrated with the sophomore medical student curriculum. The Program has provided the information and the Committee has granted reaccreditation until 2006, when the next site visit will be made.

Background and Analysis:

Physician Assistants (PAs) are health professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. Within the physician/PA relationship, the PAs are responsible for making medical decisions and providing a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. PAs function in a variety of settings: medical offices, hospital emergency rooms, nursing homes, rural satellite clinics, and patient homes.

The University of Iowa PA Program was begun in 1974. Based on the performance of graduates on the Physician Assistant National Certificate Examination (PANCE), it has been one of the leading programs in the country. Graduates consistently pass the PANCE with scores in the high ninety-percent range (national average is 85 percent).

The SUI program was last visited and accredited in 1993. The Self Study for this most recent accreditation was prepared in 1998; the site visit occurred in November 1998.

The Graduate College of the University of Iowa awards the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) and the College of Medicine awards a Certificate of Completion to graduates of the PA Program. The Program is slightly more than two years -- 25 months. The second year of the Program includes 48 weeks of supervised clinical practice.

Twenty-five students are admitted to the program annually. An average of 19.4 persons complete the program each year. Approximately one-third of the graduates have remained in Iowa (37 percent); another 27% are located in contiguous states. More than one-third (40.8 percent) are located in communities of less than 40,000 and nearly one-fourth (24.1 percent) are in a community of 10,000 or fewer. The Self Study reported that more than 300 PAs were working in Iowa.

Concerns Addressed

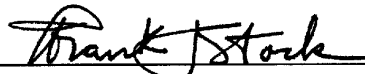
Inadequate Number of Core Faculty. The Self Study noted that a University program review had concluded that the number of core faculty members was inadequate, given the teaching, clinical, research, and administrative duties. In 1998, there were 45 faculty members participating in the Program, however, there were no full-time faculty participants. The Self Study concluded that the program had 5.3 FTE faculty for the core curriculum and 4.2 FTE-equivalent part-time faculty for other aspects of the program, for a grand total of 9.3 FTE. *Response: The 2000 Interim Report noted that an additional faculty member had been hired whose responsibilities include serving as Director of Curriculum and Evaluation.*

Behavioral Objectives of Clinical Courses. In its approval letter, ARC-PA asked that the Interim Report address Standard II. B. 2. a, and made this specific comment: "Although the didactic preparation of students for the clinical year is excellent, written behavioral objectives and competencies were not readily available in course syllabi for all courses in the didactic phase." *Response: The Interim Report contained the behavioral objectives.*

An ARC-PA letter of April 17, 2000, to President Mary Sue Coleman announced that ARC-PA will leave CAAHEP and become a freestanding accreditation agency for physician assistant programs. The change will be effective January 1, 2001. According to information in the letter, changes in the actual accreditation process will be minimal and SUI's program will remain accredited until the next scheduled review in 2006.


Charles R. Kniker

Approved: _____


Frank J. Stork