

Department of Physician Assistant Studies response to UND SMHS Strategic Plan

The Department of Physician Assistant Studies (DPAS) will align with the SMHS strategic plan by improving curriculum in oral communication (goal 1) by integrating more oral case presentations within the primary care curriculum. Providing an increased opportunity for students to present their patient and associated clinical findings will better prepare them for clinical preceptorships and ultimately, PA clinical practice.

In terms of increasing graduation rates (goal 2), the DPAS will identify faculty advisors earlier in the curriculum allowing for an earlier involvement and intervention of student support services as needed. Data will continue to be collected and reported related to rates of graduation, deceleration and attrition.

The DPAS currently teaches ~85% of the curriculum with an online format (goal 3) and continues to explore methods to improve teaching with this methodology. Most recently, online break-out rooms allowing students to work in small groups and video proctoring have been implemented. Moving additional weeks of instruction out of the classroom and into the online format has lessened the dislocation costs for students as well.

DPAS faculty currently participate in scholarship of teaching by continually assimilating the most current clinical practice methods and latest research discoveries into their case studies, simulation scenarios and presentation materials (goal 4). Together, the department collectively will work toward additional scholarship in submitting topics for presentation and/or publication in the next 3-5 academic years as faculty development continues in this area. Extramural funding is dependent upon government appropriations for PA training and cannot be a consistent source of potential resources.

Goal 5 related to fostering a welcoming, safe and inclusive campus climate indicates there will be a working group appointed by FAC and the Dean.

The DPAS offers flexibility in scheduling various clinical experiences given ample time and communication to plan accordingly (goal 6). Faculty of the DPAS have also provided advanced trauma training to select members of the ND National Guard and will continue this service as requested. Additional thoughts for further discussion related to this goal are to enhance student recruitment by reaching out to reserve members, attending drill events and connecting with those currently enrolled in military programs.

Goal 7 related to the active engagement of alumni and donors will be determined by SMHS leadership. The DPAS is too small in number to support an endowed chair or professorship. We have hosted alumni reunions, sent personal thank you notes and phone calls to donors and birthday cards to all alumni.

Outcomes related to the additional goal regarding the Healthcare Workforce Initiative are already provided through assessment reporting. These data points specifically track numbers and locations of accepted PA students, numbers of graduates practicing in the same city where they graduated (train and retain), graduates choosing a rural practice location and graduates choosing primary care. Data reflecting numbers of licensed PAs in ND, and of those, how many choose to practice in primary care has also been included.