



**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees  
Academic Affairs, Student Life, and  
Athletics Committee**

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November 10, 2020  
9:00 am

MEC Meeting Room – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Miller Education Center  
503 East Bell Street  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

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November 10, 2020  
9:00 am

**AGENDA**

Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes (Action) .....[Tab 1](#)

Approval of New Academic Degree Program (Action) .....[Tab 2](#)

    Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies

Approval of Expedited Tenure (Action) .....[Tab 3](#)

Approval of New Policy (Action) .....[Tab 4](#)

    204-A Tenure Policy Amendment

Approval of Revisions to Policy (Action) .....[Tab 5](#)

    206 Tenure and Promotion Appeals

Performance Metrics (Information) .....[Tab 6](#)

Athletics Update (Information) .....[Tab 7](#)

Campus COVID-19 Response (Information) .....[Tab 8](#)

Diversity Efforts (Information) .....[Tab 9](#)

Closing Remarks

Adjournment





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

**Action Item**

DATE: November 10, 2020

SUBJECT: **Minutes of the August 18, 2020  
Academic Affairs, Student Life,  
and Athletics Committee Meeting**

PRESENTER: Pam Wright  
Committee Chair

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on August 18, 2020.

Attached for your review and approval are the minutes from this meeting.



**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT LIFE, AND ATHLETICS COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

The Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on Tuesday, August 18, 2020, in the Miller Education Center Meeting Room at Middle Tennessee State University.

**Call to Order**

Trustee Wright called the meeting to order at 12:50 p.m.

**Roll Call**

The following Committee members were in attendance: J.B. Baker, Tom Boyd, Pete DeLay, Joey Jacobs, Mary Martin, Steve Smith, Pam Wright, Delanie McDonald, Keith Huber, and Chris Massaro. A quorum was declared.

Also present was Trustee Darrell Freeman. President Sidney A. McPhee; Joe Bales, Vice President for University Advancement; Mark Byrnes, University Provost; Andrew Oppmann, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; Bruce Petryshak, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Deb Sells, Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Enrollment and Academic Services; Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance; Brenda Burkhart, Chief Audit Executive; Heidi Zimmerman, University Counsel and Board Secretary; and, Kim Edgar, Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff were also in attendance.

**Approval of Minutes - Action**

The first agenda item was approval of the minutes from the June 2, 2020 Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee meeting. Trustee Baker moved to approve the minutes from the June 2, 2020 meeting and Trustee DeLay seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the minutes from the June 2, 2020 meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee passed unanimously.

## **Approval of New Academic Degree Program – Action**

### **Bachelor of Arts in Art Therapy**

### **Master of Arts in Art Therapy**

In discussing these new degree programs, Provost Byrnes told the Trustees this is another example of programs with a clear career path. Letters of support demonstrate a need in the market for qualified people. No public institution offers a bachelor's degree and no school in the state, public or private, currently offers a master's program in art therapy, which is required for board certification and licensure as an art therapist.

A motion was made by Trustee Boyd to approve the Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Art Therapy and Trustee DeLay seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Art Therapy passed unanimously.

## **Approval of New Academic Degree under Consideration - Action**

### **Master of Science in Data Science**

The Bachelor of Science and a graduate certificate in Data Science launched this fall. There is great demand for these graduates. These proposals will still have to go through the campus curriculum process and external reviews with THEC, if approved by the Board of Trustees. This program is part of the university's broader initiative concerning data science.

Trustee Boyd moved to approve consideration of a Master of Science in Data Science and Trustee Baker seconded the motion. During discussion, Trustee Boyd asked if the actual versus the projected enrollment numbers for new programs approved by the Board could be provided. Provost Byrnes explained that this information is provided to THEC for the first five (5) years after a program is initiated in a post-approval report. He agreed that this information will be shared with the Board. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve consideration of a Master of Science in Data Science passed unanimously.

## **SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report - Information**



Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle, Associate Provost for Strategic Planning and Partnerships and SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, reminded the Committee that the Commission last reaffirmed the university's accreditation in 2016 with no recommendations. She informed the Committee of the Fifth-Year Interim Report due March 2022. Academic Year 2020-2021 will be the year of record for reporting. Institutional achievements and areas for improvement will be recognized while reporting on 22 accreditation standards that impact many aspects of the university. Dr. McPhee formed a Fifth-Year Report committee, led by Provost Byrnes, with representatives from across the university. An impact report on the Quality Enhancement Plan, MT Engage, will be submitted. Peer reviewers will evaluate selected new off-campus instructional sites. An off-site committee will review the complete report, and the SACSCOC Board of Trustees will report their findings in December 2022.

Trustee Freeman added that although MTSU did not receive any recommendations from SACSCOC in 2017 regarding the substantive change of governance review, they did express a concern relative to the Board of Trustees' role in university operations.

Trustee Boyd asked Dr. Hoffschwelle if she would share with the Board progress toward the Fifth-Year Interim Report. Dr. Hoffschwelle agreed to do this.

President McPhee noted that SACSCOC can visit or request information at any time as they are looking for continuous compliance.

### **Data Science Initiative Update – Information**

Dr. Charlie Apigian gave an overview of the progress of the Data Science Initiative since its announcement last February. The bachelor's degree (25 students enrolled) and graduate certificate (25 students enrolled with a second cohort of 25 planned) launched this semester, and development of a master's degree will begin. Dr. Apigian explained that the program involves numerous departments in various colleges.

The Data Science Institute brought in over \$1M in research funding and is collaborating with Tennessee Tech and UT-Chattanooga on an NSF grant for workforce development. It is also funding two teachers in the degree program who will teach data science at the high school level.

This summer the Data Science Institute found partners in private industry capable of helping local and state governments identify additional revenue streams. MTSU would be the resource to use data to help the state.

Trustee Boyd asked what the capacity is for each level of the program. Dr. Apigian explained that the master's degree curriculum will utilize currently existing courses. New faculty were hired for the undergraduate program, and with the certificate program, he stated that 50 students in 2 cohorts a year is a great number.

Trustee Martin stated, and Dr. Apigian agreed, that PhD programs require considerable resources. Dr. McPhee stated that he and the Provost have made it clear that they will reallocate resources for programs that have growth potential. He praised the work of Dr. Apigian and his colleagues in putting together these programs in a short period of time. He also shared that former Speaker Beth Harwell has been an advocate for these programs, working for appropriations to support them.

### **Athletics Update - Information**

Chris Massaro, Director of Athletics, gave highlights of academic progress for the department. He stated that for the sixth straight year a department record for graduation success rate (92%) was set. The football team's rate was 95%, which was third in the nation, tied with Vanderbilt. He acknowledged that this came as a collective effort with the Division of Student Affairs, which runs the Student-Athlete Enhancement Center. Other statistics offered from the 2019 fall semester: of 368 student-athletes, 58% had a GPA of 3.0 or higher; 121 or 34% made the Dean's List with a GPA of 3.5 or higher; 35 or 10% earned a perfect 4.0 GPA; 12 of the 15 teams had a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher. In the spring 2020 semester, of 340 student-athletes 77% had a GPA of 3.0 or higher; 172 or 51% made the Dean's List; 95 students or 28% had a perfect 4.0 GPA; and 14 of

the 15 teams had a GPA of 3.0 or higher. The semester GPA for all student-athletes was a 3.36 with a cumulative average of 3.18. The academic progress rate, an NCAA measurement, each of the 15 teams had a multi-year rate of 950 and above. Forty-three student-athletes graduated last year.

Then Mr. Massaro gave an overview of testing and safety protocols for student-athletes, athletic practices, and competition as relates to the pandemic. Dr. McPhee said the conference is requiring athletes be tested three times per week, and he is not comfortable with the costs associated with this frequency. Testing costs and turnaround time for results are the two major obstacles.

Trustee Freeman expressed concern for athletes and opposition to athletic competition as well as in-person classes. He raised the issue of African-Americans being adversely impacted by the coronavirus at disproportionate rates. Mr. Massaro stated that they are watching the rates of infection in student-athletes and, so far, they have not seen this with the student-athletes. He agreed with Trustee Freeman that adequate testing is essential to being able to have sports. He explained the safety precautions put in place with the football team to manage the risk and mitigate the possibility of infection. Trustee Freeman stated that while those in the Committee meeting were adhering to CDC guidelines through social distancing and mask wearing, student-athletes are being asked to engage in conduct not in adherence with these guidelines and may expose themselves to the virus. He reemphasized his opposition to sports and in-person classes during the pandemic. Dr. McPhee stated that he shares those concerns for student safety. However, he explained that he participated in a meeting during which a leading cardiologist stated that

If precautions are taken, the risk is significantly reduced. The risk cannot be eliminated but steps have been and are being taken to mitigate risks. He also reminded the Committee that he is keeping up with circumstances related to the virus and that triggers have been identified that would result in pivoting from in-person to remote learning, as well as, ceasing to play football. Trustee Freeman asked if plans are in place for where students will go should the campus need

to close; will they be sent home, infected, to their families? Dr. McPhee reminded the Committee that 107 single-occupancy rooms have been set aside for the purpose of isolating infected students. Chairman Smith stated that students are safer on campus with the healthcare options available to them than they would be at home. Mr. Massaro stated that student-athletes were given an opt-out option with regard to playing that would not impact their status or scholarships. He stated his belief that student-athletes' ability to engage in their sports is significantly important for their wellbeing, and they are owed the institution's best efforts to safely allow this to occur.

### **Chicago Statement** – Action

Ken Paulson, Director of the Free Speech Center, discussed the 2015 Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression at the University of Chicago. The Chicago Statement guarantees the broadest possible latitude to write, speak, listen, challenge, and learn on college campuses. MTSU adopted Policy 103 Free Speech on Campus, effective January 1, 2018, which meets the standards of the Chicago Statement. This is recognized by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), so MTSU is viewed as a university that has a real commitment to free speech on campus.

Chairman Smith moved to reaffirm Policy 103 and enthusiastically endorse the Chicago Statement; Trustee DeLay seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to reaffirm Policy 103 and enthusiastically endorse the Chicago Statement passed unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee



**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

**Action Item**

DATE: November 10, 2020

SUBJECT: **Approval of New Academic Degree Program  
M.S., Physician Assistant Studies**

PRESENTER: Mark Byrnes  
Provost

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

University Policy 251, Approval of Academic Programs, Units, and Modifications, states all academic actions that require review and approval by THEC must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

A Proposal for a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies is attached for approval.



## NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM PROPOSAL

### M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies

Revised October 2020

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# THECATSAC

MIKE KRAUSE  
*Executive Director*

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**  
**STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION**  
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(615) 741-3605

BILL LEE  
*Governor*

TO: Dr. Sidney McPhee

FROM: Mike Krause 

SUBJECT: Middle Tennessee State University  
Letter of Notification: Physician Assistant Studies, Master of Science

DATE: June 28, 2019

Thank you for the June 6, 2019 response to the evaluation of the Letter of Notification (LON) for the proposed Physician Assistant Studies, Master of Science (MS) program. Per THEC Policy A1.0 – *New Academic Programs: Approval Process*, the LON is evaluated on the following criteria: alignment with state master plan and institutional mission, need, sustainable demand, program costs and revenues; institutional capacity to deliver the proposed academic program; and avoidance of duplication.

I approve Middle Tennessee State University's LON to plan the Physician Assistant Studies, MS program. As MTSU develops the New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP), all concerns responded to in the revised LON must be reflected in the NAPP. It is understood the proposed program will be developed in accord with the mission of MTSU and will meet the *Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education 2015-2025* degree completion and workforce development objectives.

The LON projects implementation of an approved Physician Assistant Studies, MS program in fall 2021. Please be advised, the Letter of Notification will be posted on the THEC website for public disclosure.

Attachment

cc: Dr. Mark Byrnes  
Dr. Peter Cunningham  
Betty Dandridge Johnson  
Julie Roberts

**Tennessee Higher Education Commission**  
**Letter of Notification Evaluation**  
**June 27, 2019**



The evaluation of the Letter of Notification (LON) is in accordance with the *THEC Policy A1.0 New Academic Programs: Approval Process*. The evaluation is conducted by interested parties and THEC staff. The LON is posted on the THEC website for a 15 day period of comment by interested parties. Based on the internal and external evaluation, THEC will make a determination of the LON to support, not to support, or defer a decision based on a revised LON.

<b>Institution:</b> Middle Tennessee State University	<b>LON Submission Date:</b> February 6, 2019
<b>Academic Program, Degree Designation:</b> Physician Assistant Studies, Master of Science	
<b>Proposed CIP Code:</b> 51.0902 (Physician Assistant)	
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b> Fall 2021	
<b>Time Period Posted on Website for Public Comment:</b> February 7-21, 2019	

**Note: Comments in italics within this document should be addressed.**

Criteria	Comments
<b>Letter of Support from President/Chancellor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter from President McPhee providing support was submitted and dated February 6, 2019. Proposed program development was approved by the MTSU Board of Trustees during the September 2017 meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Overall Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed program will seek accreditation from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA).</li> </ul>
<b>Background on Academic Program Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies has been under consideration at MTSU since 2011.</li> <li>MTSU has engaged Dr. Scott Massey, Professor and Program Director of the Physician Assistant Program at Central Michigan University to assist in the development of the curriculum, consult on the employment process of senior program leadership and faculty, and provide guidance on accreditation.</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose and Nature of Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed program will be offered on-ground and is designed for full-time enrollment.</li> <li>The program would provide the educational credential necessary for licensure as a Physician Assistant.</li> </ul>
<b>Alignment with State Master Plan and Institutional Mission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In alignment with the state's master plan, the proposed degree focuses on one of the fastest growing occupational sectors in Middle Tennessee.</li> <li>The proposed program aligns with MTSU's institutional mission through expanding on health care offerings and creating a pipeline from undergraduate majors to graduate programs.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Institutional capacity to deliver the program</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proposed program is not expected to decrease enrollment in other health-related programs.</li> <li>▪ MTSU believes it has both the infrastructure and financial means to effectively offer the proposed program. MTSU anticipates that specific positions (i.e., certified physician assistants, medical director, program director, and director of clinical placements) will need to be hired for the proposed program.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Existing programs offered at public and private Tennessee institutions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Currently, the only public university offering a MS in Physician Assistant Studies is the UT Health Science Center (UTHSC). However, UT Chattanooga has an approved letter of notification and is in the process of developing a New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) with an anticipated implementation date of January 2021.</li> <li>▪ Several private universities in Middle Tennessee offer PA programs including Trevecca Nazarene and Lipscomb. Meharry Medical College is planning to implement a program in 2020.</li> <li>▪ The public comment from UTHSC expressed concern due to the increased number of PA programs (accredited and applicant) in Tennessee. Of the 14 programs in TN (8 existing and 6 in applicant phase), TN will rank #5 in the overall number of PA program offerings in the country. In terms of geographical location, 11 of the current and projected PA programs are located around Nashville and extending to east Tennessee.</li> <li>▪ UTHSC further stated that “with the rapid growth of PA programs across the state of Tennessee and the extraordinary increase in Middle Tennessee/Nashville region, opportunities for PA programs to meet the ARC-PA clinical requirements will diminish resulting in the inability to provide the clinical educational component for the students.”</li> <li>▪ <i>In the NAPP submission, THEC staffs request MTSU to demonstrate collaboration with UTHSC and UTC regarding the proposed program and clinical placements.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Feasibility Study</b></p>	
<p><b>Student Interest</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based on information from the PA central application system, in 2018-19 MTSU was listed as the school of origin for 97 applicants applying to a PA program. Although not finalized, 103 MTSU students have already submitted applications to PA programs in 2018-2019.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Local and regional need</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Over one-third of all PA positions in Tennessee are located in the Nashville-Murfreesboro-Franklin MSA, which is the 7<sup>th</sup> fastest growing MSA in the United States.</li> <li>▪ The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects the growth in employment of PAs throughout TN will be 42 percent compared to an overall employment growth of 7 percent.</li> </ul>

<b>Employer need/demand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Physician assistant was ranked by US News and World Report as number 3 among its “Best Jobs of 2018”</li> <li>▪ The Bureau of Labor Statistics ranks Tennessee, which trails the national average of PAs per 100,000 persons by more than 26 percent, as sixth best in the nation for likely growth in PA positions.</li> <li>▪ A recent unemployment rate for PAs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, was 0.8 percent.</li> </ul>
<b>Future sustainable need/demand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Letters of support are included from employers such as Saint Thomas Health, Tennessee Valley Healthcare System, and the Christy-Houston Foundation.</li> </ul>
<b>Program costs/revenues and THEC Financial Projection Form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Costs will include three full-time positions – Medical Director, Program Director, and Director of Clinical Placement – faculty, and marketing and recruiting expenses.</li> <li>▪ Existing facilities from other health sciences programs, including a cadaver lab, will support the required facilities for the proposed program.</li> <li>▪ Enrollment calculations as based on projected cohorts of 30 students enrolling each fall with a 7 percent attrition rate between the first and second cohort.</li> <li>▪ THEC Financial Projection form is included in Appendix A</li> </ul>
<b>Public comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public comments were submitted by UT Health Science Center and UT Chattanooga.</li> </ul>

**University Provost**  
Cope Administration Building 110  
1301 East Main Street  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
o: (615) 898-2880 • f: (615) 898-5029



Julie Roberts  
Associate Chief Academic Officer  
Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
404 James Robertson Pky., Suite 1900  
Nashville, TN 37243

June 6, 2019

Julie,

Thank you for your response to our Letter of Notification to implement a master's of science degree in Physician Assistant Studies at MTSU. We appreciate your confirmation that this degree aligns with our institutional mission and will provide the necessary educational credential for licensure to practice in one of the fastest growing occupational sectors in Middle Tennessee. With a growth rate of 42% and one-third of all PA positions in Tennessee located in the Nashville-Murfreesboro-Franklin MSA, this program will meet employer demand and societal need for access to health care.

You asked posed several questions in your evaluation report and we are pleased to provide answers and additional information. Responses to specific questions are provided below and we have also revised the LON and Financial Projections form where appropriate.

*Students will be required to participate in a year-long series of clinical rotations. Please provide evidence of employer capacity/demand to assist with these types of placements.*

The use of clinical rotations within the PA curriculum is required by the Accreditation Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) and is typical of all medical / health care curricula. As such, physicians and physician assistants are familiar with this process having gone through it themselves, and recognize its provision as an accepted and expected part of their professional responsibility. Given the large and increasing number of physicians, physician assistants, and medical practices in the fast growing middle Tennessee region we do not anticipate difficulty in identifying and engaging clinical rotation opportunities for PA students. To assure that this is the case, we have budgeted for a Director of Clinical Placement whose primary responsibility is to develop and coordinate the clinical component of the curriculum. Note that this position is budgeted to begin a year before any MTSU student will actually begin the clinical rotation phase of their program of study allowing ample time to establish clinical placement agreements. MTSU will also offer the opportunity to earn both category I and category II continuing medical education (CME) credit individuals serving as

clinical preceptors in the PA program and, depending upon the number of students supervised, preceptors will also be eligible for clinical faculty appointments within the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences.

*What type of accreditation will the program seek?*

MTSU will submit an application for “Accreditation – Provisional” to the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) immediately upon program approval from THEC. Accreditation - Provisional is the initial accreditation stage and precedes Accreditation - Continued, which is granted when a program holding Accreditation – Provisional demonstrates compliance with the standards after completion of the provisional review process. ARC-PA is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

*UTHSC expressed concerns via public comments regarding the availability of clinical preceptors and clinical placements - please provide response.*

We recognize the concern of UTHSC as well as any institution that utilizes clinical preceptors when an additional program enters the market. It is natural to voice opposition to anything that may impact their existing market share or cause them to have to invest additional time and effort into developing new placements. That said, as of March 2019, there are almost 19,000 practicing physicians in Tennessee, including 8,876 primary care specialists (Kaiser Family Foundation). The membership of the Nashville Academy of Medicine alone includes 250 medical groups and practices covering 70 different specialties. In addition to practicing physicians, the approximately 1,600 licensed physician assistants in Tennessee are also eligible to serve as preceptors. As the population of the state, and in particular, the Middle Tennessee region continues to grow, the number of practicing physicians, PAs, medical practices, and health care facilities will also continue to grow. Access to qualified clinical placements and preceptors will not be a problem although existing PA programs may now have to invest time and effort in identifying additional clinical sites and preceptors.

*UT Chattanooga references possible collaboration concerning their proposed PA program and the proposed MTSU PA program. Please provide evidence of how this collaboration could function.*

Because both the UT Chattanooga and MTSU PA programs will be delivered through traditional on-ground instruction it is difficult to imagine joint delivery of coursework. However, the opportunity for joint sponsorship of continuing education programs, guest lectureships and workshops as well as coordination of study abroad programs, are all opportunities for collaboration with UTC as well as other PA programs in the region. We look forward to the opportunity to work with colleagues across the state in establishing Tennessee as a leader in physician assistant education.

*What is the delivery method of this program? Will it be primarily onground, online, hybrid?*

This will be an on-ground program located on the MTSU campus in Murfreesboro.

*Who is the target audience for the program?*

Potential students for this program are individuals in Tennessee (primarily middle Tennessee) and the surrounding region (southwestern Kentucky and northern Alabama). MTSU is also closer to Murray State University, Western Kentucky University, University of Alabama-Huntsville, University of North Alabama, and a number of other regional institutions than to any other institution with a P.A. program. We intend to focus our recruitment efforts in this region.

*Will the program be intended to serve full-time students, part-time students, or a combination?*

Admission as a full-time student will be the policy of this program. That said, there may be individual situations where a currently enrolled student needs to drop to a part-time load and we will accommodate that on an individual basis.

*Please provide evidence of student interest for the proposed PA program.*

Actual action is a better indicator of interest than surveys of potential interest. In this particular case, we have access to data on actual applications to PA programs. All applications to Physician Assistant programs are submitted through a central application service. This application process tracks the schools of record for applicants. In 2016-17, MTSU was listed as a school of record for 73 applicants. In 2017-18, MTSU was listed as a school of record for 97 applicants. Although a final report on 2018-19 applicants will not be available until fall 2019, there are already 103 applicants who list MTSU as school of record. This is an increase of 41%. It is clear from the actual number of students applying to a P.A. program as well as the growth in applicants over the three year period that ample student interest at MTSU exists. We have no reason to think that this same trend would be different at other feeder schools. Looking nationally, in 2016-17, there were 26,953 applications to P.A. programs nationwide with an acceptance rate of only 33% (8,792).

*Tuition revenue is identified in the THEC Financial Projections Form but enrollment and graduation data are not included in the costs/revenues section.*

Enrollment data was provided on the THEC Financial Projections form but not addressed in the LON. We have revised the LON (page 7, Program Costs/Revenues) to include this information.

*Where are the initial reallocations of funds coming from for the planning years?*

Academic Affairs will provide initial start-up funds in planning years one and two. These one-time funds will be allocated from unfilled faculty lines and possibly other sources. In any given year, there is turnover among MTSU's 977 full-time faculty and adjunct and part-time instructors are employed to span the time until a full-time replacement is employed. These adjunct and part-time instructors are significantly less expensive than full-time faculty and the differential is available on a non-recurring basis. The University Provost and President are committed to providing the necessary funds to assure a successful implementation of this program (Page 9, Program Cost/Revenues).

*Accreditation costs should be incorporated into this section.*

The one-time \$10,000 expense (other) is to cover the cost of the initial provisional accreditation application. We have added \$15,000 in year three to cover costs associated with continuing accreditation. Recurring expenses (other) also include funds for annual membership fees and renewals. The LON has been revised to include this information (page 7, Program Costs/Revenues).

*Graduate assistants are listed on the financial form but not mentioned in the costs/revenues section.*

We have revised the Letter of Notification (page 7, Program Costs/Revenues) to include mention of the graduate assistantships. We have also revised Attachment A to increase the number of GAs in the budget to four, beginning in year four.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Byrnes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark Byrnes  
University Provost



**Letter of Notification to Develop a New Academic Program:**

**Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies**

**Submitted to the  
Tennessee Higher Education Commission**

**By  
Middle Tennessee State University**

**June 2019**

**Revised September 2020**

**Proposed Program Name:**

Physician Assistant Studies

**Proposed Degree Designation:**

Master of Science (M.S.)

**Proposed CIP Code:**

51.0912

**Title:** Physician Assistant.

**Definition:** A program that prepares individuals to practice medicine, including diagnoses and treatment therapies, under the supervision of a physician. Includes instruction in the basic medical and clinical sciences and specialized preparation in fields such as family medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology, general surgery, psychiatry, and behavioral medicine; the delivery of health care services to homebound patients, rural populations, and underserved populations; and community health services.

**Proposed implementation date: May 2022**

**Academic Program Liaison (APL) name and contact information:**

Dr. Nita Brooks  
Interim Vice Provost for Academic Programs  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Cope Administration Building, Rm: 111  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
Office: (615) 494-7611  
Email: [nita.Brooks@mtsu.edu](mailto:nita.Brooks@mtsu.edu)

**Background concerning academic program development:**

A master's degree program in Physician Assistant Studies has been under consideration at MTSU as far back as 2011. We completed a feasibility study for a M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies in February 2012. The results of the study were positive and a recommendation to proceed was delivered to then University Provost Brad Bartel. We did not move it forward at that time for a couple of reasons. First, we were asked to make the development of a Mechatronics Engineering degree a priority. That program was approved in 2013. Second, we were in the midst of our decade-long effort to establish a DNP program and that was the priority among our health-related programs so the decision was made to wait until the DNP was approved before

moving the P.A. proposal forward. Subsequently, in fall of 2017, the MTSU Board of Trustees approved a request to conduct a feasibility study and submit a Letter of Notification for the P.A. degree. A new feasibility study (addressing THEC requirements) was completed in November 2017. However, our law school initiative was deemed to be the top priority, and we placed our focus on that proposal. Having concluded that effort, we updated the feasibility study and implementation of a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies is now the university's top academic program priority.

### **Purpose and Nature of Program:**

Middle Tennessee State University proposes to establish a program of study that leads to a Master of Science degree in Physician Assistant Studies. Physician Assistant is among the five fastest growing occupations in the United States and demand for persons trained as P.A.s is projected to grow forty-two percent in Tennessee over the next decade. While there are a number of private colleges and universities offering a degree in physician assistant studies, there is only one public institution, the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center (UTHSC) in Memphis offering this degree. This program is located at the Western end of the state. We propose to offer a second, high quality and affordable, public option in the middle region of Tennessee. This program of study would provide an opportunity for persons in Middle Tennessee to obtain the educational credential necessary for licensure as a Physician Assistant. Just as important, this program would prepare highly qualified physician assistants capable of addressing the increasing demand for access to health care among residents of Tennessee's fastest growing region.

We have engaged Dr. Scott Massey, Professor and Program Director of the Physician Assistant Program at Central Michigan University to assist in the development of the MTSU P.A. curriculum, to consult on the employment process of senior program leadership and faculty, and to provide guidance in the development of the P.A. program's provisional accreditation pathway. Dr. Massey has over 25 years of experience as a Practicing P.A., P.A. program director at four different institutions, and has consulted with over 25 colleges and universities in the development of P.A. programs, implementation of provisional accreditation pathways and successful continuing accreditations

### **Alignment with state master plan and institutional mission:**

The Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education 2015-2025<sup>1</sup> calls for a statewide strategic development of higher education programs that increases the educational attainment levels of Tennesseans; addresses the state's economic development, workforce development, and research needs; and calls for institutional mission differentiation to realize statewide efficiencies through institutional collaboration, minimized redundancy, a focus on location, and research.

This proposed master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies meets the State Master Plan in the following ways:

- *Creates a graduate degree program and associated curriculum that focuses on one of the nation's and this region's fastest growing occupational sectors.*

As reported by the Bureau of Labor statistics, there will be about 40,000 new jobs for P.A.s by 2026. This is a 37% increase and is “much faster than average. This increase is twice the projected rate of increase for physicians and 500% greater than the growth rate for all jobs overall over the next 10 years.<sup>2</sup> Hanover Research has reported that job postings for P.A.s remained unfilled longer than for any other occupation requiring a post-secondary degree.<sup>3</sup> As for Tennessee, the Bureau of Labor Statistics ranks the state of Tennessee as the sixth best in the nation in terms of likely growth in physician assistant positions, with fewer than 25 P.A.s per 100,000 people compared to 36 per 100,00 nationally.<sup>4</sup> Over one-third of all P.A. positions in Tennessee are located in the Nashville-Murfreesboro-Franklin MSA, which is the 7<sup>th</sup> fastest growing MSA in the United States. Middle Tennessee State University, located in the heart of this region, is ideally positioned to meet the current and long-term demand for the training of physician assistants.

- *Provides Tennesseans with the opportunity to prepare for careers in and be part of a growing and sustained workforce in the health care industry.*

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects that over the next decade the growth in employment of physician assistants throughout the state will be 42%, compared to overall employment growth of 7%.<sup>5</sup> The unmet demand for persons licensed as physician assistants is reflected by the high average annual salary for P.A.s (\$104,860).<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, only a small minority of individuals applying to a physician assistant program in Tennessee actually gain admission, (for example, the UTHSC P.A. program recently accepted only 30 of 1,600 applicants).<sup>7,8</sup> As a result, most persons wishing “to pursue a career as a physician assistant are unable to obtain the necessary education. MTSU with its existing facilities, including its new Science facilities, has the resources to offer this program of study and is ideally located to do so.

- *Realizes statewide efficiencies through institutional collaboration, minimized redundancy, and a focus on location.*

Currently, there is no public institution that offers a physician assistant degree in the Middle or Eastern parts of Tennessee. The UTHSC is located approximately 3 ½ hours to the West. A physician assistant master’s degree offered by Middle Tennessee State University would not overlap with the region served by this institution and would primarily serve persons in Middle Tennessee who are unable to afford one of the local private schools or relocate to Memphis to attend a more affordable public institution.

Since the MTSU P.A. program will primarily draw students from the Middle Tennessee region or students desiring to practice in Middle Tennessee following their graduation, it will also address the desire of most new certified P.A.s to work where they lived before going to school or near their P.A. program.<sup>9</sup>

The Proposed Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies also aligns with the mission of Middle Tennessee State University as expressed in the goals of the university's Academic Master Plan.<sup>10</sup>

- *MTSU will advance academic quality through excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service and the celebration of MTSU's strengths:*

Over the past decade, MTSU has enhanced its focus on academic programs related to the broad field of healthcare. Our nationally recognized School of Nursing prepares both undergraduate and graduate students for careers in Nursing, with the majority remaining in the surrounding region. With the completion of the new \$147M, 250,000 sq. ft. Science Building, the number of high achieving STEM students has increased exponentially, many of whom seek graduate programs in healthcare STEM fields. Over 1,000 MTSU students are currently enrolled as health science majors and are completing undergraduate studies in preparation for graduate education leading to careers as varied as medicine, dentistry, occupational therapy, pharmacy, and physical therapy. The addition of a physician assistant degree program builds on this solid foundation.

Veterans also make up an increasing proportion of college and university students in the U.S. Many of these veterans served in one of the many military medical and emergency occupational specializations and seek to continue their civilian education and careers in the healthcare field. MTSU enrolls more veterans and veteran family members than any other institution in Tennessee. MTSU's proximity to and relationship with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Tennessee Valley Healthcare System provides an ideal opportunity for veterans to pursue physician assistant training and future careers while continuing to serve others with similar experiences and backgrounds.

- *MTSU will develop purposeful and sustainable partnering relationships and outreach:*

The M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies will be developed in close collaboration with industry partners and will include an advisory committee of individuals with leadership experience in the industry. In addition to the advisory board, following the didactic component, this degree will include a year-long series of clinical rotations. The implementation of a physician assistant degree will allow MTSU to continue to build on the many existing relationships with healthcare providers in Middle Tennessee, including St. Thomas Health /Ascension, the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System, Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), and others, to enhance the quality and availability to healthcare in Middle Tennessee. The Director of Clinical Placements will work closely with these healthcare providers and agencies to establish clinical placement agreements. By their very nature, these clinical agreements and placements will create purposeful and sustainable partnering relationships.

### **Institutional capacity to deliver the proposed academic program:**

This will be a master's program and, as such, will not compete with undergraduate programs. Because it is somewhat unique among our current graduate degree offerings, we do not expect it

to draw students away from existing graduate degree programs. It is possible that some individuals who would enroll in the Master of Science in Nursing degree would opt to shift their aspirations to a career as a physician assistant. This brings to mind two observations. First is that MTSU will still be providing an affordable opportunity for individuals to advance their education and careers within the healthcare profession. The second observation is that between 2010 and 2018, the enrollment in MTSU's M.S.N. program has grown from 56 to 196 students. Considering this trajectory, there is little risk that the implementation of a P.A. program will have a significant adverse impact on the MSN program. It is much more likely that the implementation of the P.A. program will have a positive impact on a number of our undergraduate pre-health majors as it attracts high ability undergraduate students to MTSU and offers an affordable opportunity to continue their studies in the health care sector. We anticipate a significant number of graduates of other area institutions to apply to this degree program as it will offer the only public option in Middle Tennessee. Because specific faculty (i.e., certified physician assistants, medical director, etc.) will be brought onboard for the implementation of this degree program, the staffing of existing programs will not be adversely impacted. We have studied the feasibility of this program and in particular the ability of the university to sustain a high-quality curriculum. No academic program exists without costs, but our cost/benefit analysis convinces us that it will pay for itself through tuition and fee revenues and will fill a programmatic need on campus and a workforce need in Middle Tennessee.

#### **Existing programs offered at public and private Tennessee institutions:**

Currently, there is only one public institution in Tennessee offering a program of study in the 51.0912 CIP series. The UTHSC in Memphis offers a master of science (M.S.) with a major in Physician Assistant Studies. There are a number of private institutions offering physician assistant programs in Tennessee, including Trevecca Nazarene and Lipscomb universities (private, church affiliated) and South College (for-profit) in Middle Tennessee. One additional private institution, Meharry Medical College, announced plans to implement a program in 2020 but voluntarily withdrew its application for ARC-PA accreditation; the institution has not announced a future start date. Currently, there is no public physician assistant program available for individuals desiring to pursue this degree in the Middle Tennessee region. The UTHSC program is 3 ½ hours from the Nashville-Murfreesboro-Franklin metropolitan area. The closest P.A. program in Alabama is at the University of Alabama – Birmingham (196 miles); and the closest P.A. program in Kentucky is located at the private Sullivan University in Louisville (204 miles). The University of Kentucky in Lexington (247 miles) is the only public institution in Kentucky with a P.A. program. Table 1 provides a list of all existing P.A. programs in Tennessee and the surrounding region.

<b>Table 1. Existing Physician Assistant Programs in Tennessee and the Surrounding Region</b>			
<b>University</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Location &amp; Distance</b>	<b>Accreditation Status</b>
Bethel University	Private Church affiliated	Paris, TN – 146 miles	Continuing
Christian Brothers University	Private Church affiliated	Memphis – 236 miles	Provisional
Lincoln Memorial University	Private	Harrogate – 219 miles	Continuing
Lincoln Memorial University	Private	Knoxville – 163 miles	Provisional
Lipscomb University	Private Church Affiliated	Nashville – 36 miles	Provisional
Milligan College	Private Church Affiliated	Elizabethton – 273 miles	Provisional
South College	Private For-profit	Knoxville – 152 miles	Continuing
South College	Private For-profit	Nashville – 35 miles	Provisional
Trevecca Nazarene University	Private Church Affiliated	Nashville – 31 miles	Continuing
University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center	Public	Memphis – 239 miles	Continuing
Sullivan University	Private For Profit	Louisville – 204 miles	Continuing
University of Alabama – Birmingham	Public	Birmingham – 196 miles	Continuing

**Program Feasibility:**

A comprehensive study of the feasibility of offering a Master of Science degree in Physician Assistant Studies was conducted by the MTSU Business and Economic Research Center (BERC) during spring 2018 and then updated in spring 2019. The final report for the study is attached as Appendix A. Pertinent findings are provided below.

**Demand for the proposed academic program.**

Demand for a Physician Assistant program was examined from the perspectives of national trends, state experience, regional interest, and “feeder” institutions.

**National Trends:** National evidence of the need for additional degree programs in Physician Assistant Studies is overwhelming. In May 2017, there were 106,220 practicing Physician Assistants in the U.S., an increase of more than twenty-five percent in just the past five years.<sup>11</sup> The ten-year projection of the Bureau of Labor Statistics is that there will be about 40,000 new P.A. jobs by 2026, a thirty-seven percent increase.<sup>12</sup> These projections are supported by numerous other research studies and publications. For example, US News and World Report ranked physician assistant at number 3 among its “Best Jobs of 2018,”<sup>13</sup> and Marketwatch has identified physician assistant as one of the “ten best middle-class jobs in the U.S. for the next decade.”<sup>14</sup> In 2016, Forbes declared the P.A. masters to be the eighth best to obtain.<sup>15</sup> Clearly, there is a need to implement additional degree programs in order to prepare individuals to fill these positions.

**Evidence from Tennessee:** Demand for physician assistants in Tennessee is similar to the national trend with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development rating the P.A. occupation as having a “bright outlook statewide.”<sup>16</sup> While Tennessee is currently enjoying increased employment and a seven percent overall job growth projection over the next decade, the projection for physician assistant employment in Tennessee over the same time period is forty-two percent.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics ranks Tennessee, which trails the national average of P.A.s per 100,000 persons by more than 26%, as sixth best in the nation for likely growth in physician assistant positions.<sup>18</sup>

Tennessee has one public institution (UTHSC–Memphis) offering the degree and seven private institutions offering a degree in physician assistant studies. The University of Alabama – Birmingham and Sullivan University in Louisville are the two closest out-of-state institutions offering a physician assistant studies major.

**Regional and “Feeder Institution” Pipelines:** Of the 20,000 undergraduate students at MTSU, almost 1,100 identify themselves as pursuing a pre-health program. Austin Peay, Tennessee State, Tennessee Tech., Vanderbilt, Belmont, Trevecca Nazarene, Fisk, and Lipscomb, add over 50,000 more undergraduates in the immediate region. This does not include potential feeder schools such as Western Kentucky, Murray State, Univ. of Alabama-Huntsville, and the University of North Alabama, all of which are closer to MTSU than to any other P.A. program. If these institutions have a similar proportion of students interested in a health profession, the subset who wish to pursue a P.A. degree is significant and far exceeds the capacity of existing P.A. programs in the region.

When considering all three perspectives, it is evident that significant demand for a master’s level physician assistant program exists among potential students. Factoring in location and the difference in cost of attendance, we project that applications, admissions, enrollment, and degree production will far exceed the numbers needed to launch and maintain a successful degree program.



### **Local and regional need/demand for the proposed academic program**

The Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development and the Center for Economic Research in Tennessee (CERT) identified Physician Assistants as the fastest growing, in-demand healthcare practitioner and technical job in the Middle Tennessee ECD region. Not surprisingly, they also found physician assistant to be among the fastest growing healthcare practitioner and technical jobs in every other ECD region of the state.<sup>19</sup> The Nashville-Murfreesboro-Franklin MSA is the most populous metropolitan area in the state and is the 7<sup>th</sup> fastest growing MSA in the nation. Nine of the ten fastest growing counties in Tennessee are in the Middle Tennessee region and include both urban and rural areas. Using the previous estimate of forty-two percent growth in physician assistant jobs in Tennessee and recognizing that over one-third of all current P.A. positions are located in the Nashville MSA, the need for additional physician assistants just to meet the needs of increased growth is evident. The significant changes in the healthcare industry and the evolving healthcare needs of the citizens of Tennessee provide further support for the creation of an affordable, accessible physician assistant program at a public institution in the Middle Tennessee region.

### **Employer need/demand**

The extent of employer need and market demand for licensed physician assistants has been well documented in preceding sections of this letter. In addition to that data we note the following. Sixteen new Tennessee P.A. ads were posted on LinkedIn in just the week between January 23 and January 30, 2019; twenty-six ads were placed on Indeed.com over the three days ending January 30<sup>th</sup>; and O\*Net showed twenty-seven unfilled P.A. advertisements on that date as well.

With a current population of over three million, and an expected growth to four million in the next ten years, Middle Tennessee will see significant growth in the healthcare industry. More importantly, this region will see unprecedented demand for access to healthcare itself; and physician assistants will increasingly be one of the primary deliverers of many of these services.

### **Future sustainable need/demand as evidenced in letters from employers**

The planning and development of this Letter of Notification follows numerous inquiries from individuals seeking access to an affordable, high quality Physician Assistant program and encouragement by employers in the surrounding region who seek to employ qualified Physician Assistants to develop a program. Evidence of this need / demand is found in the attached letters of support provided by leaders and organizations in the Health Care Industry (Appendix D). These organizations recognize the need for additional physician assistants to fill the increasing demand for primary health care providers and to support physicians in practice in this rapidly growing region.

### **Program Costs/Revenues:**

A projection of one-time and recurring costs, as well as revenue projections are provided in Attachment A (THEC Financial Projections Form). Expenses include salaries for full-time

faculty and administrative staff, including a Medical Director, Program Director, and Director of Clinical Placement. Additional faculty members are accounted for as program enrollment increases in succeeding years. We have also included funds to support stipends and tuition remissions for graduate assistants beginning with one GA in year one and growing to four in year four and beyond. Funds are also included to support student recruitment and program promotion during and after implementation as well as funding necessary to support equipment and supplies. Some one-time and recurring expenses will be incurred in the planning phase (i.e., before tuition revenue is generated). Those expenses will be covered through one-time reallocation of existing funds from unfilled full-time faculty lines.

A Physician Assistant program requires specialized facilities and equipment. Fortunately, MTSU's 250,000+ sq. ft. Science building, opened in 2014, already contains many of the facilities necessary to support a P.A. program including a cadaver lab. The School of Nursing also has multiple simulation labs available for instruction of P.A. students. With graduate programs in Nursing and multiple doctoral programs in the Sciences, Walker University Library already possesses many of the journals and research data bases for this program and we have budgeted additional funds to assure all necessary resources are available.

One-time expenses (other) in planning year two and year three are to cover expenses of provisional accreditation and continuing accreditation, respectively while annual renewal fees are included in Recurring Expenses, Other.

The planning period will be funded through reallocation of existing funds. Beginning with cohort three and continuing from that point, the program is funded entirely through tuition and fee revenue. We project cohorts of 30 students, matriculating each fall. We also calculate a 10% attrition rate between the first and second year of each cohort. For purposes of this Letter of Notification, we have calculated tuition and fee revenue based on a single annual cohort starting each May and have used a 3 percent annual increase for recurring expenses as well as for tuition. Because this is a cohort program, we anticipate degree conferral to track enrollment after attrition.

## Sources

- 1 Postsecondary Attainment in the Decade of Decision: The Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education 2015-2025. Tennessee Higher Education Commission.
- 2 <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm>
- 3 Hanover Research, Higher Education, “Quarterly Message to Clients,” January 14, 2019.
- 4 <https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/physician-assistant/>
- 5 Projections Central, Long Term Employment Projections (2016-2016), <http://www.projectionscentral.com/Projections/LongTerm>
- 6 <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm#tab-5>
- 7 <https://uthsc.edu/institutional-effectiveness/factbook.php>
- 8 <https://www.uthsc.edu/physician-assistant/faq.php#what-are-my-chances-of-getting-into-a-program>
- 9 National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, 2015 Statistical Profile of Recently Certified Physician Assistants,
- 10 The Reach to Distinction: Middle Tennessee State University Academic Master Plan, 2015-2025
- 11 Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Physician Assistants, <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm>.
- 12 BLS, Occupational Outlook Handbook, op cit.
- 13 US News and World Report, <https://money.usnews.com/careers/bestjobs/rankings/the-100-best-jobs> (January 28, 2019).
- 14 Marketwatch, <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/10-best-middle-class-jobs-in-the-us-for-the-next-decade-2017-10-25> (October 25, 2017).
- 15 Kathryn Dill, “The Ten Best and Worst Masters Degrees for Jobs Right Now,” Forbes, August 12, 2016. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kathryndill/2016/08/12/the-best-and-worst-masters-degrees-for-jobsin-2016/#6382a4ed7435>.
- 16 <http://www.jobs4tn.gov>
- 17 Projections Central, Long Term Employment Projections (2016-2016), <http://www.projectionscentral.com/Projections/LongTerm>

18 <https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/physician-assistant/>

19 Department of Economic and Community Development: Center for Economic Research in Tennessee (CERT): LEAP 2018 Occupational Analysis.

**Implementation Timeline:** Provide a timeline, which includes the following items:

- Accreditation considerations for professional disciplinary accreditation organizations and/or SACSCOC, if applicable.

Physician Assistant programs are accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA). MTSU has already submitted its application for accreditation review and has received notification that it has been admitted to the Candidacy stage of disciplinary accreditation with a site visit scheduled for May 2021, and consideration of our application for accreditation is scheduled for the September 2021 meeting of the Commission. The University will submit a new program prospectus to SACSCOC per its substantive change reporting requirements. This master's level program is not a substantive change from our currently accredited academic offerings.

- Proposed dates for the external judgment site visit.

The external judgement site visit took place on June 9, 2020

- Estimated date of submission of the external review report to THEC and the institution (within 30 days after the site visit.)

The external review report was submitted to THEC on July 16 and forwarded to MTSU on July 17, 2020. Because of the extraordinary impacts of COVID-19 and the time required to transition to online instruction the reviewers requested additional time to submit the report.

- Estimated date of institution's response to external review (within 30 days upon receipt of external reviewer report.)

The institutional response to the external review was submitted on September 14, 2020.

- Proposed date of the institutional governing board meeting the new academic program would be considered for approval.

The MTSU Trustees would consider the proposal at their December 8, 2020 meeting.

- Proposed date of the THEC meeting for the academic program to be considered for Commission approval.

THEC would consider the proposed new degree at its January 2021 meeting.

**CURRICULUM** - An adequately structured curriculum which meets the stated objectives of the academic program, and reflects breadth, depth, theory and practice appropriate to the discipline and the level of the degree. The curriculum should be compatible with disciplinary accreditation, where applicable, and meet the criteria for the general education core as well as articulation and transfer.

The program is located within the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences. The MTSU P.A. Program is a 27-month, full-time graduate professional medical sciences program designed to be taken over seven consecutive semesters with a curriculum emphasis on primary care medicine and clinical methods. The program will train learners to become ethical, compassionate, and professional health care providers while preparing them for certification and licensing as graduate Physician Assistants. A Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) degree will be awarded upon successful program completion.

The MTSU P.A. Program consists of seven (7) consecutive semesters of rigorous graduate level training that covers all areas of medicine. The program, during the first 15 months of didactic study, provides students with a firm background in basic medical science, stressing the importance of patient interaction and teamwork in medicine through courses such as clinical medicine, history and physical examination, pharmacotherapy, clinical problem solving and diagnostic testing, and clinical procedures.

The second phase of the program is 12 months in duration and will provide students with Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs). Students will be matched to practicing MDs, PAs, NPs, or Nurse Midwives who serve as preceptors to assist in further educating and training P.A. students through actual patient encounters in team-based settings. Clinical rotations include the four core primary care clerkships of family medicine, pediatrics, women's health, and behavioral/mental health; three critical care clerkships of general surgery, internal medicine, and emergency medicine, and one elective clerkship.

It is important to note that all courses to be counted towards this degree must be taken at MTSU while enrolled in the Physician Assistant Program. As is standard practice in ARC-PA accredited Physician Assistant programs, graduate level courses taken during undergraduate education, or at any time prior to beginning the Physician Assistant Program, not be counted toward the MSPAS degree. Again, as is standard practice for accredited P.A. programs, courses taken at institutions other than MTSU will not be accepted for credit towards the MSPAS degree. Because this is a cohort program, students are required to enroll on a full-time basis. Should a student be unable to attend full-time, they will be required to stop-out and may return to full-time status with the next cohort.

### **Program Learning Outcomes and Objectives (LOs)**

Upon completion of the MTSU P.A. Program, graduates are expected to be competent in the following areas: The P.A. Program learning outcomes are as follows:

LO 1: Apply knowledge of basic science concepts to facilitate understanding of medical sciences (**Didactic**).

- LO 2: Exhibit attributes of engaged citizenship, community service, and social justice (**Didactic**).
- LO 3: Analyze the impact of social-behavioral sciences on the delivery of healthcare to diverse patient populations (**Didactic**).
- LO 4: Provide a comprehensive approach to normal human health and development, both physical and mental (**Didactic**).
- LO 5: Provide explanation and demonstration of skills needed to assess core diseases encountered in primary care (**Didactic**).
- LO 6: Promote commitment to provide effective, accessible, continuous, comprehensive, and personalized health care (**Didactic**).
- LO 7: Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental importance of ethical behavior in medical practice (**Didactic**).
- LO 8: Compare and contrast normal and abnormal health states (**Didactic**).
- LO 9: Demonstrate current knowledge of the P.A. profession with abilities to participate as leaders at the local, regional, state, and national levels, shaping future policy and legislation to promote P.A. practice and advancement (**Didactic, Clinical**).
- LO 10: Apply an epidemiological approach to population health through understanding of risk factors, disease prevention, and health promotion for various patients and populations (**Didactic, Clinical**).
- LO 11: Adapt communication style and messages to the cultural and socioeconomic context of the interaction (**Didactic, Clinical**).
- LO 12: Provide concise oral case presentations appropriate for the audience and context of the presentation. (**Didactic, Clinical**).
- LO 13: Demonstrate the use of clinical equipment for the diagnosis and management of disease (**Didactic, Clinical**).
- LO 14: Apply advanced critical thinking skills to evaluate sources of information (Didactic, **Clinical**).
- LO 15: Participate in generating new and evolving medical knowledge through research and intellectual inquiry (Didactic, **Clinical**).
- LO 16: Apply emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance. (Didactic, **Clinical**).
- LO 17: Demonstrate compassion, sensitivity, and honesty within the context of difficult medical conversations. Didactic, **Clinical**).

- LO 18: Accurately and adequately provide comprehensive documentation regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes in a timely manner. (Didactic, **Clinical**).
- LO 19: Discern between acute, chronic, and emergent disease states. (Didactic, **Clinical**).
- LO 20: Discern between important and extraneous information. (Didactic, **Clinical**).
- LO 21: Apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical studies and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to patients' health problems (Didactic, **Clinical**).
- LO 22: Demonstrate ability to perform a complete a physical exam and to organize, integrate, interpret, and present clinical data in a clear, concise manner (Didactic, **Clinical**).
- LO 23: Demonstrate effective communication and teamwork skills with health care teams, working in teams and groups to facilitate conflict resolution (**Clinical**).
- LO 24: Integrate diagnostic assessment skills with knowledge of patient presentation, pharmacology, and health care subspecialties to synthesize appropriate treatment plans (**Clinical**).
- LO 25: Promote cross-cultural and socioeconomic sensitivity, confront prejudice, and support development of effective medical practice in a diverse society (**Clinical**).
- LO 26: Exhibit competency practicing in clinical settings involving special needs patient populations (**Clinical**).
- LO 27: Promote teaching of patients, community, and colleagues (**Clinical**).
- LO 28: Demonstrate basic competency in basic clinical procedures performed by a graduate P.A. (**Clinical**).
- LO 29: Upon graduation, be prepared to enter the workforce as a gainfully employed P.A. with excellent job search skills and knowledge to obtain and maintain licensure in any state as a practicing P.A. (**Clinical**).
- LO 30: Collaborate effectively as a member of interprofessional health care teams (**Clinical**).
- LO 31: Exhibit competency while treating patients in emergency setting (**Clinical**).
- LO 32: Exhibit competency while practicing in community health and population health settings (**Clinical**).
- LO 33: Prioritize therapeutic actions and clinical care decisions based on available information and urgency of presentation (**Clinical**).
- LO 34: Apply established, fundamental scientific principles to patient care (**Clinical**).



**Program Requirements** – Include the minimum number of SCH overall, required curriculum, (course prefix and number, title, SCH) and any special requirements including theses, internships.

Course Prefix and Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
PA 6010	Human Anatomy	4
PA 6110	Scientific Basis of Medicine I	3
PA 6120	Scientific Basis of Medicine II	2
PA 6130	Scientific Basis of Medicine III	2
PA 6210	Diagnostic Tests I	1
PA 6220	Diagnostic Tests II	1
PA 6230	Diagnostic Tests III	1
PA 6310	Clinical Pharmacology I	3
PA 6320	Clinical Pharmacology II	2
PA 6330	Clinical Pharmacology III	2
PA 6410	Clinical Medicine I	4
PA 6420	Clinical Medicine II	4
PA 6430	Clinical Medicine III	4
PA 6250	Introduction to the Profession	2
PA 6510	History & Physical Exam I	3
PA 6520	History & Physical Exam II	3
PA 6530	History & Physical Exam III	3
PA 6260	Population Health	2
PA 6610	Clinical Problem Solving I	2
PA 6620	Clinical Problem Solving II	2
PA 6630	Clinical Problem Solving III	2
PA 6270	Principles of Infectious Disease	2
PA 6710	Survey of Psychiatry	2
PA 6720	Survey of Women's Health	3
PA 6730	Survey of Pediatrics	3
PA 6740	Survey of Surgery	2
PA 6750	Survey of Emergency Medicine	2
PA 6460	Clinical Procedures I	3
PA 6470	Clinical Procedures II	2
PA 6670	Issues in Practice	2
PA 6680	Critical Appraisal of Medical Lit. & Evidence-Based Medicine	2
PA 6810	Clerkship Preparation	2
PA 6910	Capstone I (Clinical Year)	2

PA 6820	Clinical Rotation in Family Medicine (Clinical Year)	3
PA 6830	Clinical Rotation in Internal Medicine (Clinical Year)	3
PA 6840	Clinical Rotation in Behavioral Health (Clinical Year)	3
PA 6850	Clinical Rotation in Women's Health (Clinical Year)	3
PA 6860	Clinical Rotation in Emergency Medicine (Clinical Year)	3
PA 6920	Capstone II (Clinical Year)	2
PA 6950	PANCE Preparation Seminar (Clinical Year)	3
PA 6870	Clinical Rotation in Pediatrics (Clinical Year)	3
PA 6880	Clinical Rotation in Surgery (Clinical Year)	3
PA 6890	Elective Clinical Rotation (Clinical Year)	3
	<b>Total credits for P.A. Program</b>	<b>108</b>

**Current courses and existing programs-** *List current courses and existing institutional programs, which will give strength to the proposed program.*

MTSU has a number of existing programs that will give strength to the Physician Assistant master's degree program including a large undergraduate and graduate program in Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Nursing, and Public Health. At the graduate level, these include traditional master's, professional science master's, and Ph.D. programs. To support these programs the university library already maintains a robust collection of subscriptions and databases related to science and medical education. To support the biological science programs a cadaver lab was included in the New Science Building and is available to the P.A. program. The School of Nursing and the Master of Public Health program also provide opportunities for faculty to engage in collaborative research and for students to participate in service-learning programs that will benefit the campus and surrounding communities (e.g., community health screenings and immunization clinics).

**New Courses Needed-** *List any new courses, which must be added to initiate the program; include a catalog description for each of these courses.*

All courses in this program will be created, reviewed, and approved through the university's established graduate curriculum review process. MTSU uses the Curriculog curriculum and catalog information management system. All courses will be designed and proposed by the faculty of the program, available for review by all faculty of the university, and reviewed and approved at the program and college level before review and approval by the University Graduate Council. The program director and the directors of didactic education and clinical education are currently preparing the new course proposals and we anticipate that all will be reviewed and approved this academic year, ahead of our ARC-PA accreditation site review.

**PA6010 Human Anatomy (4)** Focus on the structure and function of the human body with emphasis on the head, ears, eyes, nose, and throat (HEENT), cardiovascular, pulmonary, gastrointestinal, genitourinary systems, gynecological, and neurological systems. Designed to provide the student with an in-depth examination of the anatomical structure and function of the human body through cadaver dissection and lecture. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6410 Clinical Medicine I (4)** Pathology of disease by body system and specialty. Fundamental elements of clinical medicine such as epidemiology, precipitating factors, etiology, risk factors, pathogenesis, pathophysiology, clinical presentation and manifestations, red flags, diagnostics, clinical intervention, management of diseases and disorders, clinical pearls, and differential

diagnoses as appropriately indicated. Focus on nutrition, dermatology, hematology, HEENT, and cardiopulmonary systems. Correlated reviews of relevant pathology, radiology, and preventive measures are also incorporated. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6420 Clinical Medicine II (4)** Pathology of disease by body system and specialty. Fundamental elements of clinical medicine such as epidemiology, precipitating factors, etiology, risk factors, pathogenesis, pathophysiology, clinical presentation and manifestations, red flags, diagnostics, clinical intervention, management of diseases and disorders, clinical pearls, and differential diagnoses as appropriately indicated are covered. Focus on abdominal, genitourinary, and infectious disease. Correlated reviews of relevant pathology, radiology, and preventive measures are also incorporated. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of PA 6410.

**PA6430 Clinical Medicine III (4)** Pathology of disease by body system and specialty. Fundamental elements of clinical medicine such as epidemiology, precipitating factors, etiology, risk factors, pathogenesis, pathophysiology, clinical presentation and manifestations, red flags, diagnostics, clinical intervention, management of diseases and disorders, clinical pearls, and differential diagnoses as appropriately indicated are covered. Focus on musculoskeletal, and neuroendocrine body systems, and genetic anomalies will be covered. Correlated reviews of relevant pathology, radiology, and preventive measures are also incorporated. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant program and satisfactory completion of PA 6420.

**PA6720 Survey of Women's Health (3)** Comprehensive survey course that familiarizes the student with normal presentations and common problems in obstetrics and gynecology. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6730 Survey of Pediatrics (3)** Population based module focusing on pediatric issues. The course addresses etiology, epidemiology, genetics, clinical signs and symptoms, physical exam findings, diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis for significant issues in the pediatric population. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6740 Survey of Surgery (2)** Concepts involved in the art of eliciting a surgical history as well as the skills required to perform a competent physical examination throughout all ages. It is recognized by the faculty and should likewise be recognized the students; that an effective provider understands that the patient history, taken by a skilled listener is the foundation, and a thorough accurate physical exam is the cornerstone of medicine. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6750 Survey of Emergency Medicine (2)** Treatment of trauma and medical disorders commonly presenting to the emergency department. Taught in a case-based format, the emphasis is on the priority of stabilizing patients with life-threatening trauma or illness and selecting appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic measures: Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6270 Principles of Infectious Diseases (2)** Comprehensive survey on the diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases seen in primary care medicine and organized by organ system. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6670 Issues in Practice (2)** Investigation of current trends and issues. The course stresses the professional responsibilities in relation to the Physician Assistant's role as a health care provider.

Content relating to Physician Assistant professional organizations, professionalism, the medical team, program accreditation, graduate certification and re-certification, employment considerations and professional liability are included. Skills related to learning style, test taking, and stress & time management are covered. Includes Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) competency acquisition. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6310 Clinical Pharmacology I (3)** Introduction to pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetic and pharmacotherapeutics principles that provide a foundation for the study of pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics. Students learn how to write prescriptions. Combined lecture and active learning exercises help students to demonstrate skills that a Physician Assistant needs to enhance patient care in clinical practice. This course focuses on pharmacology and therapeutics related to otolaryngological, ophthalmological, and integumentary musculoskeletal diseases and disorders. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6320 Clinical Pharmacology II (2)** Builds on principles learned in Clinical Pharmacology I. Students continue to write prescriptions. Development of skills that a Physician Assistant needs to enhance patient care in clinical practice. Focus on pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics related to neurological, psychosocial/psychiatric, endocrinological, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and reproductive diseases and disorders. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of PA6310.

**PA6330 Clinical Pharmacology III (2)** Advanced understanding of pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics principles learned in Clinical Pharmacology I and II. Students will become proficient at writing prescriptions. Students refine and further develop skills that a Physician Assistant needs to enhance patient care in clinical practice. Focus on pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics related to hematological, cardiovascular, and pulmonary diseases, and infectious disease disorders. Pharmacological treatments related to Infectious disease are also covered. Treatment options involving genetic anomalies are addressed. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of PA 6320.

**PA6460 Clinical Procedures I (3)** Students employ knowledge, skills, and techniques learned in patient assessment to evaluate surgical patients. Students learn to perform procedures such as hand washing, sterile technique, intravenous insertions, subcutaneous and intramuscular injection technique, suturing, wound care, nasogastric tube placement, and Foley catheter insertion. Prerequisite: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6470 Clinical Procedures II (2)** Continuation of Clinical Procedures I. Students learn to perform procedures such as casting and splinting, surgical scrub, gloving and gowning, minor surgical procedures, chest tube placement, ET intubation, as well as the principles of surgery, including pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative care. Prerequisite: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and completion of PA 6460.

**PA6110 Scientific Basis of Medicine I (3)** integrative human physiology and pathophysiology involving concepts of the nervous, skeletal, integumentary, cardiovascular, renal, respiratory, endocrine, immunological, reproductive, and gastrointestinal systems with an emphasis upon homeostatic mechanisms and etiologies of disease. Covers the interrelationships of function and dysfunction at the molecular, cellular, tissue, organ, and systemic levels. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6120 Scientific Basis of Medicine II (2)** Provides a working knowledge of the major anatomical regions and structures of the body in relation to the neurological, psychosocial/psychiatric, endocrinological, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and reproductive body systems. Emphasis is placed upon the relationships of components within a specific region, as well as topographical and functional anatomy as each relates to physical examination skills and clinical applications. Concurrently, students learn integrative human physiology and pathophysiology involving concepts of cell biology reactive to the stated body systems. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of PA 6110.

**PA6130 Scientific Basis of Medicine III (2)** Provides a working knowledge of the major anatomical regions and structures of the body in relation to the hematological, cardiovascular, pulmonary body systems and infectious disease. Emphasis is placed upon the relationships of components within a specific region, as well as topographical and functional anatomy as each relates to physical examination skills and clinical applications. Concurrently, students learn integrative human physiology and pathophysiology involving concepts of cell biology reactive to the stated body systems. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and completion of PHAS 6120.

**PA6610 Clinical Problem Solving I (2)** First of a series designed to instruct the student in the use of critical thinking skills to effectively evaluate patients and provide quality patient care, provides the student with the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in other courses to the assessment and care of patients across the lifespan, including preventative care, impact of social determinants of health and psychosocial issues, and maximization of health and well-being. A team-based learning approach is used to support the development of critical thinking skills necessary for the practice of medicine. Diagnosis and management decisions related to disorders and diseases of neurological, psychosocial/psychiatric, endocrinological, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and reproductive body systems are explored. The roles of other members of the healthcare team are identified and incorporated into the learning modules. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6620 Clinical Problem Solving II (2)** Second of a series designed to instruct the student in the use of critical thinking skills to effectively evaluate patients and provide quality patient care. Provides the student with the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in other courses to the assessment and care of patients across the lifespan, including preventative care, impact of social determinants of health and psychosocial issues, and maximization of health and well-being. A team-based learning approach is used to support the development of critical thinking skills necessary for the practice of medicine. Diagnosis and management decisions related to disorders and diseases of hematological, cardiovascular, and pulmonary body systems, infectious disease, and genetic anomalies are explored. The roles of other members of the healthcare team will be identified and incorporated into the learning modules. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of PA 6610.

**PA6630 Clinical Problem Solving III (2)** Third of an on-going series designed to instruct the student in the use of critical thinking skills. To effectively evaluate patients and provide quality patient care, provides the student with the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in other courses to the assessment and care of patients across the lifespan, including preventative care, impact of social determinants of health and psychosocial issues, and maximization of health and well-being. A team-based learning approach is used to support the development of critical thinking skills necessary for the practice of medicine. Diagnosis and management decisions related to disorders and diseases of gastroenterology, endocrinology, GU, reproduction, OB/GYN, renal, orthopedics,

rheumatology, and psychiatry are explored. The roles of other members of the healthcare team will be identified and incorporated into the learning modules. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of PA 6620.

**PA6680 Critical Appraisal of Medical Literature and Evidence-Based Medicine (2)** Focus on the importance of evidence-based medicine through discovery of how basic statistics, research methods, and ethical standards are utilized in research. Students learn to interpret various types of clinical articles to answer clinical questions, preparing students to apply evidence-based medicine to their clinical practices. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6210 Diagnostic Tests I (1)** Focus on learning basic terminology related to tests and testing, such as test of choice and gold standard. Students also learn how primary and differential diagnoses are used to order labs, imaging and other diagnostic studies needed to rule in or rule out disease processes and disorders. Critical skills required to appropriately order laboratory, imaging and other diagnostic studies based upon patient presentation and best practices, to interpret results and to know what to do with the findings will be honed. Students will also learn how to calculate needed values from given values when necessary. Case-based integrated learning that takes place in a series of small group case exercises, concurrently covering the same diseases and disorders that are being covered in Clinical Medicine. Includes blood-borne pathogen competency acquisition. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6220 Diagnostic Tests II (1)** Builds upon basic terminology related to tests and testing from Diagnostic Testing I, such as test of choice and gold standard. Focus on how primary and differential diagnoses are used to order labs, imaging and other diagnostic studies needed to rule in or rule out disease processes and disorders. Addresses critical skills required to appropriately order laboratory, imaging, and other diagnostic studies based upon patient presentation and best practices, to interpret results, and to know what to do with the findings. Students learn how to calculate needed values from given values when necessary. Case-based integrated learning takes place in a series of small group case exercises, concurrently covering the same diseases and disorders that are being covered in Clinical Medicine. Includes blood-borne pathogen competency acquisition. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of PA 6210.

**PA6230 Diagnostic Tests III (1)** Mastery of terminology related to tests and testing, such as test of choice and gold standard. Focus on how primary and differential diagnoses are used to order labs, imaging and other diagnostic studies needed to rule in or rule out disease processes and disorders. Includes critical skills required to appropriately order laboratory, imaging, and other diagnostic studies based upon patient presentation and best practices to interpret results, and to know what to do with the findings. Students will also learn how to calculate needed values from given values when necessary. Case-based integrated learning takes place in a series of small group case exercises, concurrently covering the same diseases and disorders that are being covered in Clinical Medicine. Includes blood-borne pathogen competency acquisition. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of PA6220.

**PA6510 History and Physical Examination I (3)** Introduces students to the art of patient history taking and documentation. Focus on how to properly obtain and document patient encounters, utilizing appropriate communication skills. Content includes medical vocabulary, professional conduct, patient interviewing, and fundamental aspects of the adult history and physical examination format with variants involving the newborn, pediatric, and adolescent patients. Students are taught how to elicit and document a full history and physical examination. This

course begins to prepare students for clinical experiences the following semester. Prerequisites: Admission to the Physician Assistant program.

**PA6520 History and Physical Examination II (3)** Teaches the foundational knowledge required to systematically perform a comprehensive physical examination, setting the course for best-practice clinical approaches. The course focuses on pragmatically approaching and diagnosing diseases and disorders of the otolaryngological, ophthalmological, integumentary, and musculoskeletal body systems based upon patient complaint, history, and presentation. Students also learn components of a well-child pediatric history and physical examination. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of PA6510.

**PA6530 History and Physical Examination III (3)** Builds on skills learned in History & Physical Examination II, continuing to focus on relevant history and physical examination skills needed to pragmatically approach and diagnose diseases and disorders. Students will learn how to clinically approach and assess diseases and disorders of the neurological, psychosocial/psychiatric, endocrinological, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and reproductive body systems based upon patient complaint, history, and presentation. Components of a well-adult history and physical examination, as well as the nuances of obtaining a special needs population history or performing an examination are covered. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of PA6520.

**PA6260 Population Health (2)** Introduces core public health concepts to inform clinical practice regarding population health. The fields of preventive medicine, environmental/occupational health, and public health policy/ advocacy are explored. Focus on conceptual and practical understanding of mitigating health care barriers, health maintenance, disaster preparedness, and behavioral change communication strategies. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6250 Introduction to the Profession (2)** Introduces the student to the Physician Assistant profession including historical perspective of the Physician Assistant profession, as well as biomedical ethical concepts as related to practical medical decision-making and problem solving. Students study risk management strategies and the legal definitions of and their responsibilities toward informed consent and confidentiality. Ethical principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice are discussed. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6710 Survey of Psychiatry (2)** Course examines the most significant power of a health care provider to act as a behavioral change agent and a catalyst for patients to modify a variety of self-injurious lifestyles or habits. Addresses the P.A.'s capacity to assist patients to make such changes not only through technologic expertise but in his/her ability to educate patients in daily healthy living. Explores how a physician assistant may appropriately assess normal and abnormal human behavior including common psychiatric disorders. Also provides a knowledge base for the different treatment regimens utilized to treat psychiatric disorders. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program.

**PA6810 Clerkship Preparation (2)** Designed to transition students from their academic experiences to clinical experiences to clinical practice. Topics include issues students encounter during clerkships including medical ethics, patient safety principles, clinical setting communications, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Advance Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Basic Life Support (BLS) renewal, Pediatric Advance Life Support (PALS), professionalism, quality improvement,

prevention of medical errors, risk management and an in-depth discussion of program and professional requirements for progressing through the clinical year. Preparation for formative examinations following most clinical clerkships. Students are introduced to continuing medical education activities. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses.

**PA6910 Capstone I (2)** Capstone project based upon previously developed research proposal Project is selected from a menu of potential approaches, such as a traditional quasi-experimental study, an evidence-based medicine question, case report, and comprehensive literature review. The student will formally present the findings to the University community during the Capstone II course. This course takes place during the clinical year and involves students meeting with the course coordinator and advisor periodically throughout the year. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses.

**PA6920 Capstone II (2)** Each student will present results of their individual Capstone project or research topic, to synthesize previous study and work experience, and to demonstrate an understanding of the program and profession's principles. Students must also demonstrate the knowledge and skills obtained during the program through successful completion of a summative OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) and a summative written exam. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and completion of PA6910.

**PA6820 Clinical Rotation in Family Medicine (3)** Designed to provide the PA student with the basics necessary to build a solid foundation for the evaluation, documentation, diagnosis, and treatment of problems common in family medicine. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of all didactic courses.

**PA6830 Clinical Rotation in Internal Medicine (3)** Designed to provide the PA student with the basics necessary to build a solid foundation for the evaluation, documentation, diagnosis, and treatment of problems common in internal medicine. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses.

**PA6840 Clinical Rotation in Behavioral Health (3)** Designed to provide the P.A. student with the basics necessary to build a solid foundation for the evaluation, documentation, diagnosis, and treatment of problems common in behavioral health. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses.

**PA6850 Clinical Rotation in Women's Health (3)** Designed to provide the P.A. student with the basics necessary to build a solid foundation for the evaluation, documentation, diagnosis, and treatment of problems common in women's health. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses.

**PA6860 Clinical Rotation in Emergency Medicine (3)** Designed to provide the P.A. student with the basics necessary to build a solid foundation for the evaluation, documentation, diagnosis, and treatment of problems common in emergency medicine. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses.

**PA6870 Clinical Rotation in Pediatrics (3)** Designed to provide the P.A. student with the basics necessary to build a solid foundation for the evaluation, documentation, diagnosis, and treatment of problems common in pediatrics. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses.



**PA6880 Clinical Rotation in Surgery (3)** Designed to provide the P.A. student with the basics necessary to build a solid foundation for the evaluation, documentation, diagnosis, and treatment of problems common in general surgery. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses.

**PA6890 Elective Clinical Rotation (3)** Designed to provide the P.A. student with the basics necessary to build a solid foundation for the evaluation, documentation, diagnosis, and treatment of problems common in an area of practice not covered by other rotations. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses.

**PA6950 PANCE Preparation Seminar (3)** Preparation for successful completion of the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE), necessary for entering medical practice. Strategies for successful study and successful completion of board-style exams, as well as an intense overview of medical knowledge to help prepare for the PANCE. Provides a summative evaluation tool to measure cognitive, motor, and affective domains at a point near a student's completion of the clinical portion of the program. Students perform an objective standardized clinical examination (OSCE) in order to demonstrate competencies in interpersonal skills, comprehensive physical examination skills, and professional bearing. Students will complete an end-of-year written examination providing proof of medical knowledge and clinical competence. Prerequisites: Admittance to the Physician Assistant Program and satisfactory completion of didactic year courses.

**Distance Learning** – *Indicate whether this program will be offered via distance learning and which courses are available via distance learning.*

The Physician Assistant Studies program is not being proposed as an online degree program.

**ACADEMIC STANDARDS** – The admission, retention and graduation standards should be clearly stated, be compatible with institutional or governing board policy, and encourage high quality.

#### **Application Requirements**

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies is a limited enrollment program. Application trends across the United States show that significant numbers of highly qualified applicants do not gain admission each year. To ensure that admitted students have the capacity to be successful in coursework, and clinicals, and the PANCE exam for licensure, a rigorous evaluation of all applications will take place. Applicants must submit application materials through the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) in addition to submitting an application for admission to graduate study to the MTSU College of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Analyst assigned to the P.A. program will be responsible for assuring submission of all required documents and certification of CASPA materials as well as verification that applicants meet the minimum requirements for admission to the College of Graduate Studies. Once applications are complete, the Physician Assistant Admissions Committee will be responsible for selecting students for admission. Applicants must meet the following minimum criteria for consideration for admission into the MSPAS Program; although, simply meeting these minimum criteria does not guarantee admission:

1. A Bachelor's degree from a U.S. institution of higher education accredited by a regional accrediting association or the degree equivalent from another country. Students may apply

while their degree is in progress; however, degree completion and final transcripts are required prior to enrollment into the P.A. Program.

2. Minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA 3.00 or above on a 4.0 scale. Students presenting a graduate transcript must have a minimum graduate GPA of 3.25.
3. Applicants with a Bachelor's degree earned outside of the US must send their transcripts to one of the member organizations associated with the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (<https://www.naces.org/members>) for translation. Then submit the results to CASPA and complete all Medical Core prerequisite courses (see below) in the United States. No exceptions will be made.
4. Applicants who are not U.S. citizens are required to submit official test scores for either Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) <https://www.ets.org/toefl>, or the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) <https://www.ielts.org/en-us> or completion of level 112 of ELS. The following are the minimum scores for admission consideration:
  - a. TOEFL: 215 computer-based score or iBT score of 80.
  - b. IELTS: an overall band score of 7.0, with no individual band score below 6.0.
  - c. Completion of Level 112 of ELS.
5. All applicants must successfully complete Medical Core prerequisite courses with a grade of "C" or higher (within the bachelor's degree or through coursework at a regionally accredited US institution of higher education). Medical Core Prerequisite Courses and Credit Hours are listed in the chart below:

<b>Coursework</b>	<b>Semester credit hours</b>
Anatomy & Physiology	8 hours
General Chemistry with Lab	8 hours
General Biology with Lab	8 hours
Microbiology	3
Organic Chemistry or Biochemistry with Lab	4
Developmental Psychology or Human Growth & Development	3
Medical Terminology	1

6. Prerequisite science courses are to be completed within six years prior to the date of admission. (General Chemistry and General Biology are not subject to the six-year time limit if completed as pre-requisite for another requirement.)
7. A waiver of the six-year requirement, or grade requirement, for a prerequisite course may be requested by the applicant if 1) there is a continuous employment history that would demonstrate knowledge of the course content or 2) the applicant has a B grade or better within the last six years in a more advanced course in the same subject. Knowledge-based testing does not satisfy any of the prerequisites. All waivers must be submitted with the supplemental application. The waiver must be approved by Program Director.
8. Applicants must submit acceptable Graduate Record Exam scores taken within the last five years. Official GRE score reports must be received by MTSU no later than December 1 for an application to be considered for admission. The institution code for MTSU is 1466.
9. All applicants to the P.A. Program must apply through the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). <https://caspa.liasoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>. Applicants must also submit and supplemental application to the MTSU Graduate School <https://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/apply.php>.
10. When completing the CASPA application, particular attention should be given to the following:
  - a. The applicant's personal statement detailing their desire to become a physician assistant.
  - b. Three (3) letters of recommendation addressing the applicant's potential as a physician assistant.

- c. One of the letters of recommendation must be from a practicing physician assistant with whom the applicant has had a minimum of 40 hours of first-hand observation or “shadowing” experience.
- d. Documentation of a substantial level of experience involving direct patient care is required. While we do not require a specific minimum number of hours and accept volunteer experience, applicants are advised that the admission committee places great emphasis on both quantity and quality of direct patient care. It is recommended that students obtain direct patient care hours in different medical settings, e.g., hospice, assisted living facility, hospital, underserved areas/countries, etc. to obtain strong direct patient care experience. Students are encouraged to obtain certification credentials, e.g., paramedic, nurse's aide, phlebotomist, medical assistant, radiologic technologist, EKG tech, EMT (I or Basic), LPN, dental hygienist, or clinical laboratorians (the student MUST be performing phlebotomy, assisting with bone marrow aspirations/biopsy and must have direct patient interaction, not just with their specimens), and behavioral health technician.
- e. Applicants must have no history of dismissal from another Physician Assistant school for academic or disciplinary reasons.
- f. The MTSU Physician Assistant program does not accept transfers from other P.A. programs.
- g. Applicants must have no history of drug abuse or conviction of a felony and must be able to pass a background and drug test.
- h. All applicants must be able to meet the program’s technical standards.

**Activities used to assure that graduates achieve required professional and program competencies**

1. Periodic review with formative and summative assessments by assigned faculty advisors.
2. Formative and summative assessment of students’ knowledge, clinical skills, and professionalism using a variety of assessment measures delivered on a regular basis during didactic and clinical courses.
3. Successful completion of a Summative I at the conclusion of the didactic year and a Summative II evaluation before graduation. A Summative evaluation consists of a comprehensive written assessment of knowledge base, review of professional behavior evaluations, and practical testing of clinical skills with standardized or simulated patients.
4. Completion of an approved “Capstone Project”.
5. Monitoring of curricular content and student performance with reference to program goals, ARC-PA standards, and AAPA competencies.
6. Administration of the Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT) at the end of the didactic year and at the end of the clinical year before graduation to benchmark student performance with national norms and assess student core medical knowledge prior to taking the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE).

**Academic Standing – University standards for retention, probation, and suspension**

In addition to program standards specific to the Physician Assistant program, all MTSU graduate students are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 for all graduate work completed at MTSU as well as in the major. A student failing to meet the applicable minimum cumulative graduate GPA retention standard will be placed on academic probation for the subsequent term and has three consecutive semesters in which to restore the cumulative GPA to the minimum required. If the student fails to attain the required GPA at the close of the third semester of probation, the student will be suspended automatically.

**EQUITY** – Provide information regarding how the proposed program will serve a diverse population of students (e.g., adult learners, students working and unable to relocate, student’s fall 2021 with preference for various delivery modes) or an underserved, historically underrepresented population of students or international students.

The fifth edition Standards of Accreditation Section requires P.A. programs to demonstrate an active commitment to attracting and retaining a diverse student and faculty population. P.A. programs are permitted and encouraged to establish admission and enrollment practices that favor specified individuals or groups and are required to define, publish, consistently apply, and make readily available to prospective students these policies.

As the only public P.A. program in the middle Tennessee region, we will recruit from the institutions in this region, including the historically black institutions. Recruitment efforts will also address access for the larger spectrum of students to include adult learners, veterans, and underserved and underrepresented students. Applicants from Health Personnel Shortage Areas (HPSA) <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/hpsa-find> or Medically Underserved Areas/Populations (MUA/P) <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/mua-find> and groups and/or racial/ethnic populations underrepresented within the physician assistant profession will be encouraged to apply. We anticipate weighting of admission criteria to ensure diversity in the composition of the student cohort as this is of great importance to the overall learning environment in physician assistant education.

We have already begun the process of establishing MOUs with institutions (Tennessee State University and Austin Peay are already in process) in the surrounding region. These agreements will ensure that qualified pre-medical students who are nominated by the institution will be guaranteed an admission interview. These MOUs will also specify the pre-requisites for admission as well as a process for pre-admission advising.

**PROGRAM ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATES** – Provide the projected number of declared majors and graduates expected over the first three years (associate and certificate), 5 years (baccalaureate and master’s programs) or 7 years (doctoral programs).

We assume a May 2022 start for this program and enrollment of 30 students per year, a conservative estimate given the national demand for entry to P.A. programs. This is a full-time program only and full-time enrollment is figured at 18- 20 credits per semester with enrollment in fall, spring, and summer terms. (Sample program of study is included as Appendix B). We also incorporate a 10 percent attrition, occurring after the first year.

Projected Number of Graduates

Year	Full-Time Headcount	Part-time Headcount	Total Year Headcount	FTE	Graduates
1	30	0	30	30	0
2	57	0	57	57	0
3	84	0	84	84	27
4	84	0	84	84	27
5	84	0	84	84	27

**ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE** – Provide the administrative unit and program director that will be responsible to ensure success of the proposed program.

The Physician Assistant Studies Program is part of the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences and the program director reports directly to the dean of the college. The duties of the Program Director of the P.A. program will be the same as the chairs and directors of the other academic programs in the college and include assigning faculty to courses and committees, conducting annual evaluations of all program faculty, ensuring compliance with program accreditation standards, managing program budgets and providing overall leadership to the program. The Program Director also serves as an approver in Curriculog to ensure the timely and accurate review of all curriculum proposals. An organizational chart, with the Physician Assistant Studies program shown, is provided at Appendix I.

**FACULTY RESOURCES** - Current and/or anticipated faculty resources should ensure a program of high quality. The number and qualification of faculty should meet existing institutional standards and should be consistent with external standards, where appropriate. The adequacy of the number of faculty should be paramount in the planning process as institutions build increasing numbers of interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary academic programs. The student/faculty ratio for the proposed program should be included in the documentation.

**Current Faculty** – *List the name, rank, highest degree, primary department and estimate of the level of involvement of all current faculty members who will participate in the program. If the proposed program is at the graduate level, designate current graduate faculty status in relation to eligibility to chair thesis and/or dissertation. Attach a three-page vita for each faculty member listed including relevant related activities for the past five years.*

MTSU has recruited and employed Dr. Marie Patterson PA-C to serve as the inaugural Program Director. Dr. Patterson served as a faculty member in the Physician Assistant Program at Lipscomb University where she was instrumental in starting that program and successfully attaining ARC-PA accreditation. Dr. Patterson began full-time duties at MTSU in April. We have also recruited Dr. Edward Eastham, the former Chief of Staff of Ascension St. Thomas Rutherford Hospital, to serve as the Medical Director of the Physician Assistant Studies program. We have recruited Dr. Jason Huddleston PA-C from the ARC-PA accredited P.A. program at South College to serve as Director of Didactic Education and Shannon Colvin PA-C to serve as the Director of Clinical Education. Professor Colvin was most recently the Director of Clinical Education at UTC. Dr. Eastham holds a current Medical License and Lifetime Certification from the American Board of Pediatrics. Professors Patterson, Huddleston and Colvin hold current NNCPA certification per ARC-PA requirements. Vitae for these individuals are provided in Appendix E and brief summaries are provided in the table below.

PROGRAM FACULTY				
NAME	RANK	TERMINAL DEGREE	Licensure / Certification	FTE
Marie Patterson	Assistant Professor	Doctor of Health Science – (Nova Southeastern Univ)	PA-C	1.0

Edward Eastham	Associate Professor and Medical Director	Doctor of Medicine (U.T. Health Sciences Center)	Current TN Med. license & Lifetime Certification by the American Board of Pediatrics	.20
Jason Huddleston	Assistant Professor	Doctor of Medical Science (University of Lynchburg)	PA-C	1.0
Shannon Colvin	Assistant Professor	M.H.S.- PAS M.P.H. (Georgetown Univ.)	PA-C	1.0
TOTAL FTE IN PROGRAM				3.2

**Anticipated Faculty** - Describe the additional faculty needed during the next five years for the initiation of the program and list the anticipated schedule for addition of these faculty members.

We will search for and hire three additional full-time principal faculty members with NCCPA certification in Planning year 2, ahead of the start of the didactic year program. In addition to these full-time faculty members we will also employ adjunct faculty to supplement instruction in specialized subject areas. These positions, the hire date and FTE in the program are provided in the table below.

Anticipated Program Faculty		
Position	Hire Year	FTE in Program
Principal Faculty	2021	1.0
Principal Faculty	2021	1.0
Principal Faculty	2021	1.0
Adjunct Faculty	2022	.5
TOTAL FTE IN PROGRAM		3.5

**LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES** – Provide documentation to demonstrate adequate current and/or anticipated library and information technology resources to support a high-quality program, which meets recognized standards for study at a particular level or in a particular field.

**Library and Information Technology Acquisitions Needed** - Describe additional library and information technology acquisitions needed during the first three years (associate and certificate), 5 years (undergraduate and master’s programs) or 7 years (doctoral programs) for the successful initiation of the program.

The James E. Walker University Library already houses an extensive collection of health science texts, ebooks, and database subscriptions in order to serve our other graduate health science degree programs (e.g., MSN, MS-PS – Health Care Informatics). In addition to extensive print materials, we have active subscriptions to databases such as Pub Med, Scopus, and Up to Date. Because Physician Assistant education is unique, we have also budgeted recurring funds (see attachment A) to support additional database subscriptions (e.g., Access Medicine, Clinical Key) and acquisitions designed to support a Physician Assistant program. It is important to note that

these additional resources will also increase the breadth and quality of resources available to all our allied health programs.

**SUPPORT RESOURCES** - Provide documentation to demonstrate adequate other existing and/or anticipated support resources including clear statements of support staff, student advising resources, arrangement for clinical or other affiliations, and professional development for faculty necessary for a successful program.

#### **Student Advising Resources**

As an institution, MTSU has a strong commitment to student success and provides a wide range of academic support services that includes campus-based and online tutoring and well as a University Writing Center to assist students. Walker Library also maintains student study rooms reserved exclusively for graduate students. In addition to academic support, MTSU also provides counseling and mental health services for graduate students through the Office of Testing and Counseling Services as well as the Center for Counseling & Psychological Services. All students also have access to the resources of MTSU Health Services which includes physicians, nurses, pharmacy, and wellness clinics. P.A. students also received their required physical examinations and immunizations through Student Health Services at no cost.

The University is also responsible for achieving and maintaining ARC-PA standards for a developing PA program. At a minimum, the program must demonstrate compliance with the following standard prior to achieving provisional accreditation

#### **Support Staff**

The accreditation standards for PA education provides the minimum guidelines for program staff support

*There must be at least a 1.0 FTE position, which should be dedicated exclusively to the program, to provide administrative support for the program.*

We have budgeted for and already hired an Executive Aide to serve in this position on a full-time basis. This position reports to the Program Director and provides administrative support to the program under the program director's supervision. Specific duties include serving as liaison and initial point of contact for faculty, staff, students, and the public contacting the program. The Executive Aide provides secretarial, technical, and business management assistance to the program director, including submitting purchase authorizations, maintaining inventory, monitoring, and reconciling budgets as well as other special projects as assigned.

The College of Graduate Studies will also assign a specific Graduate Analyst to serve as the program liaison to the P.A. program. This individual will support the program by managing the application/admission process for students seeking admission to the P.A. program. Funding for this position is not included in Attachment A as graduate analysts are employed by the College of Graduate Studies and assigned to assist graduate programs.

#### **Student Advising Resources**

At a minimum, the program must demonstrate compliance with the following standard in regard to securing clinical sites for the developing P.A. program prior to achieving provisional accreditation

*A1.09 The sponsoring institution must provide the program with the physical facilities to operate the educational program to fulfill obligations to matriculating and enrolled students.*

*Physical facilities relate to office, classroom, and other educational space. This includes, space to provide confidential academic counseling of students by the program director, principal faculty, space for program conferences and meetings, space for secure storage of student files and records, appropriate didactic and clinical facilities sufficient in number and size and appropriate in design to meet their intended use and appropriate classroom and laboratory space conducive to student learning.*

The P.A. program will be located in the Cason-Kennedy Building on the MTSU Campus. With the completion of the New Academic Building the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences Dean's suite has been redesignated for the administrative offices of the P.A. program and will house the program director, the medical director, the directors of didactic and clinical education as well as the program's executive aid. All faculty members will have secure private offices with telephones, computers., and internet connectivity. Conference rooms as well as a faculty lounge are located across the hall from the P.A. program offices.

The Cason-Kennedy Building currently houses the MTSU School of Nursing which offers a limited enrollment undergraduate BSN program. The MSN program is delivered online with no classes or labs scheduled on campus. This facility has sufficient instructional classrooms and simulation labs to accommodate the P.A. Program without adversely impacting the BSN program. All classrooms have complete technology packages and the building, as well as the campus, is connected to the campus network by WIFI.

*A2.05 Principal Faculty and the program director must actively participate in the processes of:*

- a) Developing, reviewing and revising as necessary the mission statement for the program,*
- b) Selecting applicants for admission to the PA program,*
- c) Providing student instruction,*
- d) Evaluating student performance,*
- e) Academic counseling of students,*
- f) Assuring the availability of remedial instruction,*
- g) Designing, implementing, coordinating, evaluating curriculum and*
- h) Evaluating the program.*

MTSU is committed to the concept that the faculty own the academic programs of the university. It is the expectation that every academic program engages in the activities listed above and the P.A. program will have the same responsibilities and the authority to carry out such responsibilities.

#### **Arrangements for clinical or other affiliations**

At a minimum, the program must demonstrate compliance with the following standard in regard to securing clinical sites for the developing P.A. program prior to achieving provisional accreditation

*A1.11The **sponsoring institution** must support the program in securing clinical sites and preceptors in sufficient numbers for program-required clinical practice experiences.*



*D1.07 The program must have identified prospective clinical sites sufficient in number to meet the needs of the number of anticipated students.*

To ensure that the program meets these accreditation standards, we have already recruited a full-time faculty member in planning year one (Director of Clinical Education) whose responsibility is to identify and engage clinical sites. This individual begins three years ahead of the first cohort of students entering the clinical year. Professor Shannon Colvin was previously the Director of Clinical Education at UTC and brings her knowledge of clinical sites in the region to our program. We have also budgeted funds to compensate preceptors who are supervising our students as an incentive to preceptors to mentor our students. We have also limited admission to our P.A. program to 30 student each year and this will limit the number of clinical sites needed accordingly.

**Evidence of willingness to partner - *Include government, education, health and business entities.***

We provided letters of support at the time we submitted the Letter of Notification. These provide evidence of willingness on the part of local and regional health care providers and organizations to partner and are included here as Appendix D. These organizations (St. Thomas / Ascension and the Veteran Affairs Tennessee Valley Healthcare System will be a significant source of rotations for students in the clinical phase of their program of study and the Christy-Houston Foundation is a private foundation formed from the proceeds of the sale of the community hospital with the mission of enhancing the quality of life in Rutherford County with emphasis on health care, through distribution of its grant resources to programs and projects that will accomplish such enhancement. It has distributed over \$105 million since its formation, (including primary funding for the Cason-Kennedy building at MTSU which will house the P.A. program). We have also hired our Medical Director. This individual is the former Chief of Staff of St. Thomas Rutherford Hospital and a well-regarded member of the medical community. He will provide additional credibility for the program and encourage even greater collaboration by community partners as the primary point of contact for our Advisory Board, to be established following program approval and before ARC-PA accreditation. (See Appendix E: Faculty Vitae) We have also reached out to both the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga and the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center to discuss possible opportunities for collaboration among the public P.A. programs in Tennessee. Since UTC has withdrawn its proposal to implement a P.A. program, we have shifted our discussions of collaboration to focus on recruiting activities. Dr. Patterson and Dr. Maday (UTHSC) have begun discussions on possible service-learning opportunities for students during clinical rotations. We are also interested in the possibility of creating an elective rotation that would allow students in both programs to work together in a short term international or mission type rotation. It is not possible to finalize any of these plans until final program approval is obtained but we look forward to pursuing these opportunities for collaboration.

**Other Support Currently Available - *Include support staff, university and non-university assistance.***

The Physician Assistant program will utilize the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) to manage the student application process. We anticipate well over 300 applications for the inaugural class of 30 students. Using CASPA will both increase the visibility of our program among qualified applicants and provide order and standardization to the process. The actual admission processing of students will occur in the College of Graduate Studies. The CGS is responsible for the admission processing of all graduate students at MTSU and has a structured process in place. Other resources available to students are provided through the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, the Hazel and Charlie Daniels Veterans and Military

Families Center, Student Life (including housing, health and wellness services, and counseling services).

**Other Support Needed** -- *List additional staff and other assistance needed during the first three years (associate and certificate), 5 years (baccalaureate and master's programs) or 7 years (doctoral programs).*

We have also budgeted for a Program Manager beginning in year two to support the Director of Clinical Education in the management of records related to clinical affiliation agreements and placement of students in rotations during their clinical year. This professional position will also maintain program records related to ARC-PA accreditation under the supervision of the Program Director. (see Attachment A).

In addition to the full-time staff noted above, we have also budgeted for graduate assistants to support faculty instructing in this program. We begin with one GA in year one and increase to four GAs in year four. (see Attachment A).

**FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT-** Provide documentation to demonstrate adequate existing and/or anticipated facilities and equipment. New/or renovated facilities required to implement the program should be clearly outlined by amount and type of space, costs identified and source of funds to cover costs.

**Existing Facilities and Equipment** - *Assess the adequacy of the existing physical facilities and equipment available to the proposed program. Include special classrooms, laboratories, physical equipment, computer facilities, etc.*

This program will be located in the Cason Kennedy building, a state-of-the-art instructional facility for applied health sciences. Multiple classrooms are available and equipped with the full range of instructional resources used in a P.A. program. It also houses three different simulation labs and a large computer lab that is available for instruction, testing, and individual student use. This facility is currently used by the School of Nursing which offers a BSN and an MSN program. However, the BSN only admits 64 students in the fall and spring semesters and the MSN is an online program that does not hold classes or labs on campus. As a result, the Cason-Kennedy building has sufficient uncommitted capacity to support instruction and clinical labs for both programs. The School of Nursing has a staff member who is responsible for scheduling of the simulation labs and will coordinate usage by both programs. With completion of the new Behavioral and Health Science Building, the existing Dean's Suite in Cason Kennedy has been converted to house the program director and associated program staff. In addition to the resources of the Cason Kennedy building, a state-of-the-art cadaver lab is located in the New Science Building, located nearby. This facility has been unused up to now. Additional Anatomy & Physiology classrooms and labs are also located in the Science Building, adjacent to the cadaver lab.

**Additional Facilities and Equipment Required or Anticipated** - *Describe physical facilities and equipment that will be required/anticipated during the first three years (associate or certificate programs), 5 years (undergraduate and master's programs) or 7 years (doctoral programs).*

While the School of Nursing has significant instructional resources (e.g., anatomical anatomy models) we have also budgeted for acquisition of specific instructional tools such as an Anatomage virtual cadaver system, cadavers, EKG machines, X-ray light reader, blood pressure

cuffs, etc.) that will be used primarily in P.A. instruction. The approval of the P.A. program will also allow us to enhance instruction in the BSN, Exercise Science, and Athletic Training programs as well as support the educational program of the Forensic Institute for Research and Education by sharing access to equipment resources purchased for the P.A. program.

We have also budgeted as a recurring expense the cost of supplies and materials for laboratories and simulations (e.g., suture kits, splints, pharmacology, etc.).

**MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT PLAN** – Provide a plan, including marketing and recruitment, to ensure all prospective students will have equitable access to the program so as not to impede the state’s commitment to diversity and access in higher education. Identify any budget implications in the THEC Financial Projection Form.

The M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies will be implemented in May 2022 and will be subject to post-approval monitoring for the first five years of operation. The university’s assessment of program viability (the basis for the decision to seek approval to implement a new degree) is based upon a projection of enrollment sufficient to offset program costs. With the national trends in P.A. program applications we anticipate well over 300 application for our inaugural class, allowing for an admission rate of approximately 10% of applicants.

All applications to the Physician Assistant Studies program will come through the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). This centralized system, operated by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), is used by 95% of all P.A. programs. Potential applicants are able to identify, learn about, and apply to multiple programs with a common application. All applicants to the MTSU P.A. program will apply through the CASPA portal. CASPA also provides robust national data on application, admission, and matriculation trends as well as data specific to our program to support strategic recruitment planning in the future. To support recruitment and promote our program, the College of Graduate Studies will incorporate program information into its graduate recruitment activities throughout the region. In addition, a web page with comprehensive information about the program and conforming to the requirements of CASPA and the ARC-PA will be launched during the planning year. Last, we have also budgeted funds to support program promotion, including faculty travel for campus-based recruitment in planning year two (see Attachment A – One-time expenditures, other).

**ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION** - Although the primary responsibility for program quality rests with the institution and its institutional governing board or its system, THEC considers pertinent information to verify that high standards have been established for the operation and evaluation of the program. Evidence must be proposed to demonstrate that careful evaluation is undertaken periodically throughout the lifetime of the program indicating:

#### **The Program Assessment Process**

The following narrative provides a proven programmatic assessment system fully in compliance with ARC-PA standards.

Students will participate in a comprehensive robust programmatic assessment process. It is essential that students take ownership of assessment methods. This constitutes a professional development opportunity for students to impact future classes by participating in continuous quality improvement.

The leadership and faculty of the MSPAS program at MTSU will be dedicated to a process of

continuous self-evaluation and analysis of all aspects of program operations. The faculty executive committee (FEC) and the curriculum committee (CCOM), which are briefly described below determine all program decision-making.

FEC= Faculty Executive Committee: the FEC is comprised of all faculty and staff, chaired by the Program Director. This committee oversees and votes regarding all programmatic decisions both assessment and operational. This committee will receive recommendations from the curriculum committee. All programmatic decisions involving curricular modifications, implementation of policy and programmatic self-assessment and accreditation are voted upon and enacted by this committee.

CCOM = Curriculum Committee: the CCOM will review all data received from the assessment process. The curriculum committee analyzes data generated from the programmatic self-assessment process and makes recommendations for improvement to the faculty executive committee for consideration.

The MS in PAS program curricular plan evaluates all aspects of the curriculum, including formative and summative outcomes. The curriculum will be evaluated regularly by achieving educational best practices, determining compliance with ARC-PA standards, and measuring graduates' results on the NCCPA examination. Program alumni and employers of these alumni will be surveyed to determine if the program is achieving program goals, as well as mission and vision statements.

The Curricular Strategic Plan is implemented through regular faculty meetings and a yearly Annual Program Review Meeting to comprehensively evaluate all aspects of the program. The loop of programmatic improvement represents a critical, self-evaluative and analytical process that results in appropriate changes in the curriculum as needed to ensure the mission is achieved. Curricular alignment with ARC-PA standards, NCCPA blueprint, OSCE scores and survey results contribute to this planning process. The MSPAS program is therefore a living organism impacted by these aforementioned assessment processes with appropriate modifications and programmatic improvements based upon valid data sources. In order to keep current with the ever-changing paradigm of P.A. practice, a culture of continuous self-analysis will create an ethos of academic excellence among the faculty and students.

The programmatic assessment process also includes ongoing strategic planning. This process is aligned with university strategic planning and is driven by the assessment process. The curricular strategic plan is closely aligned with the operational strategic plan and is supportive of personnel, financial and physical resources. The cycle is complete as the strategic plan and corresponding changes reflect the mission of the program.

Student learning outcomes will begin with all principal and instructional faculty members being involved in the evaluation of students. During the didactic phase of study (academic year), students are evaluated by course instructors who are principal faculty, instructional faculty, or both. The faculty member who was assigned as the course master (main faculty member designee) for that course evaluates all courses taught by principal faculty. For courses that are team taught, principal faculty will provide questions to the course director for inclusion into assessment instruments.

The MS in Physician Assistant Studies program also assesses students following each applicable rotation in the clinical-year phase of the program. The clinical team under the direction of the Director of clinical education will be responsible for organizing callback days and collecting data on clinical aspects of the program. The data collected will encompass PAEA End of Rotation™ exam (EORE) scores, preceptor evaluations; oral presentations required electronic entries, as well as periodic system-focused patient exams. This data will be used to track student progress and overall program achievement of competencies. The EOREs are all-encompassing exams that cover material graduates of the MTSU P.A. program are expected to know for clinical practice and to perform

satisfactorily on the PANCE. The EOREs will provide comparison of MTSU P.A. students to other P.A. students across the nation.

Students will also be evaluated on final evaluation from the preceptor attending and participation at professional seminars on callback days, clinical rotation specific documents/assignments, submission of student evaluation of preceptor and site, and successful completion of required electronic entries.

The electronic tracking system used by students during the clinical year will be used for assessment purposes. The collected data will be reviewed and assessed by principal faculty, as well as the coordinator of research and assessment.

The program faculty realizes that aspiring to successfully measure learning outcomes in the clinical year does not merely mean a specific number of patient encounters have been logged by a student. Rather than just relying on numerical evidence of case logs, the program is developing a system of measuring clinical experiences that demonstrate that students are growing in clinical acumen as the clinical year progresses.

Students will be expected to demonstrate higher levels of patient interactions as they grow in competence as clinicians. The program will aspire to elevate the assessment process in the clinical year to successfully grow from novice to skilled learner. The program faculty will define program expectations and competencies to be acquired during SCPEs and attempt to connect this process with the didactic curriculum. They believe that the curriculum is a continuum from day one to graduation will guide the program toward a successful integrated assessment system

During each semester, students will also be graded on complete system-focused, problem-specific simulated patient encounters. These exams will be organized and scheduled by assigned academic-year and clinical-year principal faculty members. These exams will be in preparation for the end-of-the-year objective standardized clinical examination (OSCE), which must be passed in order to matriculate to the clinical phase of the program and to fulfill a graduation requirement.

The program will conduct and document a summative evaluation of each student during the clinical year of the program with the final SUMMATIVE evaluation within the final three months of the program to help verify each student is prepared and competent to enter clinical practice. The summative evaluation will include assessment of student knowledge, interpersonal skills, patient care skills and professionalism. Part of the summative evaluation process involves cognitive assessment to provide feedback on strengths and weaknesses for both students and the program. The cognitive evaluation is comprised of multiple parts. During the first two semesters of the clinical year, students will take comprehensive examinations (SUMMATIVE I comprised of 360 questions that follows the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) blueprint and mimics the PANCE in areas of length, content of task. The students will then complete a 700-question comprehensive examination (SUMMATIVE II) within the last four months of the program. SUMMATIVE II will also involve an OSCE. The OSCE will include multiple stations to assess psychomotor skills, history taking skills, physical examination skills, interpersonal assessment, and interpretation of laboratory data. The student will be required to generate a primary diagnosis, differential diagnoses, and plan, as well providing appropriate patient education. The OSCE will be administered with sufficient time that allows students to be remediated within a specific domain(s) in which their performance was below the satisfactory cut score. The program will also use a summative professionalism assessment tool as a component of the SUMMATIVE evaluation processes; however, evaluation of professionalism will also be conducted at the conclusion of each semester during the program. Therefore, professionalism will be assessed both as a formative and summative process.

This will enable faculty to provide feedback about student's professional skills and provide

remediation as needed. The preceptor evaluation also provides a composite data point for professional behaviors.

In addition to student evaluation, assessment of the program will also occur throughout both academic and clinical years, as per ARC-PA standards. If at any time, the program is determined not in compliance with its accrediting body standards, it will be documented and a plan will be devised, implemented, and assessed; thereby, closing the feedback loop. The program Director will oversee and guide this process to ensure compliance with the ARC-PA standards regarding all aspect of program assessment.

Principal and adjunct faculty, as well as the program director, will actively participate in the evaluation of the MS in PAS program. Other instructional faculty including preceptors will play a role in continued program assessment. Evaluation of the program will be continuous and comprehensive and will be discussed at faculty meetings and at the annual faculty retreat.

The on-going assessment process will be initiated for the inaugural class and maintained throughout the program. At each annual faculty retreat, the ongoing development and maintenance of curricular standards will be benchmarked against program competencies, ARC-PA standards and NCCPA blueprint topics. Measurement of whether the program is meeting the learning outcomes and goals will be embedded into the annual review.

Outcomes generated from the previous year will include course-embedded assessments and overall course grades, student evaluation of faculty/courses, cumulative program GPAs, OSCE performances, Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT) evaluations, SUMM I/SUMM II , preceptor evaluations of cognitive, psychomotor, and professional behaviors, student retention and graduation rates, graduate surveys, exit surveys, graduate scores on the PANCE, job placement rates, employer surveys and faculty and preceptor retention. Data collected annually in these areas will be analyzed for any weaknesses and will be triangulated analyze for emerging trends. This result in necessary adjustments to the curriculum, policy and procedure, and pedagogical methods. Programmatic changes are incorporated into the upcoming year as needed.

### **Responsible parties for conducting program assessments or evaluations, and accreditation.**

The program director maintains oversight for conducting program assessments, evaluations, and accreditation. The program must maintain compliance with ARC-PA fifth edition standards involving the functions and competence of the program director, which states the following:

A2.09 The program director must be knowledgeable about and responsible for program:

- a) organization,
- b) administration,
- c) fiscal management,
- d) continuous programmatic review and analysis,
- e) planning,
- f) development,
- g) completion of ARC-PA required documents, and
- h) adherence to the Standards and ARC-PA policies

All program faculty and staff members have responsibility to participate in the program assessment and accreditation process. The program director will have the primary responsibility to ensure that the program is in compliance with ARC-PA standards

In addition to the work of the Program Director, the MTSU Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning provides support to all program undergoing accreditation or external review. This support will be available to the P.A. program and includes data collection and analysis.

#### **How results will inform the program post-approval.**

This is a critical component for both provisional and continuing accreditation by ARC-PA. As assessment includes both formative and summative analysis of quality of didactic instruction, student competencies, clinical skills, performance in the clinical rotations and student success on the PANCE examination, recommendations it will be integrated into the curriculum in an ongoing manner.

**ACCREDITATION** - Where appropriate, professional disciplinary accreditation organizations should be identified. The proposed accreditation timeline must be submitted. Any substantive change that may requires a SACS-COC review should be indicated.

As noted throughout this NAPP, the University has already applied for Accreditation through ARC-PA and will be subject to the standards of that organization. The implementation of this major does not comprise a substantive change requiring SACSCOC review. The university will submit the required New Program Prospectus to SACSCOC.

**FUNDING** –A budget narrative that complements the budget projections on the THEC Financial Projection Form should be included. The narrative must address the institution’s capacity to deliver the proposed program within existing and projected resources including an explanation of the current departmental budget in which the proposed program will be housed and estimated additional costs for the first three years (associate degrees, five years (undergraduate and master’s degrees), or seven years (doctoral degrees ) for the proposed program. Please note that these costs for each year are incremental costs not cumulative costs. Include all accreditation costs and proposed external consultations as related to accreditation. Identify any grants or gifts which have been awarded or anticipated.

THEC Financial Projection form is provided as Attachment A. The form includes projections for both one-time and recurring expenditures as well as identifying annual program revenues.

- Program revenues in planning years one and two come from institutional reallocations within the university.
- Year one revenues are a combination of student tuition, course fees, and institutional reallocations since the first cohort does not matriculate until May.
- Beginning in year two and then in subsequent years all program revenues are generated by tuition and course fees.

One-time expenditures include:

- Space renovation - reconfiguration/remodeling of existing space to accommodate P.A. needs. We intend to renovate an existing classroom in Cason-Kennedy for more appropriate configuration for teaching of P.A. content and also remove several temporary walls in another room to return it to instructional use.
- Equipment expenses include computers and related technology for the program director and administrative assistant (planning year one) as well as for other faculty at time of their hire (planning year two and beyond). Also budgeted are funds to purchase equipment necessary for

P.A. instruction such as Anatomage or similar simulation equipment (beginning in year one, year two, and year five).

- Funding for consultants to assist with program development and preparation for ARC-PA accreditation (planning year one and two).
- Travel for the VPAP to attend PAEA annual conference and for the VPAP and Program Director to attend the required ARC-PA Provisional Accreditation workshop (planning year one).
- Other includes expenses related to ARC-PA accreditation review, including initial application fees.

Recurring expenses include:

- Personnel (Administration) – Salary and benefits for Program Director. (Beginning Planning year 1)
- Personnel (Faculty) - Salary and benefits for program faculty members (Medical Director, Director of Didactic Education, and Director of Clinical Education begin in planning year two with additional faculty budgeted beginning in year one.
- Personnel (Support staff) – Salary and benefits for Executive Aide (beginning planning year one) and Program Management Specialist (beginning year two).
- Personnel (Graduate Assistants) – Beginning in year one, we include one full-time graduate assistant, increasing to four fully funded assistants in year four and beyond.
- Operating expenses increase as the program matriculates its first students and continue to increase through the full enrollment of three concurrent cohorts and include
  - Travel – to support program promotion (beginning in planning year one), recruitment (beginning in planning year two), and professional and continuing education travel for faculty (beginning in year one).
  - Printing of recruitment and promotional materials. (beginning in planning year two)
  - Equipment and supplies necessary to support instruction and labs. (beginning in year one)
  - Other includes funds to compensate preceptors (beginning in year two)
  - Other expenses also include funding related to student recruitment including CASPA fees (beginning in planning year two), PAEA membership fees (beginning in year one), ARC-PA annual fees (beginning in year one), Library subscriptions and fees (beginning in year one), Preceptor compensation (beginning in year two), as well as specific instructional expenses (cadavers, OSCE's, PACKRAT, etc.). General operational expenses of the program (professional development & travel, licenses, certifications, and memberships, office supplies, etc.) are also budgeted and all expenses include a 3% inflation factor each year.



ATTACHMENT A: THEC Financial Projections Form

**Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
Attachment A: THEC Financial Projections  
Middle Tennessee State University  
M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies**

Seven-year projections are required for doctoral programs.  
Five-year projections are required for baccalaureate and Master's degree programs  
Three-year projections are required for associate degrees and undergraduate certificates.  
Projections should include cost of living increases per year.

	Planning Year 1	Planning Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<b>I. Expenditures</b>							
<b>A. One-time Expenditures</b>							
New/Renovated Space	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment	\$ 2,500	\$ 10,000	\$ 140,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000
Library	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Consultants	\$ 7,500	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ 30,000	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,500	\$ -
<b>Sub-Total One-time</b>	\$ 40,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 140,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 7,500	\$ 100,000
<b>B. Recurring Expenditures</b>							
<b>Personnel</b>							
<b>Administration</b>							
Salary	\$ 31,000	\$ 175,100	\$ 180,353	\$ 185,764	\$ 191,336	\$ 197,077	\$ 202,989
Benefits	\$ 10,850	\$ 61,285	\$ 63,124	\$ 65,017	\$ 66,968	\$ 68,977	\$ 71,046
<b>Sub-Total Administration</b>	\$ 41,850	\$ 236,385	\$ 243,477	\$ 250,781	\$ 258,304	\$ 266,053	\$ 274,035
<b>Faculty</b>							
Salary	\$ -	\$ 175,833	\$ 474,000	\$ 682,170	\$ 701,915	\$ 722,253	\$ 743,200
Benefits	\$ -	\$ 61,542	\$ 165,900	\$ 238,760	\$ 245,670	\$ 252,788	\$ 260,120
<b>Sub-Total Faculty</b>	\$ -	\$ 237,375	\$ 639,900	\$ 920,930	\$ 947,585	\$ 975,041	\$ 1,003,320
<b>Support Staff</b>							
Salary (adjunct)	\$ -	\$ 41,200	\$ 42,436	\$ 93,709	\$ 96,520	\$ 99,416	\$ 102,398
Benefits	\$ -	\$ 13,596	\$ 14,004	\$ 30,924	\$ 31,852	\$ 32,807	\$ 33,791
<b>Sub-Total Support Staff</b>	\$ -	\$ 54,796	\$ 56,440	\$ 124,633	\$ 128,372	\$ 132,223	\$ 136,190
<b>Graduate Assistants</b>							
Salary			\$ 12,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 36,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 48,000
Benefits			-	-	-	-	-
Tuition and Fees* (See Below)			\$ 24,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 72,000	\$ 96,000	\$ 96,000
<b>Sub-Total Graduate Assistants</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 36,000	\$ 72,000	\$ 108,000	\$ 144,000	\$ 144,000
<b>Operating</b>							
Travel	\$ 5,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 41,200	\$ 42,436	\$ 43,709	\$ 45,020
Printing		\$ 2,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,545	\$ 1,591	\$ 1,639	\$ 1,688
Equipment & Supplies		\$ 5,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 36,050	\$ 47,431	\$ 48,854	\$ 50,320
Other	\$ -	\$ 12,500	\$ 82,375	\$ 119,500	\$ 223,085	\$ 229,778	\$ 236,671
<b>Sub-Total Operating</b>	\$ 5,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 148,875	\$ 198,295	\$ 314,543	\$ 323,980	\$ 333,699
<b>Total Recurring</b>	\$ 46,850	\$ 573,556	\$ 1,124,691	\$ 1,566,638	\$ 1,756,805	\$ 1,841,297	\$ 1,891,244
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A + B)</b>	\$ 86,850	\$ 653,556	\$ 1,264,691	\$ 1,666,638	\$ 1,756,805	\$ 1,848,797	\$ 1,991,244

**\*If tuition and fees for Graduate Assistants are included, please provide the following information.**

Base Tuition and Fees Rate	\$	24,000.00	\$	24,000.00	\$	24,000.00	\$	24,000.00	\$	24,000.00
Number of Graduate Assistants		1		2		3		4		4

	Planning Year 1	Planning Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>II. Revenue</b>							
Tuition and Fees <sup>1</sup>			\$ 381,340	\$ 1,440,250	\$ 2,345,529	\$ 2,406,998	\$ 2,470,279
Institutional Reallocations <sup>2</sup>	\$ 86,850	\$ 653,556	\$ 883,351	\$ 226,388	\$ (588,724)	\$ (558,201)	\$ (479,035)
Federal Grants <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Grants or Gifts <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other <sup>5</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BALANCED BUDGET LINE</b>	<b>\$ 86,850</b>	<b>\$ 653,556</b>	<b>\$ 1,264,691</b>	<b>\$ 1,666,638</b>	<b>\$ 1,756,805</b>	<b>\$ 1,848,797</b>	<b>\$ 1,991,244</b>

**Notes:**

**(1) In what year is tuition and fee revenue expected to be generated and explain any differential fees. Tuition and fees include maintenance fees, out-of-state tuition, and any applicable earmarked fees for the program.**

Year 1: (20 In-state students x 1 semester @ \$7,096 = \$141,920) + (10 Out-of-state students x 1 semester @ \$17,942 = \$179,420) + (course fees = \$60,000) = \$381,340  
 Year 2: (37 In-state students @ \$513,890) + (20 Out-of-state students @ \$712,460) + (course fees = \$213,900) = \$1,440,250  
 Year 3: (54 In-state students @ \$845,639) + (30 Out-of-state students @ \$1,202,290) + (course fees = \$297,600) = \$2,345,529  
 Year 4: (54 In-state students @ \$871,018) + (30 Out-of-state students @ \$1,238,380) + (course fees = \$297,600) = \$2,406,998  
 Year 5: (54 In-state students @ \$897,149) + (30 Out-of-state students @ \$1,275,530) + (course fees = \$297,600) = \$2,470,279

**(2) Please identify the source(s) of the institutional reallocations, and grant matching requirements if applicable.**

Existing institutional resources within the division of Academic Affairs, including unfilled faculty lines, will be used to fund reallocations.

**(3) Please provide the source(s) of the Federal Grant including the granting department and CFDA(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) number.**

No Federal grants are used to fund this degree.

**(4) Please provide the name of the organization(s) or individual(s) providing grant(s) or gift(s).**

No external grants or gifts are used to fund this degree.

**(5) Please provide information regarding other sources of the funding.**

Course Fees included in Note 1 are budgeted at \$100 per credit hour for P.A. courses. Per course fees are common in applied health care programs. They are used here to cover expenses related to equipment, supplies, and supervision of students in clinical rotations.



## APPENDIX A: Feasibility Study



Feasibility Study for a

**PHYSICIAN  
ASSISTANT**

M.A. Degree at MTSU

**MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY.

JONES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

*Business and Economic Research Center*

Steven G. Livingston, Ph.D. | Murat Arik, Ph.D.

Below we evaluate the feasibility of offerereng a Physician Assistant masters Degree at MTSU. We first look at student and recent graduate interest in such a program, and then at the employment prospects for physicians assistants.

## Part I

# Interest in a Physician Assistant Degree

Physician Assistant degree programs have been growing at a very rapid rate. The number of accredited PA programs has increased from 131 in 2008 to 238 in 2018. That number is expected to grow to over 270 by 2020.<sup>1</sup> The number of students attending and graduating from these programs is growing equally fast. Almost 9,800 students matriculated into physician assistant programs in 2016-17, more than double the number of ten years earlier.<sup>2</sup> Despite the large increase in the number of programs, the average class size of these programs has increased by fifteen percent over this same time frame.<sup>3</sup> Measured either by the number of degrees awarded or by the number of first-time takers of the PANCE (the certification exam to practice as a PA), the number of individuals seeking a career as a PA is growing steeply.<sup>4</sup>

The competition to enter a PA program reinforces this conclusion. Applicants per seat in physician assistant programs are up fifty-three percent from ten years ago.<sup>5</sup> The experience of Tennessee programs bears this out. Bethel University has received over three hundred applications a year for the fifty seats in its program. Another Tennessee program, that at South College, decided in 2016 to almost double the size of its program due to demand.<sup>6</sup> The UT Health Center has also doubled its entering class since the

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<sup>1</sup>The accrediting body is The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant. Numbers are from its website, <http://www.arc-pa.org/>

<sup>2</sup>Compiled from the annual program reports of the Physician Assistant Education Association, <http://paeaonline.org/research/program-report/>

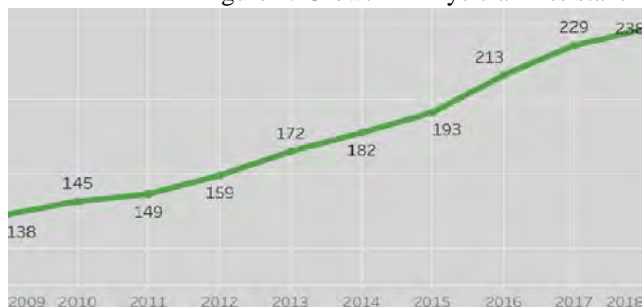
<sup>3</sup>*PAEA Research: Program Report 33*, Physician Assistant Education Program, 2018.

<sup>4</sup>By 2020 all individuals taking the PANCE will be required to have a masters, that is not currently the case.

<sup>5</sup>J. Glenn Forister and Curt Stilp, "A Spatial Analysis of Physicians Assistant Programs," *Journal of Physician Assistant Education* 28(2), June 2017.

<sup>6</sup>Bethel information from [https://www.bethelu.edu/assets/2369/annual\\_report\\_card\\_2016\\_.pdf](https://www.bethelu.edu/assets/2369/annual_report_card_2016_.pdf), South

Figure 1: Growth in Physician Assistant Programs



Source: Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, <http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/accredited-programs/>

fall of 2014, but still accepts only 30 out of 1600 applicants.<sup>7</sup> Almost all programs have waiting lists, and all have an interview process. In short, demand for admission into these programs significantly exceeds the seats available. For an anecdotal sense of the anxiousness of students to get into one of these programs, there are thousands of views each year of posts about admission concerns on the “physician assistant forum,” a website devoted to PA students and practitioners.<sup>8</sup>

PA programs have two major student feeders. About a fifth of those entering a PA program already work in a health care position.<sup>9</sup> (One-third of all those entering PA programs do so more than two years after receiving their bachelors degree.) As is widely known, this industry is unusually concentrated in the Nashville MSA. An earlier BERC study found 105,000 individuals working in the “core” health care sector, 68,000 as health care practitioners.<sup>10</sup> The large size of health care employment in the Nashville region should lead to substantial demand for the degree from those already working in this sector.

The second large feeder for PA programs comes from students graduating from pre-health majors or allied programs. Four out of five entrants into PA masters programs come from these majors.<sup>11</sup> Using NSF data on degrees awarded, 5.27% of all students in pre-health majors later enter a physicians assistant program<sup>12</sup>

College from [https://cdn.southcollegetn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Success-of-the-Program-in-Achieving-its-Goals\\_2016\\_1219.pdf](https://cdn.southcollegetn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Success-of-the-Program-in-Achieving-its-Goals_2016_1219.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>[https://academic.uthsc.edu/ie/docs/enrollment/Fall\\_Enrollment\\_by\\_Program.pdf](https://academic.uthsc.edu/ie/docs/enrollment/Fall_Enrollment_by_Program.pdf)

<sup>8</sup>This link goes to posts on Trevecca’s program, but the site can be searched for any PA program: <https://www.physicianassistantforum.com/forum/405-tennessee-trevecca-nazarene-university/>

<sup>9</sup>*PAEA Research: Program Report 32, op cit.*

<sup>10</sup>Murat Arik, Director. *Health Care Industry Nashville MSA 2015 Trends, Scope, and Impact on the Regional Economy*. Prepared for the Nashville Health Care Council. <https://healthcarecouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Council-Final-Report.pdf>

<sup>11</sup>Compiled from data in *PAEA Research, Student Report 1: Data from the 2017 Matriculating Student and End of Program Surveys*, Table 57. <http://paeaonline.org/research/student-survey-report/>

<sup>12</sup>NSF degree data at <https://ncesdata.nsf.gov/webcaspar/TableBuilder>. The figure was compiled by looking at all NSF bachelors degrees in the biological sciences, the health sciences, and medical technologies and subtracting those not medically related (e.g. zoology, etc.) or awarded in other medical areas (nursing, dentistry, etc.).



MTSU has 1093 students identifying themselves as pursuing a pre-health program.<sup>13</sup> Extrapolating from the figures in the previous paragraph, we would anticipate that fifty-eight of these students will later enter a PA program, either upon graduation or in the two years after. There are some 30,000 undergraduates at other regional universities nearby. If we assume pre-health is equally popular as an academic focus, there would be each year over one hundred students in the region eventually seeking a PA masters.<sup>14</sup>

The combination of the large health care sector nearby and the large number of undergraduate students graduating from feeder programs suggests that there is a sizable pool from which an MTSU program could draw. This is particularly so given that in the middle Tennessee region there are only two programs currently operating (Trevecca and Lipscomb).

Indeed Tennessee has only four continuing and four “provisionally” accredited PA programs. All are small private colleges with the single exception of the program at the UT Health Sciences Center.<sup>15</sup> Lincoln Memorial, over 220 miles from MTSU, accounts for fully one-third of the state’s PA graduates.

An MTSU program would be additionally well placed to attract applicants because of what is likely to be far lower tuition and expenses. Physician Assistant degrees at private schools are not cheap. All state programs (including that at the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center) cost over \$85,000 in tuition and fees.

Every measure indicates that there is substantial, and growing, interest among students (and recent graduates) for a career as a physician assistant. Demand for a masters degree in this field is strong. The two major feeders for a PA program, those already working in the health care industry and current undergraduates pursuing studies in a pre-health program, point to MTSU as well-positioned to easily attract substantial numbers of students. The attractiveness of lower tuition and the relative weakness of some of the existing PA programs in the state are two other factors arguing in favor of students selecting a PA program at MTSU.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Communication with Eric B. Miller, Advising Manager of MTSU’s Pre-Professional Health Science Advising Center.

<sup>14</sup>Recall that about twenty percent of those entering PA programs do not have health-related degrees.

<sup>15</sup>Bethel, Lincoln Memorial, South, and Trevecca Nazarene are fully accredited. Lipscomb, Christian Brothers, and Milligan are provisionally accredited.

<sup>16</sup>Tennessee currently ranks 46th among American states in student pass rates on the PANCE. See the data at “the PA Life,” <https://www.thepalife.com/best-pa-schools/>. This is not indicative of strong programs.

Figure 2: Growth in Physician Assistant masters Degrees Awarded and Certification Exams Taken



Sources: for degrees, NSF data from <http://ncesdata.nsf.gov/webcaspar>, for PANCE examinations, National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, <http://prodcmstoragesa.blob.core.windows.net/uploads/files/PANCEPassRates.pdf>

## Part II

# Job Market for Physician Assistants

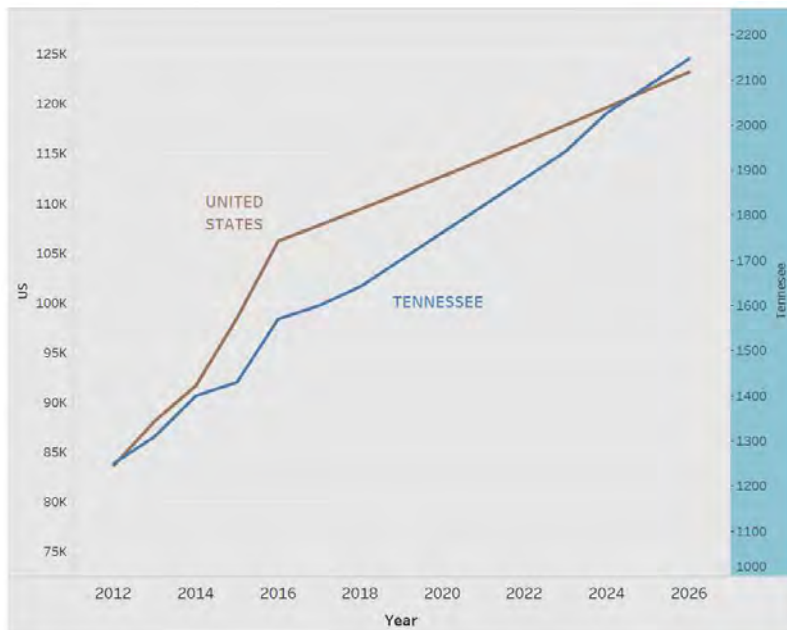
There were 106,220 practicing Physician Assistants at the end of May 2017.<sup>17</sup> Growth has been rapid. The number of jobs has increased by more than a quarter over the past 5 years. Just over seventy percent of these jobs are held by those with masters degrees or above, but recall that by 2020 all PAs will be expected to hold at least a masters to obtain certification.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics believes that the demand for PAs will be very strong. Its ten year projection is that there will be about 40,000 new jobs for PAs by 2026, a thirty-seven percent increase. It expects employment growth to be “much faster than average.” In fact, it believes growth in physician assistant jobs will increase twice as fast as that for physicians and five times as fast as the growth in all jobs overall over the next ten years.<sup>18</sup> Numerous research services and press outlets share the outlook. US News and World Reports has ranked PAs as number 3 among its “Best Jobs of

<sup>17</sup>This is the most recent figure. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Physician Assistants, <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm>. The National Commission on Certification of of Physician Assistants, *2017 Statistical Profile of Certified Physicians Assistants*, <https://prodcmstoragesa.blob.core.windows.net/uploads/files/2017StatisticalProfileofCertifiedPhysicianAssistants%206.27.pdf>, gives a somewhat higher figure of 123,089. This is presumably because the latter includes certified PAs not in the workforce.

<sup>18</sup>BLS, Occupational Outlook Handbook, [op cit.](#)

Figure 3: Employment Growth and Growth Projections for Physicians Assistants



Data from BLS Occupation Employment Statistics (<https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>), BLS 2016-2026 Occupational Outlook and Employment Projections (<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.toc.htm>), Projections Central (<http://www.projectionscentral.com/Projections/LongTerm>) and Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Market Information (<https://www.jobs4tn.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>)

2018” and number 3 among the best healthcare jobs. Marketwatch has identified PAs as one of the “ten best middle-class jobs in the U.S. for the next decade.”<sup>19</sup> In 2016 a Forbes survey of masters degrees declared the PA masters to be the eighth best to obtain.<sup>20</sup> Hanover Research found that job postings for PAs remain unfilled, on average, for more than a month, a longer period than that of any other occupation requiring a post-secondary degree.<sup>21</sup> This, of course, indicates the field has significantly fewer applicants than positions available. Finally, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for physician assistants is an astonishingly low 0.8 percent.

Anecdotal evidence agrees with an assessment that this is a rapidly growing field. In the most recent survey of recently certified PAs, 83.8 percent found there to be “many jobs” vs. 0.5 percent that found there to be few or none. The vast majority accepting a job had multiple offers.<sup>22</sup> (Eighty percent of those finding jobs said they

<sup>19</sup>For these rankings see, *US News and World Report*, <https://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/rankings/the-100-best-jobs> (January 28, 2019, *Marketwatch*, <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/10-best-middle-class-jobs-in-the-us-for-the-next-decade-2017-10-25> (October 25, 2017).

<sup>20</sup>Kathryn Dill, “The Ten Best and Worst masters Degree for Jobs Right Now,” *Forbes*, August 12, 2016. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kathryndill/2016/08/12/the-best-and-worst-masters-degrees-for-jobs-in-2016/#6382a4ed7435>.

<sup>21</sup>Hanover Research, Higher Education, “Quarterly Message to Clients,” January 14, 2019.

<sup>22</sup>The National Commission on Certification of of Physician Assis-

“faced no challenges” in their job search.)

Tennessee’s demand for physician assistants appears equally rosy. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development rates the occupation as having a “bright outlook statewide.”<sup>23</sup> Over the next decade, Tennessee growth in PA employment is anticipated to be forty-two percent, compared to overall employment growth of seven percent.<sup>24</sup> The state projects 165 job openings per year through 2026. Reflecting these projections, currently in this state there are roughly two physician assistant jobs available per applicant for them.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, using BLS data, the “Learn How to Become” website’s discussion of PA employment prospects ranks the state of Tennessee as sixth best in the nation in terms of likely growth in physician assistant positions.<sup>26</sup> In this regard we might note that Tennessee currently has 26.4 PAs per 100,000 people. This is quite a bit below the national figure of 36 PAs per 100,000. It not unreasonable to expect Tennessee to trend towards the national average, which would further argue for robust growth in the occupation. Neighboring states, especially North Carolina, employ substantial PAs in rural counties, which is not the case in Tennessee. This could be a source of pent-up demand.

A scan of major recruiting sites supports the conclusion that demand is strong in Tennessee. Sixteen new Tennessee PA ads were posted on LinkedIn in just the week between January 23 and January 30, 2019. Twenty-six ads were placed on Indeed.com over the three days ending January 30th. O\*Net showed twenty-seven unfilled PA advertisements on that date as well.

### **Middle Tennessee/Nashville MSA**

The Nashville region is the site of the plurality of the state’s PA jobs. Over one-third of all positions are located in the Nashville MSA. Typically, one-half of advertised jobs are in the Nashville MSA. In January 2019, thirteen of the twenty-seven advertised positions on O\*NET were in this MSA.

As shown in Table 1, most newly certified PAs wish to work where they lived before going to school or near their PA program. The disparity between the location of the existing Tennessee PA programs and the location of the employment prospects within the state argue that a program based in the middle Tennessee region would be strongly positioned to place graduates in PA jobs.

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tants, *2017 Statistical Profile of Recently Certified Physicians Assistants*, <https://prodcmsstoragesa.blob.core.windows.net/uploads/files/2017StatisticalProfileofRecentlyCertifiedPAs.pdf>

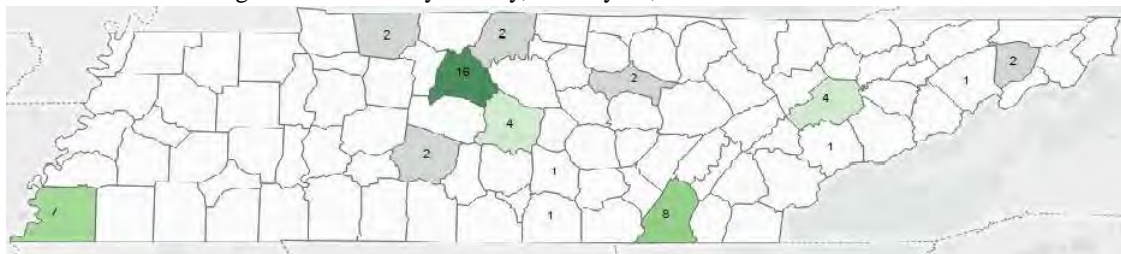
<sup>23</sup><http://www.jobs4tn.gov>

<sup>24</sup>Projections Central, Long Term Employment Projections (2016-2016),<http://www.projectionscentral.com/Projections/LongTerm>

<sup>25</sup>On January 29, 2019, the state recorded twenty-seven job openings for PAs vs. thirteen individuals seeking employment one of these occupations. From the Department’s “Current Labor Summary.” <https://www.jobs4tn.gov/>.

<sup>26</sup><https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/physician-assistant/>

Figure 4: PA Jobs by County, January 30, 2019



Taken from Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development O\*Net and Indeed.com job advertisements. Highlighted counties have advertised jobs.

Table 1: Where Recent PAs wish to Practice

Preferred Location to Work	% of Respondents
Where grew up or living when entered program	44.3%
Where PA program is located	20.8%
Where want to live	15.2%
Other	19.7%

Source: National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, *2015 Statistical Profile of Recently Certified Physician Assistants*, pages 18 and 37. This is from a survey of 6,048 recently certified PAs. 5,940 responded to this question. Multiple responses were allowed but the aggregate number suggests that few chose multiple categories.

## Conclusion

There is clear evidence that there is strong student (and recent graduate) interest in entering physician assistant masters degree programs. This is shown by the sheer number of students enrolling, the number of new programs being developed, the competition to get into a program, and, on the MTSU campus, the sizable number of students pursuing studies for which a PA degree should be an attractive option. There is also an abundance of evidence that the demand for physician assistants is growing robustly. Both the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development estimate job growth to be in the neighborhood of forty percent over the next ten years, far surpassing general employment growth or indeed that of the vast majority of other occupations.

Locally the state’s Jobs4TN website shows a dearth of applicants for the PA positions that are advertised. Within the state, the most significant employment opportunities are and will be in Nashville and surrounding counties, the center of the state’s health care industry. This is where that dearth is presently greatest. There are currently but two PA programs in this region, both at small private universities. Given the number of PA graduates that wish to practice near where they grew up or where they attended school, a very strong case can be made that an MTSU physician assistant program would attract a significant number of applicants to fill a sizable number of local positions.



APPENDIX B: Program of Study

**Appendix B**  
**Program of Study**  
**Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies - MTSU**

DIDACTIC PHASE				CLINICAL PHASE		
Semester One (Summer)	Semester Two (Fall)	Semester Three (Spring)	Semester Four (Summer)	Semester Five (Fall)	Semester Six (Spring)	Semester Seven (Summer)
PA6010 Regional Anatomy 4	PA6420 Clinical Medicine II 4	PA6430 Clinical Medicine III 4	PA6720 Survey of Women's Health 3	PA6910 Capstone I 2	PA 6850 Clinical Rotation in Women's Health 3	PA6920 Capstone II 2
PA6110 Scientific Basis of Medicine I 3	PA6320 Clinical Pharmacology II 2	PA6130 Scientific Basis of Medicine III 2	PA6730 Survey of Pediatrics 3	PA6820 Clinical Rotation in Family Medicine 3	PA 6860 Clinical Rotation in Emergency Medicine 3	PA 6870 Clinical Rotation in Pediatrics 3
PA6210 Diagnostic Tests I 1	PA6260 Population Health 2	PA6460 Clinical Procedures I 3	PA6740 Survey of Surgery 2	PA 6830 Clinical Rotation in Internal Medicine 3	PA 6880 Clinical Rotation in Surgery 3	PA 6890 Elective Clinical Rotation 3
PA 6510 History/Physical Exam I 3	PA6270 Principles of Infectious Disease 2	PA6620 Clinical Problem Solving II 2	PA6750 Survey of Emergency Medicine 2	PA 6840 Clinical Rotation in Behavioral Medicine 3		PA6950 PANCE Preparation Seminar 3
PA6310 Clinical Pharmacology I 3	PA6120 Scientific Basis of Medicine II 2	PA6330 Clinical Pharmacology III 2	PA6670 Issues in Practice 2			
PA6410 Clinical Medicine I 4	PA6620 Clinical Problem Solving I 2	PA6230 Diagnostic Tests III 1	PA6470 Clinical Procedures II 2			
PA6250 Introduction to the Profession 2	PA520 History/Physical Exam II 3	PA6530 History/Physical Exam III 3	PA6680 Crit. Appraisal of Medical Literature & Evidence-Based Medicine 2			
	PA6220 Diagnostic Tests II 1	PA6710 Survey of Psychiatry 2	PA6630 Clinical Problem Solving III 2			
			PA6810 Clerkship Preparation 2			
<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>

**TOTAL = 108**



## APPENDIX C: Strategic Marketing Plan

## APPENDIX C

### Strategic Marketing Plan – M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies

The project implementation date for the M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies is May 2022. Based upon national trends, we anticipate substantial numbers of applications to the MTSU P.A. program. As such, the focus of this strategic plan is not so much to generate applications but to ensure that we identify, recruit, and enroll the most qualified applicants possible. In order to achieve that goal, we have limited cohorts to 30 students in each of the first five years. We have also chosen to implement the program in May 2022, allowing significant lead-time for program promotion and student recruitment. The enrollment targets projected in the New Academic Program Proposal are in the table below (including a 10% attrition at the end of the first year).

#### Enrollment Targets

	<b>Full-Time Headcount</b>	<b>Part-time Headcount</b>	<b>Total Headcount</b>	<b>Total FTE Headcount</b>
Year 1: AY 2021-22	30	-	30	30
Year 2: AY 2022-23	57	-	57	57
Year 3: AY 2023-24	84	-	84	84
Year 4: AY 2024-25	84	-	84	84
Year 5: AY 2025-26	84	-	84	84

#### Time-Line with Recruiting Milestones

11/2019 – MTSU Graduate Council approves degree

- NAPP is submitted to THEC

7/2020 – External Judgement by THEC

- Reviewer report
- MTSU response to reviewer report

11/2020 – MTSU Board of Trustees approves NAPP

11-12/2020 – Work on marketing plan in preparation of THEC Approval

- Work with Marketing and Public Affairs to craft press release
- Work with Marketing and Graphics to develop web page, video, and print materials
- Develop social media platforms and strategy
- Develop new Physician Assistant brochures and banner for recruiting events
- Meet with Admissions Office (recruiters), CBAS, CBUS, CBHS, and CME College Advisors, and Undeclared Advisors to brief recruiters on new degree that is proposed for May 2022.

1/2021 – THEC approves degree

- Press Release announcing new degrees is distributed
- Campus-wide email announcing degree approval
- Special email to students in B.S. in Science (Allied Health Science Concentration) describing program.
- Revised MTSU Programs and new Physician Assistant Studies web pages are published

- Launch social media platforms
- Produce recruitment materials (brochures, banners, rack cards)
- “Physician Assistant starting May 2022” announcement on MTSU homepage
- Develop a marketing plan that continues each semester:
  - Promote Physician Assistant program at public and private colleges in Tennessee and surrounding states through advisors and programs that lead well into the degree.
  - Contact CBAS, CBHS, and Veterans Center to confirm approval of new Physician Assistant major.
  - Send press release and article to TN media outlets to announce degree.
  - Organize student interest meeting to answer questions about new major.
  - Promote the program through the Tennessee Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA) and the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), through its events and marketing outlets.
  - Speak and promote at local meetings and organizations of physician assistants.
- Host initial meeting of MTSU Pre-PA Society (campus-wide invitation to interested students)
- Formally create the Physician Assistant external advisory board that incorporates Physician Assistants, Physicians, Hospital and Health Care Administrators that are recognized leaders in health care delivery.

#### Semester begins

- Send recruitment materials to all public and private colleges and universities in Tennessee and surrounding states with pre-med / pre-health professions degree programs.
- Faculty personally visit with select colleges and universities with allied health focused programs
- Host monthly meetings of the Pre-PA Society
- Finalize participation in CASPA and provide all program information.
- Host visitation days for prospective students.
- Convene initial meeting of the P.A. Advisory Board. Request assistance in review and preparation of self-study.

#### 3/2021 – Submission of ARC-PA self-study (due 12 weeks before on-site visit

- Contact CBAS, CBHS, Veterans Center, and Undeclared Advisors to confirm approval of new Physician Assistant major.
- Continue to offer events, such as Physician Assistant Institute Data dives which promote the new Physician Assistant undergraduate program.

#### 5/2021 – Host ACR-PA on-site accreditation review team

#### 9/2021 – MTSU accreditation reviewed and granted by ACR-PA

- MTSU continues outreach to colleges and universities that are projected to be feeder schools.
- College of Graduate Studies showcases P.A. program at graduate and professional school fairs.
- MTSU participates in CASPA and begins to accept applications for May 2022 start.
- MSPAS admissions committee begins review of completed applications.

#### 12/2021 – Deadline for completed applications for May 2022 start.

#### 3/2022 – All offers of admission and waitlist completed

#### 4/2022 – Waitlist offers completed

#### 5/2022 – Program begins

- Student orientation.
- Welcome first cohort of Physician Assistant majors / induction ceremony.
- Continued social media, web page, marketing campaigns (highlighting inaugural class and focused on next cohort).
- Continue to maintain the marketing plan developed in 2020 (see above for individual action items).
- Analyze 2022 application and enrollment data to identify priority recruiting opportunities.

- Survey of current Physician Assistant students to evaluate successful recruiting techniques.

#### 8/2022 - Fall semester begins

- Continue to maintain the marketing plan developed 7/2020 (see above for individual action items).
- Continue working with the Physician Assistant Advisory Board on events to promote the degree to potential students and to potential clinical preceptors.
- Host visitation days for prospective students.

#### Future academic year activities years 3, 4 and 5 (ongoing)

##### **Fall**

- Continue working with the Physician Assistant Advisory Board on events to promote the degree to potential students and to potential clinical preceptors.
- Host campus –based and virtual visitation days for prospective students.
- Participate in regional college and university graduate and professional school recruiting events.
- Special Events in conjunction with Physician Assistant Advisory board (guest speakers/colloquia /clinics/outreach to community).
- Survey of current Physician Assistant students to evaluate successful recruiting techniques
- Continue to maintain the marketing plan developed previously (see above for individual action items).
- MSPAS Admissions committee begins review of completed applications and makes initial offers to qualified applicants.

##### **Spring**

- Program follows-up with applicants who have incomplete files.
- MSPAS admissions committee continues review of completed applications.
- MSPAS admissions committee completes admission offers and creates waitlist.
- MSPAS admissions committee makes offers to applicants on waitlist.
- Continued social media, web page, meeting with local feeder programs, marketing campaigns.
- Participate in recruiting events – including guest presentations at other institutions with feeder programs.
- Host on-campus and virtual visitation days for prospective students.
- Special Events in conjunction with Physician Assistant Advisory Board (guest speakers/colloquia/etc.).
- Survey of current Physician Assistant students to evaluate successful recruiting techniques.
- Continue to maintain the marketing plan developed 7/2020 (see above for individual action items).

## APPENDIX D: Letters of Support



Gordon B. Ferguson, FACHE  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital  
Saint Thomas Regional Hospitals

October 22, 2018

Dr. Sidney McPhee, President  
Middle Tennessee State University  
1301 East Main Street  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Dear Dr. McPhee,

It has come to my attention that Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) is considering the establishment of a Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program. I'm writing this letter in strong support of this academic offering by MTSU.

As you well know, our population in the middle Tennessee region continues to grow at a significant rate. Given Saint Thomas Health's role as a key provider of quality health care services in this area, we are constantly evaluating the manpower needs required to take care of those we are called to serve. Over the past few years, we have followed the national trend in seeing firsthand the value provided by physician extenders such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

The offering of this post graduate program would go a long way in helping us recruit physician assistants to Saint Thomas Health and Ascension Medical Group. We have enjoyed a lasting relationship with MTSU's School of Nursing with regards to the training and placement of registered nurses. I have every reason to believe that an equally productive relationship would exist as MTSU embarks on a training program for physician assistants.

It has been noted that Tennessee lags behind in the number of physician assistants needed to take care of our current and projected population. We are also aware that the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development is projecting physician employment growth to be 44% through 2024. Both factors support the need for an additional training program in middle Tennessee. We applaud MTSU's efforts in applying the resources necessary to stand up a Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program and would be more than happy to discuss ways in which Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital could assist in your efforts.

In His Service,

Gordon B. Ferguson, FACHE  
President & CEO, Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital  
President, Saint Thomas Regional Hospitals

1700 Medical Center Parkway  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37129

p 615-396-4100  
[STHealth.com](http://STHealth.com)





## *Christy-Houston Foundation*

1296 Dow Street  
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Phone 615-898-1140  
Fax 615-895-9524

February 15, 2018

Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, President  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Dear Dr. McPhee:

I am writing to applaud the decision of **Middle Tennessee State University** to submit a Letter of Notification to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, for the addition of a master's degree program in Physician Assistant Studies to your graduate level course offerings.

As you know, **The Christy-Houston Foundation, Inc.** is a private, health-legacy foundation, formed from the 1986 sale of the community hospital, Middle Tennessee Medical Center, to Saint Thomas and Baptist Hospitals in Nashville. The mission statement of the Foundation is to enhance the quality of life in Rutherford County, Tennessee, **with emphasis on health care**, through distribution of our grant resources to programs and projects that will accomplish such enhancement. Since 1986, we have provided \$109M in such grants to local non-profits.

MTSU has been the beneficiary of almost \$10M in CHF grants since 1987, including the Foundation's contributions to healthcare projects such as nurse education, the Center for Dyslexia, improvements to both the School of Nursing and the Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, and the construction of the MTSU Science Building.

Toward that end, our organization is supportive of MTSU's forward-thinking desire to add the Physician Assistant Studies master's degree program. Such graduates would be a positive addition to the pool of local healthcare professionals, in the midst of tremendous area growth. With a population projected to expand by 89,000 over the next 15 years, Rutherford County continues to count itself as one of the nation's fastest growing communities.



We know that county healthcare needs will increase directly in proportion to county population increases. Thus, the Foundation realizes the importance of having enough medical professionals to take care of our ever-growing population. Currently, we understand that middle Tennessee is 160 internal physicians short of where we should be. Other, more rural counties in middle Tennessee, have even more dire needs.

The Physician Assistant Studies graduates could provide support for our local physicians, as these assistants could assist with diagnosing and treating illnesses, perform physical examinations, assist in surgeries, develop treatment plans and make rounds in our 3 Rutherford County hospitals, numerous clinics, and 6 regional hospitals.

With regard to Workforce Development, there is structure in place to **employ future graduates of an MTSU Physician Assistant Studies program**. These healthcare organizations could provide a student clinical environment and an employment pipeline for MTSU Physician Assistant graduates:

**Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital:**

- 286-bed hospital in Murfreesboro--relocated to a new facility in 2010
- Member of \*Saint Thomas Health and Ascension, the nation's largest Catholic and non-profit health system
- The leading healthcare provider in Rutherford County
- Currently undergoing an \$81M expansion to add 72 beds, 3 operating rooms, 25 observations rooms and the addition of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> floors on the West wing
- \*Saint Thomas Health (STH) is a family of 9 Middle Tennessee hospitals in the region
- STH includes **Saint Thomas Medical Partners**
  - A physician-led multi-specialty medical group, serving 35 counties in Middle Tennessee and South Central Kentucky
  - 600 physicians and 100 locations

**TriStar StoneCrest Hospital:**

- 109-bed hospital in Smyrna—part of HCA
- 500 physicians including 45 specialties
- Complete medical care for adults and children



**TrustPoint Hospital:**

- 101-bed acute care general hospital --Murfreesboro's leading psychiatric hospital
- Offering acute physical medicine and rehabilitation
  - Stroke, cardiac, spinal and neurological disorders
  - Complex, co-occurring and psychiatric disorders
- Adult and geriatric psychiatry
- Outpatient behavioral health
- Medical psychiatry for adult and senior patients

**Murfreesboro Medical Clinic:**

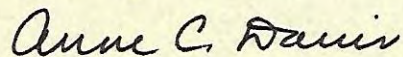
- Independently-owned physician clinic made up of 20+ specialties
- Located within one location (228,000 square feet)
- Staff of 600 associates who see 50,000 patients per year
- SurgiCenter performs 725 surgical cases per month

It is my understanding that such a master's degree program at MTSU would make this educational opportunity even more accessible and affordable for residents in middle Tennessee and the surrounding region.

In your role as President, we know from first-hand experience that you are deeply committed to high-quality graduate and undergraduate programs that can contribute to meeting the growing healthcare needs of Tennesseans.

Please convey our support to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and let me know how we may further support you in this request.

Sincerely,



Anne C. Davis, CFRE

President

The Christy-Houston Foundation, Inc.

[acdchristyhouston@att.net](mailto:acdchristyhouston@att.net)

615-330-8330 cell







**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
TENNESSEE VALLEY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**  
1310 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue South                      3400 Lebanon Pike  
Nashville, TN 37212                              Murfreesboro, TN 37129

February 6, 2018

In Reply Refer To: 626/00

Peter H. Cunningham  
Vice Provost for Academic Programs  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Cope Administration Building, Room 111  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132

Dear Dr. Cunningham:

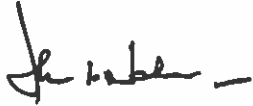
As the Chief of Staff and Health System Director for the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System (TVHS), we strongly support the development and implementation of a physician assistant program at Middle Tennessee State University. We currently have a number of affiliations with MTSU, including nursing, social work, and recreational therapy. We value and appreciate our partnership with you in training our nation's future healthcare force. The VA has a longstanding commitment to education and in 2017 trained over 120,000 trainees throughout the nation. Our teaching mission and its clinical learning environment contribute to excellent patient care for veterans and enhance VA's ability to attract and retain high quality professional staff

TVHS is an integrated healthcare system comprised of two medical centers - the Alvin C. York Campus in Murfreesboro and the Nashville Campus - and many community based outpatient clinics located in Tennessee and Kentucky. TVHS provides ambulatory care, primary care, and secondary care in acute medicine and surgery, specialized tertiary care, transplant services, spinal cord injury, outpatient care, and a full range of extended care and mental health services for over 80,000 veterans. The Nashville Campus is the only VA facility that supports all solid organ transplant programs, including total in-house kidney and bone marrow transplants. The Alvin C. York Campus is a network referral center for mental health services, geriatrics, chronic pain management, and extended care. Health professions trainees contribute substantially to VA's ability to deliver cost-effective, high-quality patient care for veterans.

TVHS has active affiliations with numerous allied health programs throughout the United States, including several physician assistant programs. We also have medical school affiliations with Meharry Medical College, Vanderbilt University Medical Center and the University of Tennessee College of Medicine (Chattanooga and Nashville). We offer a wide-variety of both inpatient and outpatient patient-care settings for our trainees in Internal Medicine, Surgery and Psychiatry.

We support your efforts to create a PA program and have a strong commitment to primary care and educating future clinicians. If you need further information or have additional questions, please do not hesitate to call us.

Sincerely,



John H. Nadeau, MD  
Chief of Staff



Jennifer Vedral-Baron, MN, ARNP, NP-C, FAANP, FACHE  
Health System Director

Chief of Staff Contact Information:  
John H. Nadeau, MD, TVHS Chief of Staff  
1310 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, South, Nashville, TN 37232  
Office: 615-873-6969  
Fax: 615-873-7891  
e-mail: [john.nadeua@va.gov](mailto:john.nadeua@va.gov)

Contact for Educational Affiliation Information: TVHS Associate Chief of Staff for Education  
Sam R. Sells, MD, MPH, MEd  
[Sam.sells@va.gov](mailto:Sam.sells@va.gov)

## APPENDIX F: Position Descriptions

## Medical Director

- Job Title Medical Director of Physician Assistant Program, Clinical-Track Faculty
- Department College of Behavioral and Health Sciences
- College Behavioral and Health Science

University Expectations: MTSU seeks candidates who are committed to excellence and innovative teaching. We also seek to attract a culturally and academically diverse faculty who value working with a diverse student body.

Job Description: The College of Behavioral and Health Sciences at Middle Tennessee State University invites applications for a founding Medical Director of its Physician Assistant Program. This is a 12-month, part-time (.20 FTE) clinical-track faculty position (#018125) with open rank. Start date for this position may be as early as June 2020.

The University seeks a Medical Director with strong leadership, organizational, and interpersonal communication skills and collaborative work ethic. The Medical Director must be team oriented and possess excellent communication and problem solving skills. The Medical Director will be responsible for supporting the development of the program competencies to meet current practice standards as they relate to the role of the Physician Assistant in the clinical setting. The Medical Director is an active participant in the Physician Assistant Program and will report directly to the Physician Assistant Program Director. They will also work to assure that all didactic education and supervised clinical experiences meet the current standards of medical practice and assume the highest levels of educational quality. The Medical Director will work with the Program Director and other members of the academic leadership team to assess the quality of the program and implement plans for continuous quality improvement across the curriculum. The Medical Director must have a strong understanding of the Physician Assistant profession and education.

As a public comprehensive university and one of nine senior institutions in the Tennessee state system of higher education, MTSU enrolls almost 22,000 students in bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs.

The Medical Director will participate in the organization, administration, continuous review and analysis, planning, development, and participation in the accreditation process of the Physician Assistant Program. This includes applying for, achieving, and maintaining ARC-PA accreditation. Duties include developing and maintaining positive relationships with community clinicians and healthcare executives with the goal of advancing quality clinical rotations, providing guidance and assisting the clinical team in securing clinical sites and preceptors from a variety of specialty areas, participating in evaluation of clinical sites, participating in faculty development sessions, contributing to the development and implementation of didactic curriculum depending on area of expertise, maintaining accreditation standards, and engaging in open, collaborative and collegial interactions with the Program Director, Clinical Director, faculty and staff.

Required Education: Graduation from accredited medical school and residency program

Required Related Experience: Five years of experience in a clinical practice setting as a physician

Required License/Registration /Certification: Applicants must be a currently licensed allopathic or osteopathic physician and must be certified by an ABMS or AOA approved specialty board and hold or be eligible for licensure in the state of Tennessee.

Other Desirable: Applicants who possess experience in Physician Assistant education or those with teaching and/or clinical supervision of Physician Assistants will receive special consideration.

Salary and Benefits: Rank and salary commensurate with education and experience.

## Director of Clinical Education

- Job Title Director of Clinical Education, Clinical-Track Faculty
- Department College of Behavioral and Health Sciences
- College Behavioral and Health Science

University Expectations: MTSU seeks candidates who are committed to excellence and innovative teaching. We also seek to attract a culturally and academically diverse faculty who value working with a diverse student body.

Job Description: The College of Behavioral and Health Sciences at Middle Tennessee State University invites applications for a founding Clinical Director of its Physician Assistant Program. This is a 12-month, clinical-track (non-tenurable) faculty position at the assistant/associate professor rank. Start date for this position may be as early as June 2020.

The University seeks a Clinical Director with strong leadership, organizational, and interpersonal communication skills and collaborative work ethic. The Clinical Director will report directly to the Physician Assistant Program Director and must be team oriented and possess excellent communication and problem-solving skills. The Clinical Director will be responsible for planning, developing, and overseeing development and implementation of the clinical phase of the Physician Assistant Program that meets the needs of the State of Tennessee and the profession.

As a public comprehensive university and one of nine senior institutions in the Tennessee state system of higher education, MTSU enrolls almost 22,000 students in bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs.

The Clinical Director will participate in the organization, administration, continuous review and analysis, planning, development, and participation in the accreditation process of the Physician Assistant Program. This includes applying for, achieving, and maintaining ARC-PA accreditation. Duties include identifying appropriate clinical sites, building relationships and recruiting clinical partners, traveling for clinical site visits and recruitment, maintaining accreditation standards, engaging in open, collaborative and collegial interactions with the program director, medical director, faculty and staff.

Required Education: Master's level Physician Assistant degree from an ARC-PA accredited program

Required Related Experience: Five years of experience in a clinical practice setting as well as at least one year in higher education experience in a Physician Assistant Master's program.

Required License/Registration /Certification: Applicants must be a Physician Assistant with current NCCPA certification and hold or be eligible for licensure in the State of Tennessee

Other Desirable: Applicants who possess a doctoral degree in related field, or willingness to pursue degree, and those with Physician Assistant clinical education experience will receive special consideration.

Salary and Benefits: Rank and salary commensurate with education and experience.

## Director of Didactic Education

- Job Title Director of Didactic Education, Clinical-Track Faculty
- Department College of Behavioral and Health Sciences
- College Behavioral and Health Science

University Expectations: MTSU seeks candidates who are committed to excellence and innovative teaching. We also seek to attract a culturally and academically diverse faculty who value working with a diverse student body.

Job Description: The College of Behavioral and Health Sciences at Middle Tennessee State University invites applications for a founding Didactic Director of its Physician Assistant Program. This is a 12-month, clinical-track (non-tenurable) faculty position at the assistant/associate professor rank. Start date for this position may be as early as June 2020.

The University seeks an innovative Didactic Director with strong leadership, organizational, and interpersonal communication skills and collaborative work ethic. The Didactic Director will report directly to the Physician Assistant Program Director and must be team oriented and possess excellent communication and problem-solving skills. The Didactic Director will be responsible for planning, developing, and overseeing development and implementation of the didactic phase of the Physician Assistant Program that meets the needs of the State of Tennessee and the profession.

As a public comprehensive university and one of nine senior institutions in the Tennessee state system of higher education, MTSU enrolls almost 22,000 students in bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs.

The Didactic Director will participate in the organization, administration, continuous review and analysis, planning, development, and participation in the accreditation process of the Physician Assistant Program. This includes applying for, achieving, and maintaining ARC-PA accreditation. Duties include ensuring that the didactic phase of the program guarantees the PA students readiness to enter the supervised clinical practice experiences, leading students through their didactic educational experience, coordinating didactic principal and instructional faculty, and supporting ARC-PA compliance and selfstudy related to the didactic curriculum, maintaining accreditation standards, and engaging in open, collaborative and collegial interactions with the Program Director, Medical Director, faculty and staff.

Required Education: Master's level Physician Assistant degree from an ARC-PA accredited program

Required Related Experience: Five years of experience in a clinical practice setting as well as at least one year of higher education experience in a Physician Assistant Master's program.

Required License/Registration /Certification: Applicants must be a Physician Assistant with current NCCPA certification and hold, or be eligible for, licensure in the State of Tennessee.

Other Desirable: Applicants who possess a doctoral degree in related field, or willingness to pursue degree, and those with Physician Assistant didactic education experience will receive special consideration.

Salary and Benefits: Rank and salary commensurate with education and experience.



## **Appendix G**

### **AAPA Statement on Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession**

# Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession

*Between 2003-2004, the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) led an effort with three other national PA organizations (Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), and Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) --formerly Association of Physician Assistant Programs (APAP)) to define PA competencies in response to similar efforts conducted within other health care professions and the growing demand for accountability and assessment in clinical practice. The resultant document, Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession, provided a foundation from which physician assistant organizations and individual physician assistants could chart a course for advancing the competencies of the PA profession. This document was updated in 2012 and then approved in its current form by the same four organizations.*

## Medical Knowledge

Medical knowledge includes the synthesis of pathophysiology, patient presentation, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion, and disease prevention. Physician assistants must demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care in their area of practice. In addition, physician assistants are expected to demonstrate an investigative and analytic thinking approach to clinical situations. Physician assistants are expected to understand, evaluate, and apply the following to clinical scenarios:

- evidence-based medicine
- scientific principles related to patient care
- etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
- signs and symptoms of medical and surgical conditions
- appropriate diagnostic studies
- management of general medical and surgical conditions to include pharmacologic and other treatment modalities
- interventions for prevention of disease and health promotion/maintenance
- screening methods to detect conditions in an asymptomatic individual
- history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate differential diagnoses

## Interpersonal & Communications Skills

Interpersonal and communication skills encompass the verbal, nonverbal, written, and electronic exchange of information. Physician assistants must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients' families, physicians, professional associates, and other individuals within the health care system. Physician assistants are expected to:

- create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients
- use effective communication skills to elicit and provide information
- adapt communication style and messages to the context of the interaction
- work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group
- demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety

- accurately and adequately document information regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes

## **Patient Care**

Patient care includes patient- and setting-specific assessment, evaluation, and management. Physician assistants must demonstrate care that is effective, safe, high quality, and equitable. Physician assistants are expected to:

- work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals to provide patient-centered care
- demonstrate compassionate and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families
- obtain essential and accurate information about their patients
- make decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, current scientific evidence, and informed clinical judgment
- develop and implement patient management plans
- counsel and educate patients and their families
- perform medical and surgical procedures essential to their area of practice
- provide health care services and education aimed at disease prevention and health maintenance
- use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education

## **Professionalism**

Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. Foremost, it involves prioritizing the interests of those being served above one's own. Physician assistants must acknowledge their professional and personal limitations. Professionalism also requires that PAs practice without impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency or mental illness. Physician assistants must demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse patient population, and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. Physician assistants are expected to demonstrate:

- understanding of legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the appropriate role of the physician assistant
- professional relationships with physician supervisors and other health care providers
- respect, compassion, and integrity
- accountability to patients, society, and the profession
- commitment to excellence and on-going professional development
- commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices
- sensitivity and responsiveness to patients' culture, age, gender, and abilities
- self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative
- healthy behaviors and life balance
- commitment to the education of students and other health care professionals

## **Practice-based Learning & Improvement**

Practice-based learning and improvement includes the processes through which physician assistants engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, the medical literature, and

other information resources for the purposes of self- and practice-improvement. Physician assistants must be able to assess, evaluate, and improve their patient care practices. Physician assistants are expected to:

- analyze practice experience and perform practice-based improvement activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the health care delivery team
- locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients' health
- apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical literature and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
- utilize information technology to manage information, access medical information, and support their own education
- recognize and appropriately address personal biases, gaps in medical knowledge, and physical limitations in themselves and others

## **Systems-based Practice**

Systems-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which health care is delivered. Physician assistants must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that balances quality and cost, while maintaining the primacy of the individual patient. PAs should work to improve the health care system of which their practices are a part. Physician assistants are expected to:

- effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems
- understand the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care and use the systems effectively
- practice cost-effective health care and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care
- advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities
- partner with supervising physicians, health care managers, and other health care providers to assess, coordinate, and improve the delivery and effectiveness of health care and patient outcomes
- accept responsibility for promoting a safe environment for patient care and recognizing and correcting systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care
- apply medical information and clinical data systems to provide effective, efficient patient care
- recognize and appropriately address system biases that contribute to health care disparities
- apply the concepts of population health to patient care

*Adopted 2012 by ARC-PA, NCCPA, and PAEA*

*Adopted 2013 by AAPA*

Appendix H  
Physician Assistant Program Advisory Board

## MTSU Physician Assistant Program Advisory Board\*

Joey Peay, Chief Operating Officer  
Murfreesboro Medical Clinic  
1272 Garrison Drive  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129  
615-894-4480

Edward Eastham M.D.  
Tennessee Pediatrics  
1370 Gateway Blvd. Suite 110  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129  
615-890-9008  
*(MTSU Program Liaison to Advisory Board)*

William Andrew (Andy) Brown M.D.  
2238 Northwoods Dr.  
Murfreesboro, TN 37130  
615-542-6719

Jenny Stinnett, DNP  
Medical Director  
Primary Care and Hope Clinic  
1453 Hope Way  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129  
615-893-9390

Katherine Moffat, Executive Director  
Tennessee Academy of Physician Assistants  
PO Box 150785,  
Nashville, Tennessee 37215  
615-463-0026

Jeff Lindquist, PA-C  
Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant  
St. Thomas Rutherford Hospital  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129  
Cell 615-218-6493

Josh Courtney, PA-C  
Mental Health Physician Assistant  
Branches Counseling Center  
1102 Dow St. Murfreesboro, TN 37130  
615-904-7170

Amanda Amick Nelson, PA-C  
Dermatology Physician Assistant  
Skin and Allergy Center  
100 Blythewood Dr. Columbia, TN 38401  
931-381-1920

Brad McCrary, PA-C  
Urgent Care & Primary Care Physician Assistant  
Face Pace Urgent Care  
829 West Main St. Woodbury, TN 37190  
615-616-6010

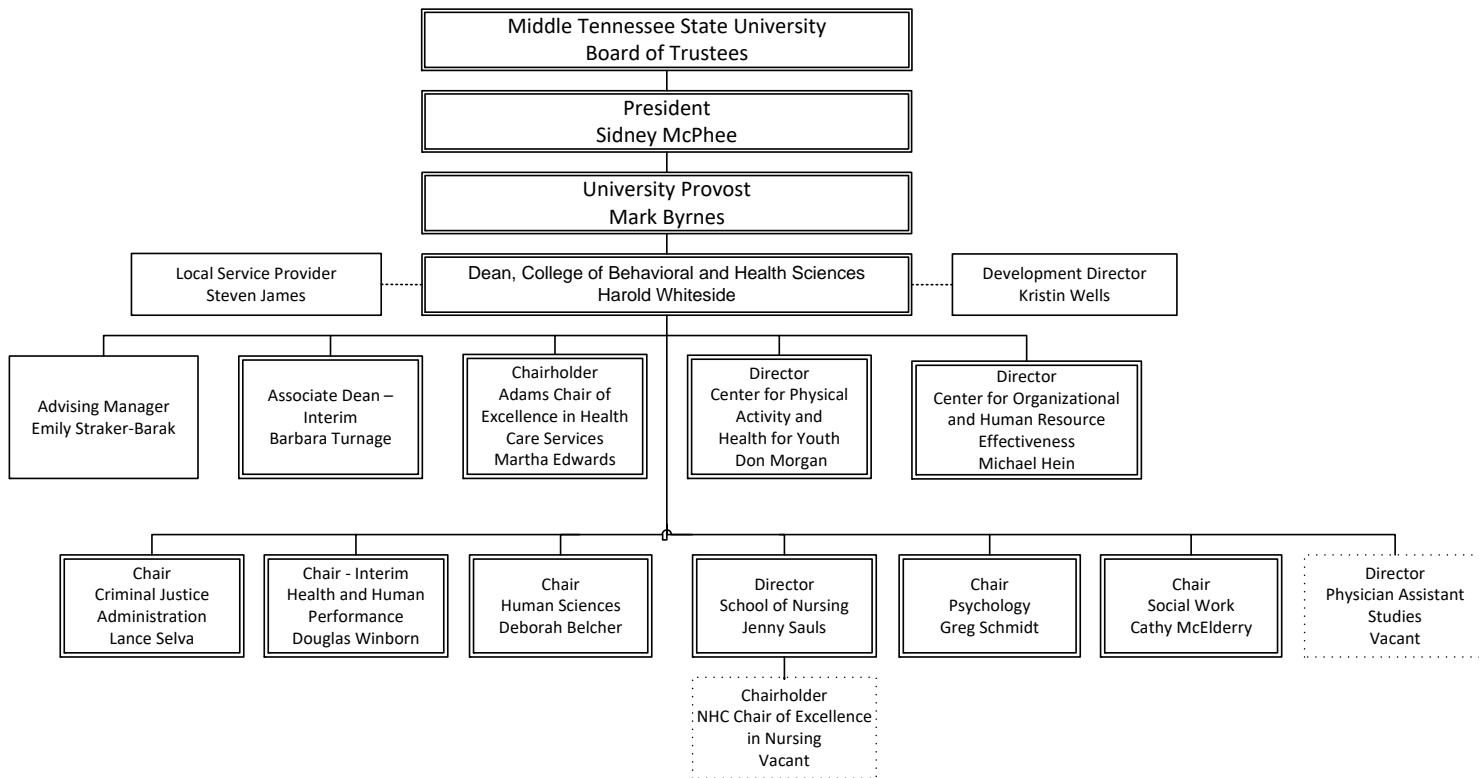
Anne Davis, CFRE  
Executive Director  
Christy-Houston Foundation  
1296 Dow Street  
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Kristin Wells, Development Director  
College of Behavioral & Health Sciences  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
615-898-2417

- *Advisory Board will convene for its initial meeting upon THEC approval of program*

## APPENDIX I: Organizational Chart

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES  
OCTOBER BUDGET 2019-2020**







**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

**Action Item**

DATE: November 10, 2020

SUBJECT: **Approval of Expedited Tenure**

PRESENTER: Mark Byrnes  
Provost

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The University may find it necessary to expedite tenure review in order to recruit high-quality faculty for administrative positions. Departmental input regarding tenure for an administrator is necessary since tenure is awarded in a specific department. [Policy 204 Tenure, Section VII]

The following faculty member has been reviewed for tenure by his department chair, department committee, and college dean according to MTSU Policy 204 Tenure and the respective college and department policies. The President and University Provost recommend that tenure be granted effective December 8, 2020.

Name	Department	Rank
Martindale, Trey	University Studies	Professor





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

**Action Item**

DATE: November 10, 2020

SUBJECT: **Approval of New Policy  
204-A Tenure Policy Amendment**

PRESENTER: Mark Byrnes  
Provost

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

This proposed policy, which supplements current Policy 204 Tenure, provides tenure-track faculty with an additional stop-the-clock opportunity to address the interruption in their progress towards tenure caused by COVID-19.



## **204-A Tenure Policy Amendment**

**Approved by Board of Trustees**

**Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2020**

**Responsible Division: Academic Affairs**

**Responsible Office: University Provost**

**Responsible Officer: University Provost**

### **I. Purpose**

This policy permits a stoppage of the tenure clock for one (1) additional year beyond the stoppage permitted in Policy 204 Tenure V.B.4. due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have interrupted a faculty member's research progress.

### **II. Amendment**

Faculty members in a tenure-track appointment may request a stoppage of the tenure clock for one (1) additional year beyond the stoppage permitted in Policy 204 Tenure, Section V.B.4. due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have interrupted their progress in research/scholarship/creative activity.

Policy 204-A does not replace Policy 204 Tenure which remains in effect but is intended to supplement it. In the event of a discrepancy or inconsistency between Policy 204 and Policy 204-A, the provisions of this policy shall govern.

### **III. Amendment Duration**

This amendment is temporary and will remain in effect only as long as the COVID-19 crisis requires the University to take exceptional measures to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the MTSU community. It will remain in effect until rescinded by the President on the recommendation of the Provost.

### **IV. Procedures**

A faculty member requesting a tenure clock stoppage due to the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on their research progress must submit the request in writing and secure the recommendation of the Department Chair, College Dean, and Provost, and the approval of the President. The President will notify the faculty member of the decision within one (1) month after the request has been submitted.

Forms: None.

Revisions: None.

Last Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ 2020.

References: Policy 204 Tenure.



**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

**Action Item**

DATE: November 10, 2020

SUBJECT: **Approval of Policy Revision  
206 Tenure and Promotion Appeals**

PRESENTER: Mark Byrnes  
Provost

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Proposed revisions include separating and expanding “Nature of an Appeal” (Section IV.) and “Procedure for an Appeal” (Section V.) as well as streamlining language and replacing paper copies with scanned documents to be transmitted via email.





## 206 Tenure and Promotion Appeals

Approved by Board of Trustees

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2020

Responsible Division: Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: University Provost

Responsible Officer: University Provost

### I. Purpose

This policy applies to candidates for tenure and/or promotion. It is available to those receiving negative recommendations if the appeal meets one of the criteria stipulated in Section IV.A. of this policy.

### II. Scope

[This policy is to be used only to appeal a negative tenure and/or promotion recommendation by the Provost.](#)

### III. Definitions

- A. Appeal. A request by a faculty member for investigation by the Faculty Appeals Committee of an alleged error or errors made during the review process resulting in a negative recommendation for tenure and/or promotion by the Provost.
- B. Faculty Appeals Committee. The committee established under [Policy 32 University Committees](#).
- C. Faculty Member. Includes any individual who holds academic rank. See [Policy 204 Tenure](#).
- D. Days. Refers to business days.

### IV. Nature of an Appeal

- A. A faculty member who receives written notification from the Provost that they have not been recommended to the President for tenure and/or promotion may appeal on one (1) or more of the following grounds:
  - 1. The recommendation was made in violation of the faculty member's right to academic freedom.
  - 2. The recommendation was made in violation of the University policies or procedures.
  - 3. The recommendation was made in violation of the faculty member's right to equal employment opportunity. Appeals on this basis shall be referred to the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#) (IE&C) as claims of discriminatory acts prohibited by law or MTSU policy are considered by IE&C. This office shall investigate the complaint and produce a report to include a determination as to whether discrimination adversely affected the tenure and/or promotion recommendation. The Committee shall accept this determination as conclusive.
- B. The Faculty Appeals Committee (Committee) shall serve as an advisory body to the President on matters arising from a faculty member's appeal.
- C. A faculty member with an appeal may discuss the case informally with any member of the faculty or the administration, except a member of the Committee. A Committee member who discussed Committee deliberations with the faculty member concerned shall immediately disqualify themselves or, failing to do so, be disqualified from any further proceedings in the case.

## **V. Procedure for an Appeal**

- A. Step One - Filing: Within ten (10) business days of receipt of the Provost's denial of tenure and/or promotion, the faculty member may file an appeal.
  - 1. The appeal must be made on the [Faculty Appeal Form](#) and explain in detail the nature of the violation with all factual data deemed pertinent. (See Section IV. A. above.)
  - 2. The faculty member will scan the [Faculty Appeal Form and email the PDF](#) to the Chair of the Faculty Appeals Committee and the Provost.
- B. Step Two - Initial Committee Review: Within ten (10) business days of the date of the email containing the Faculty Appeal Form, the Chair of the Faculty Appeals Committee must email the Faculty Appeal Form to Committee members and hold the initial Committee meeting.

1. The Committee will determine whether the appeal was timely filed and whether it qualifies for further consideration based on one (1) or more of the alleged violations stated in Section IV.A.
  2. If the Committee determines that the appeal was not timely filed, or that it does not qualify for further consideration, the Committee Chair, within ten (10) business days of the date of the initial committee meeting, will so inform the President in writing via email, copying the faculty member and the Provost.
- C. Step Three - Committee Inquiry Meeting: If the Committee finds grounds for the appeal, it will hold an inquiry meeting within ten (10) business days of the initial Committee meeting.
1. The inquiry meeting provides the faculty member an opportunity to present oral and/or written statements regarding their appeal.
  2. The inquiry meeting also provides the Provost or designee an opportunity to present oral and/or written statements regarding the appeal.
  3. The meeting shall be investigatory, rather than adjudicative, in nature.
- D. Step Four - Committee Decision: Within ten (10) business days of the date of the Committee inquiry meeting, the Committee Chairperson shall report the Committee's findings and recommendations to the President via email, copying the faculty member and the Provost.
1. A simple majority of Committee members constitutes a quorum for purposes of reaching a decision.
  2. The Committee's findings and recommendations shall be limited to the following:
    - a. By the weight of the evidence, the Committee determines that the grounds for the appeal were valid, and the Committee determines that this adversely affected the Provost's recommendation.
    - b. By the weight of the evidence, the Committee determines that the grounds for the appeal were valid, but the Committee believes that this did not adversely affect the Provost's recommendation.
    - c. By the weight of the evidence, the Committee determines that no grounds exist for the appeal.
    - d. If the decision of the Committee is not unanimous, the Committee may reference dissenting opinions in the report submitted to the President.

- E. Step Five - President's Recommendation: Within ten (10) business days of the date on the report of the Committee inquiry meeting, the President will render a decision either to deny the appeal or to grant the appeal, thus either recommending or not recommending tenure and/or promotion.
- F. If the faculty member is not satisfied following the President's recommendation for tenure and/or promotion, they may appeal to the Academic Affairs, Student Life and Athletics Committee of the Board of Trustees for final disposition. The appeal shall be filed within twenty (20) business days from the date that appears on the President's decision notification. The criteria and process established in [Policy 60 Appeals and Appearances before the Board](#) will apply. The decision of the Committee shall be final.

## V. Miscellaneous

- A. The number of days indicated in Section V. shall be considered the maximum, but every effort shall be made to expedite the process. The stated time limits may be extended only by mutual consent of the faculty member, Committee, Academic Affairs, Student Life and Athletics Committee of the Board of Trustees, or President, depending on the step in the appeal process
- B. An appeal may be withdrawn without prejudice and may be re-filed subject to provisions related to timeliness and other relevant procedural requirements.
- C. All matters pertaining to the processing of an appeal shall be kept as confidential as may be appropriate.
- D. The faculty member and the Committee shall have access to all persons, places, and official records for information necessary to the determination and processing of an appeal.

Forms:

[Faculty Appeal Form](#)

Revisions: June 5, 2017 (original); \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

References: Policies 32 University Committees; 60 Appeals and Appearances before the Board; 204 Tenure.

## 206 Tenure and Promotion Appeals ~~Process~~

Approved by Board of Trustees

Effective Date: ~~June 5, 2017~~ \_\_\_\_\_, ~~2020~~

Responsible Division: Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: University Provost

Responsible Officer: University Provost

### I. Purpose

This policy applies to candidates for tenure and/or promotion. It is available to those receiving negative recommendations if the appeal meets one of the criteria stipulated in Section IV.A. of this policy.

### II. Scope

~~This policy is to be used only to appeal a negative tenure and/or promotion recommendation by the Provost. Policy 852 Administrative, Professional, and Faculty Grievance or Complaint is available for some grievances not addressed in this policy. This policy is not to be used in instances of complaint about the non-renewal of tenure-track contracts.~~

### III. Definitions

- A. Appeal. A request by a faculty member for investigation by the Faculty Appeals Committee of an alleged error or errors made during the review process resulting in a negative recommendation for tenure and/or promotion by the Provost.
- B. Faculty Appeals Committee. The committee established under [Policy 32 University Committees](#).
- C. Faculty Member. Includes any individual who holds academic rank. See [Policy 204 Tenure](#).
- D. Days. Refers to business days.
- ~~E. Days. In this policy refers specifically to normal business days.~~

#### IV. Nature ~~and Procedures for of~~ an Appeal

- A. A faculty member who receives written notification from the Provost that they have ~~he/she has~~ not been recommended to the President for tenure and/or promotion may appeal on one (1) or more of the following grounds:
1. The recommendation was made in violation of the faculty member's right to academic freedom.
  2. The recommendation was made in violation of the University policies or procedures.
  3. The recommendation was made in violation of the faculty member's right to equal employment opportunity. Appeals on this basis shall be referred to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (IE&C) as claims of discriminatory acts prohibited by law or MTSU policy are considered by IE&C. This office shall investigate the complaint and produce a report to include a determination as to whether discrimination adversely affected the tenure and/or promotion recommendation. The Committee shall accept this determination as conclusive.
- ~~B. A faculty member who receives written notification from the Provost that he/she has not been recommended to the President for tenure and/or promotion will have ten (10) business days from the date that appears on the Provost's written notification to file an appeal.~~
- ~~The appeal, to be made on the Faculty Appeal Form, must set forth in detail the nature of the alleged violation along with all factual data deemed pertinent. Ten (10) copies of the appeal form must be supplied to the Committee, through its chairperson. At the same time, a copy of the appeal must be provided to the Provost.~~
- B. The Faculty Appeals Committee (Committee) shall serve as an advisory body to the President on matters arising from a faculty member's ~~an~~ appeal ~~filed by a faculty member~~.
- C. A faculty member with an appeal may discuss the case informally with any member of the faculty or the administration, except a member of the Committee. A Committee member, who discusses sd Committee deliberations with the faculty member concerned shall ~~automatically immediately~~ disqualify ~~themselves/himself/herself~~ or, failing to do so, be disqualified from any further proceedings in the case.

#### V. Procedure for an Appeal

- A. Step One - Filing: Within ten (10) business days of receipt of the Provost's denial of tenure and/or promotion, the faculty member may file an appeal.

1. The appeal must be made on the Faculty Appeal Form and explain in detail the nature of the violation with all factual data deemed pertinent. (See Section IV. A. above.)
  2. The ~~candidate must supply ten (10) copies of~~faculty member will scan the Faculty Appeal Form and email the PDF to the Chair~~person~~ of the Faculty Appeals Committee ~~with an additional copy to~~and the Provost.
- B. Step Two - Initial Committee Review~~Meeting~~: Within ten (10) business days of the date of the email containing~~receipt of~~ the Faculty Appeal Form, the Chair~~person~~ of the Faculty Appeals Committee must ~~email~~distribute the Faculty Appeal Form to Committee members and hold the initial Committee meeting.
1. The Committee will determine whether the appeal was timely filed and whether it qualifies for further consideration based on one (1) or more of the alleged violations stated in Section IV.A.
  2. If the Committee determines that the appeal was not timely filed, or that it does not qualify for further consideration, the Committee Chair~~person~~, within ten (10) business days of the date of the initial committee meeting, will so inform the President in writing via email, ~~with copies of the report sent simultaneously copying to~~the faculty member and the Provost.
- C. Step Three - Committee Inquiry Meeting: If the Committee finds grounds for the appeal, it will hold an inquiry meeting within ten (10) business days of the initial Committee meeting.
1. The inquiry meeting provides the faculty member an opportunity to present ~~oral and/or written statements regarding their evidence to support his/her~~oral and/or written statements regarding the appeal.
  2. The inquiry meeting also provides the Provost or designee ~~an~~the opportunity to ~~present~~submit oral and/or written statements regarding the appeal.
  3. The meeting shall be investigatory, rather than adjudicative, in nature.
- D. Step Four - Committee Decision: Within ten (10) business days of the date of the Committee inquiry meeting, the Committee Chairperson shall report the Committee's findings and recommendations to the President via email, ~~with copies of the report sent simultaneously copying to~~ the faculty member and the Provost.
1. A simple majority of ~~C~~committee members ~~present~~constitutes a quorum for purposes of reaching a decision.
  2. The Committee's' findings and recommendations shall be limited to the following:

- a. By the weight of the evidence, the Committee determines that the grounds for the appeal were valid, and the Committee determines that this adversely affected the Provost's ultimate recommendation.
  - b. By the weight of the evidence, the Committee determines that the grounds for the appeal were valid, but the Committee believes that this did not adversely affect the Provost's ultimate recommendation.
  - c. By the weight of the evidence, the Committee determines that no grounds exist for the appeal.
  - d. If the decision of the Committee is not unanimous, the Committee may reference dissenting opinions in the report submitted ~~also submit to the President a minority report with the rationale for dissenting opinions.~~
- E. Step Five - President's Recommendation: Within ten (10) business days of the date on the report of the Committee inquiry meeting, the President will render a decision either to deny the appeal or to grant the appeal, thus either recommending or not recommending tenure and/or promotion.
- F. If the faculty member is not satisfied following the President's recommendation for tenure and/or promotion, they he/she may appeal to the Academic Affairs, Student Life and Athletics Committee of the Board of Trustees -for final disposition. The appeal shall be filed within twenty (20) business days from the date that appears on the President's decision notification. The criteria and process established in Policy 60 Appeals and Appearances before the Board will apply. The decision of the Committee/~~Board~~ shall be the final deposition of the matter.
- ~~F. In its initial review of the appeal, the Committee shall determine whether the appeal appears to qualify for further consideration based on one (1) or more of the alleged violations stated in Section IV.A. If found to have merit sufficient for further consideration by the Committee, an inquiry shall be scheduled on the appeal within fifteen (15) business days of the appeal submission deadline to provide the faculty member an opportunity to present additional evidence in support of the appeal. The inquiry shall also provide an opportunity for the Provost or designee to submit written and/or oral statements to the Committee regarding the allegations in the appeal. Such inquiry shall be investigatory rather than adjudicative in nature.~~
- ~~G. A simple majority of members present constitutes a quorum for purposes of reaching a decision.~~
- ~~H. The Committee shall, within ten (10) business days from the start of the inquiry, report its findings and recommendations to the President, with copies of the report sent~~



~~simultaneously to the faculty member and the Provost. The Committee's findings and recommendations shall be limited to the following:~~

- ~~1. By the weight of the evidence, the Committee determines that the ground(s) of the appeal was/were valid, and the committee believes that this adversely affected the ultimate recommendation;~~
  - ~~2. By the weight of the evidence, the Committee determines that the ground(s) of the appeal was/were valid, but the committee believes that this did not adversely affect the ultimate recommendation; or~~
  - ~~3. No ground(s) was/were found to exist.~~
- ~~I. If the decision of the Committee is not unanimous, the Committee may also submit to the President a minority report with the rationale for dissenting opinions.~~
  - ~~J. If the faculty member is not satisfied following the President's recommendation for tenure and/or promotion, he/she may appeal, if permitted by policy, to the Board of Trustees or its designated subcommittee for final disposition. The appeal shall be filed within twenty (20) business days from the date that appears on the President's decision notification. The Board or its designated subcommittee will follow the criteria and process established in Policy 60 Appeals and Appearances before the Board.~~

## V. Miscellaneous

- A. The number of days indicated in Section ~~4V4~~ shall be considered the maximum, but every effort shall be made to expedite the process. The stated time limits may be extended only by mutual consent of the faculty member, Committee, Academic Affairs, Student Life and Athletics Committee of the Board of Trustees, or President, depending on the step in the appeal process.
- B. An appeal may be withdrawn without prejudice and may be re-filed subject to provisions related to timeliness and other relevant procedural requirements.
- C. All matters pertaining to the processing of an appeal shall be kept as confidential as may be appropriate.
- D. The faculty member and the Committee shall have access to all persons, places, and official records for information necessary to the determination and processing of an appeal.
- ~~E. It shall be the general practice to process an appeal during the time which does not interfere with normal working duties.~~

Forms:

## Faculty Appeal Form

Revisions: ~~none~~ June 5, 2017 (original); \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

References: Policies 32 University Committees; 60 Appeals and Appearances before the Board;  
204 Tenure; ~~852 Administrative, Professional, and Faculty Grievance or Complaint.~~



**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

**Information Item**

DATE: November 10, 2020

SUBJECT: [Performance Metrics](#)

PRESENTER: Mark Byrnes  
Provost

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

An update of the Performance Metrics Dashboard.



## FLUID

### APPLICATION/ADMISSION ACTIVITY

	YTD	YOY	3-yr Goal
Freshmen applications received in Fall 2020	12,265	1.03%	1%/year
Freshmen admitted in Fall 2020	8,649	.55%	1%/year
<i>*Note: The number of admitted students withdrawing submitted applications was up by 826 students, an increase of 79%.</i>			
Transfer applications received in Fall 2020	3,923	-6.53%	1%/year
Transfers students admitted in Fall 2020	2,828	-6.73%	1%/year
Graduate applications received in Fall 2020	3,894	118.8%	33%
Graduate students enrolled in Fall 2020	2,893	28.0%	33%

### ATHLETICS FUNDRAISING

	FY 2019	FY 2020	
BRAA giving	\$1,235,914	\$1,043,029	\$2M by 2023
Total giving	\$1,808,231	\$1,452,399	\$3M by 2023

### ATHLETICS ATTENDANCE

	2018	2019
Football attendance	15,577	14,253
Men's basketball attendance	3,947	3,453
Women's basketball attendance	4,353	3,571

## MARKERS

### ENROLLMENT

	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	3-yr Goal
Full-time equivalent enrollment	17,672	17,755	17,900	1%/year
Total headcount	21,630	21,721	22,080	1%/year
Freshmen enrolled	2,846	3,259	3,075	1%/year
Transfers students enrolled	1,967	2,048	1,879	1%/year
Avg. ACT score of entering class	22.87	23.34	23.23	N/A
Avg. high school GPA of entering class	3.49	3.54	3.59	N/A

### ACADEMICS

	AY 2018	AY 2019	AY 2020	5-yr Goal
Six-year graduation rate	51.5%	53.4%	57.4%	60% by 2025

#### Degrees awarded

Bachelor's	4,002	4,047	4,039	N/A
Master's/Education Specialist	811	789	783	N/A
Doctoral	53	47	56	N/A
Research, Service, Sponsored Programs	\$9,677,921	\$10,386,271	*	\$11,219,300

*\*Note: Data comes from THEC and is not yet available.*

	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	5-yr Goal
Freshman retention	75.6%	75.1%	78.4%	80% by 2025
Graduate retention	85.0%	83.9%	85.8%	87%

## TUITION AND DEBT

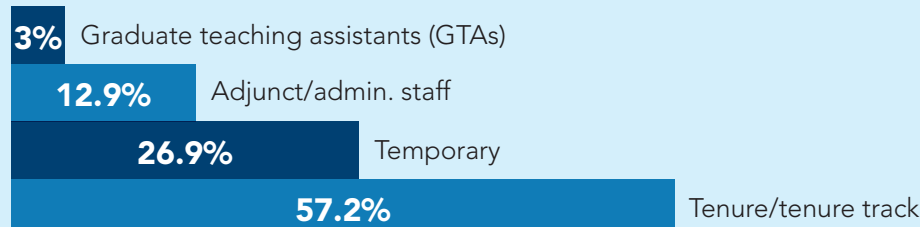
Undergraduate tuition (12 credit hours)	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
MTSU	\$3,516	\$3,600	\$3,600
University of Tennessee	\$5,555	\$5,666	\$5,666
University of Memphis	\$3,840	\$4,104	\$4,104
Graduate tuition (9 credit hours)			
MTSU	\$4,248	\$4,473	\$4,473
University of Tennessee	\$5,622	\$5,734	\$5,734
University of Memphis	\$4,527	\$4,608	\$4,608
% of Pell-eligible students			
MTSU	48%	43.6%	N/A
University of Tennessee	40.5%	27.5%	N/A
University of Memphis	48.5%	45.5%	N/A
		May 2018	May 2019
Avg. debt of undergraduates at graduation		\$27,000	\$25,677
Avg. % of undergraduates with debt at graduation		59%	58%

ATHLETICS	Cohort 2010	Cohort 2011	Cohort 2012	3-yr Goal
Graduation Success Rate	88%	89%	92%	
Academic Progress Rate	991	989	987	
Total revenues	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	
MTSU	\$35.35M	\$35.8M	\$34.8M	
Conference USA (Rice didn't release info)	\$33.35M	\$35.05M	N/A	
Institutional support (% of total)				
MTSU	36%	34%	34%	
Conference USA (Rice didn't release info)	28%	26%	N/A	
Private support (% of total)				
MTSU	6%	5%	5%	
Conference USA (Rice didn't release info)	12%	11%	N/A	

ADVANCEMENT	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Total annual support	\$12,756,770	\$10,090,667	\$10,797,630
CASE/VSE benchmark	\$6,851,000	\$6,872,000	N/A
Number of donors	7,299	7,873	7,607

	1-year	10-year	20-year
Investment return as of June 30, 2020	1.5%	7.0%	5.9%

### Credit hours taught by faculty type





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

**Information Item**

DATE: November 10, 2020

SUBJECT: **Athletics Update**

PRESENTER: Chris Massaro  
Athletic Director

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

An update of Middle Tennessee Athletics including APR, GSR, and spectators at football and basketball.







**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

**Information Item**

DATE: November 10, 2020

SUBJECT: **Campus COVID-19 Response**

PRESENTER: Sidney A. McPhee  
President

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

An update of MTSU's response to COVID-19.





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

**Information Item**

DATE: November 10, 2020

SUBJECT: **Diversity Efforts**

PRESENTER: Mark Byrnes  
Provost

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Provost Byrnes will provide an update of institutional diversity efforts.