

DATE: January 28, 2021**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program
Middle Tennessee State University
Physician Assistant Studies, Master of Science
(CIP 51.0912 – Physician Assistant)**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) proposes a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies which will be housed in the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences and will require 108 credit hours to complete. The proposed program will consist of cohorts of 30 students, with an annual admissions process to take place in the summer of each academic year. The proposed program is a 27-month, full-time program consisting of 15 months of didactic curriculum and 12 months of supervised clinical practice experiences. Graduates of the proposed program will have the needed background and credential necessary for licensure as a Physician Assistant. The program will seek accreditation by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA).

INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNING BOARD APPROVAL

The proposed Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program was approved by the Middle Tennessee State University Board of Trustees on December 8, 2020.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE

May 2022

ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN

The proposed Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program aligns with the State's Master Plan to provide Tennesseans with the opportunity to prepare for careers in the healthcare workforce which is one of the fastest growing occupation sectors in Middle Tennessee.

Additionally, the proposed program aligns with MTSU's institutional mission to advance academic quality through excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service through expanding on healthcare offerings and creating a pipeline from undergraduate majors to graduate programs.

CURRICULUM

The proposed program will require 108 credit hours with a curricular emphasis on primary care medicine and clinical methods. The 27-month, full-time graduate professional program will also include both didactic and supervised clinical

experiences. The seven semesters of graduate level training will provide students with a rigorous background in basic medical science, stressing the importance of patient interaction and teamwork through courses such as clinical medicine, history and physical examination, pharmacotherapy, clinical problem solving and diagnostic testing, and clinical procedures. The proposed curriculum will also include twelve months of supervised clinical practice experiences which will consist of 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.

PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY

The proposed Physician Assistant Studies, MS program projects annual cohorts of 30 students with a maximum of 84 current students in the program at any given time. Attrition rates are calculated at 10 percent. The proposed program projects 27 graduates annually starting in year three.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Enrollment	30	57	84	84	84
Graduates	--	--	27	27	27

PROGRAM DUPLICATION

Nationally, there are 267 Physician Assistant programs accredited by the ARC-PA. In Tennessee, only one other public university currently offers a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies – University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Several private institutions in Tennessee offer similar programs including Trevecca Nazarene, Lipscomb University, Bethel University, Christian Brothers University, Lincoln Memorial University, Milligan University, and South College. Additionally, Meharry Medical College is planning to implement a similar program which will begin taking applications in 2022.

EXTERNAL JUDGEMENT

An external review of the proposed program was conducted during a virtual institutional site visit on June 9, 2020. Dr. Tosi Gilford, Department Chair for Physician Assistant Studies at the University of Alabama, Birmingham and Dr. Judith Stallings, Associate Dean for the College of Allied Health Sciences and Department Chair for Physician Assistant at Augusta University served as the external reviewers.

Dr. Gilford and Stallings made a recommendation for approval of the proposed program and stated: "We believe MTSU has the resources and institutional support to provide an exceptional signature program that will serve the surrounding community and attract students that will practice in the surrounding community after graduation. After completing the site visit and speaking with students, faculty, stake holders, and administrative leaders, it is evident that the program will have a great deal of support from all parties involved."

STUDENT DEMAND

Based on information from the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CAPSA), in 2018-19, MTSU was listed as the school of origin for 97 applicants applying to a Physician Assistant program. Additionally, in this application cycle, approximately 103 MTSU students submitted applications to Physician Assistant programs throughout the United States.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM GRADUATES

Graduates from the proposed program will have the necessary requirements to qualify for licensure as a Physician Assistant which is considered a high demand field regionally and nationally. The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects growth in employment of Physician Assistants throughout Tennessee will be 42 percent compared to an overall employment growth of seven percent. Additionally, Physician Assistant was ranked by *US News and World Report* as number three among its “100 Best Jobs of 2020” and over one-third of all Physician Assistant positions in Tennessee are located in the Nashville-Murfreesboro-Franklin area.

Letters of support for the proposed program were provided by employers such as Saint Thomas Health, Tennessee Valley Healthcare System, HCA, and the Christy-Houston Foundation.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER THE PROGRAM

MTSU will utilize existing infrastructure for the proposed program, including the Cason Kennedy Building which is a modern instruction facility for applied health sciences. Multiple classrooms are available and equipped with the full range of instructional resources required for the proposed program including three different simulation labs. Additionally, a state-of-the-art cadaver lab is available to students and existing library resources are available to support the proposed program. Several new positions are required for the implementation of the proposed program including a Program Director, Director of Clinical Education, Director of Didactic Education, Medical Director, three principle faculty, one adjunct faculty, and an executive aide. Additionally, all of the courses will be developed specifically for the proposed program based on established program outcomes.

ASSESSMENT AND POST-APPROVAL MONITORING

An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following program approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the campus, institutional governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, and other metrics set by the institution and Commission staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the institutional governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the institutional governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.

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
I. Expenditures	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
A. One-time Expenditures							
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	\$ -
Sub-Total One-time	\$ 40,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 140,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 7,500	\$ 100,000
B. Recurring Expenditures							
Personnel							
Administration							
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
Sub-Total Administration	\$ 41,850	\$ 236,385	\$ 243,477	\$ 250,781	\$ 258,304	\$ 266,053	\$ 274,035
Faculty							
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
Sub-Total Faculty	\$ -	\$ 237,375	\$ 639,900	\$ 920,930	\$ 947,585	\$ 975,041	\$ 1,003,320
Support Staff							
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
Sub-Total Support Staff	\$ -	\$ 54,796	\$ 56,440	\$ 124,633	\$ 128,372	\$ 132,223	\$ 136,190
Graduate Assistants							
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
Sub-Total Graduate Assistants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 36,000	\$ 72,000	\$ 108,000	\$ 144,000	\$ 144,000
Operating							
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
Sub-Total Operating	\$ 5,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 148,875	\$ 198,295	\$ 314,543	\$ 323,980	\$ 333,699
Total Recurring	\$ 46,850	\$ 573,556	\$ 1,124,691	\$ 1,566,638	\$ 1,756,805	\$ 1,841,297	\$ 1,891,244
TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A + 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
II. Revenue							
Tuition and Fees ¹			\$ 381,340	\$ 1,440,250	\$ 2,345,529	\$ 2,406,998	\$ 2,470,279
Institutional Reallocations ²	\$ 86,850	\$ 653,556	\$ 883,351	\$ 226,388	\$ (588,724)	\$ (558,201)	\$ (479,035)
Federal Grants ³		-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Grants or Gifts ⁴		-	-	-	-	-	-
Other ⁵		-	-	-	-	-	-
BALANCED BUDGET LINE	\$ 86,850	\$ 653,556	\$ 1,264,691	\$ 1,666,638	\$ 1,756,805	\$ 1,848,797	\$ 1,991,244

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.