

IUPUI GAC Reviewer Form

Documents Reviewed: Proposal for a Master of Physician Assistant Studies from the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, IUPUI.

Summary of Proposal: The School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences proposes to develop and offer a program designed to prepare students to become professional Physician Assistants who upon graduation will be fully capable of providing patient care under the supervision of a licensed physician. The proposed program capitalizes on the academic and training strengths of IUPUI and is consistent with IUPUI's mission. The planned program will include both didactic and practical training, requires full-time student enrollment, and will require 7 consecutive semesters of enrollment and include 106 credit hours. This is a very ambitious program proposal that will require considerable effort in the development of courses, clinical practica and training sites, coupled with plans to enroll 35 students in year 1 and reach a maximum of 50 students per year by year 3.

1. Are the goals clear and achievable? I think the proposal does a good job in outlining learning and program objectives, the subsequent curriculum, and the goals required for program development. Achieving these goals requires additional faculty and I am a bit unclear about this. Currently they report 6 faculty and administrators and plans to add 4 new faculty in year 1, and additional faculty in years 2, 3, and 4, with final, full capacity of 10. The numbers don't add up and it may be because they don't count current administrators as program faculty. But even then, 4 current faculty, 4 additional in year 1, and a minimum of 1 per year in the next three years is clearly more than 10. More exacting detail here would be useful because so much of the program is to be developed in the coming years. It might also be useful to justify the proposed faculty size by course load estimates, student-faculty ratios or with other indexes that help demonstrate that the planned number of faculty are fully justified by program demands.

2. Is the program academically sound? I have no basis to make such a judgment other than the observation that the proposal has a lot of face validity and appears to provide a solid basis for an academically sound program.

3. Are faculty resources available to offer this certificate without undercutting other key missions of the unit? Current faculty resources are not adequate to develop and implement the proposed program. Once new resources are available it appears that this program will complement and more fully use current resources and not undercut other programs or missions.

4. Is there overlap, either real or potential, with any other unit that could harm the program or be exploited to help the program? No conflicts that I note. This proposal capitalizes on IUPUI resources and strengths. Letters of support from cooperating units are needed.

5. My recommendation, comments/concerns regarding this proposal...

I think this is a clearly developed proposal. It makes a solid case that this is a good direction for the School to pursue. My major questions concern costs and the financial data presented in the proposal. I do not recall previous proposals having such a degree of budgetary information. A significant number of new faculty will be required along with additional teaching support services, space, etc. The proposal maintains that new student fees will off-set the additional costs for these new resources of approximately 3.2 million. It is not clear to me how this was calculated. For example, no discussion of in-state vs. out-of-state students and this may be important because each provides a different revenue stream, or least the tuition is quite different. It may also be a flat-fee for all students but a clearer picture of how revenue is calculated might be useful. I also don't know that new student revenues are to exclusively support new program development. The proposal might include the thinking and policy behind this budgetary approach.

The budget on page 3 is apparently for year 5 so a question one might ask is where do the initial funds come from to begin the program, and why choose year 5, and not the total costs and revenue over the complete five year period? Is it happenstance that revenues exactly offset new resource expenses at a single point in time, year 5?

This budget snapshot also leads to the conclusion that the program will be more expensive than presented. Also, because apparently all the new revenue generated is for added resources, another conclusion is that total program costs are not supported by student fees (total program cost=new resources + extant faculty, resources, etc.). If the budgetary issues are an important component of submission, then they might be more fully presented and justified. This seems the weakest part of the proposal. The uses and benefits of the additional resources in the context of the new program are well detailed and I believe that the program is otherwise well-described and well-justified. I assume the letters of support which were not included are all strong and supportive.