UPAP TODAY news & updates

Newsletter of the University of Utah's Physician Assistant Program

March 2022

50 Years of UPAP Celebration Happening in May

After the delays of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are thrilled to announce that the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Utah Physician Assistant Program (UPAP) will take place on Saturday, May 14.

The UPAP Celebration is part of the Alumni and Medical Community Weekend, May 12-14. All alumni, former residents, faculty, and the medical community are invited to attend these events and learn about programs, projects, and engagement that are positively impacting our communities locally and contributing internationally in the areas of medicine, research science, industry innovation, and outreach.

Learn more here and register to attend this once-in-a-lifetime event!

Want to be part of our continued success? Consider donating to UPAP's $50,000 for 50 Years campaign!

UPAP Reaches Goals for Diversity, Employment in 2021

The mission of the Utah Physician Assistant Program (UPAP) is "to improve the quality of health and access to care, with a commitment to the medically underserved, by educating students to become highly proficient, socially conscious, and accountable physician assistants (PAs) in the primary care model." This mission guides the program's decisions and leads to the creation of goals that bring the program closer to their vision.

2021 was a stellar year for UPAP, and the program reported significant achievement over the last five years in meeting and exceeding its goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduating year</th>
<th>Percentage Primary Care*</th>
<th>Percentage Underserved*</th>
<th>Percentage Medically Underserved Community (MUC=HPSA and MUAs) from HRSA**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46.62%</td>
<td>30.66%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
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population. Through dedicated focus on diversity in the admissions process,
The six goals--four for the entire program and two specific to the St. George campus--provide measurements for the program's diversity, the viability of the physician assistant career, and employment trends of program graduates.

One of the most important goals for the program reflects the culmination of work across the division: admitting a class which is at least as diverse as the Salt Lake City metropolitan area. This important equity work strengthens the program through diversity, while greatly increasing training PA's ability to connect with a diverse patient population. The program has been able to grow their non-White population of students from 16% in 2017 to 39% in 2021. This number is impressive not only for the speed at which the program was able to increase the diversity of its cohort, but because it exceeds the Salt Lake City metropolitan area percentage of 27% non-White citizens.

Increasing the diversity of the student cohort is only one goal that UPAP met in 2021. Click here to read more about UPAP’s ongoing goals and continuing success as the program grows.

UPAP 50th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE BOOK

Compiled and designed by Don Pedersen, PhD, PA, this beautiful archival book documents 50 years of PA education in Utah and the Intermountain West. Available in hardcover and digital versions.

Order your copy today!
visit www.blurb.com/bookstore and search for “UPAP”

PROGRAM MESSAGE

50 Years of Excellence

By Jennifer M. Coombs, PhD, PA-C
Director of Graduate Studies

We are honored this year to be celebrating 50 years as a program and as a profession. If you have come through our program - whether that was in the World War II barracks building or in our Research Park classrooms - you’ll want to return to campus and celebrate with us during the Alumni and Medical Community Weekend. It promises to be an unforgettable event.

Publications

UPAP scholarship continues to advance our understanding of best clinical and pedagogy practices.

Katherine Fortenberry, PhD; et al.

"Wellness Now! Two Physician Assistant Programs’ Experiences Incorporating a Wellness Curriculum”

in The Journal of Physician Assistant Education

This article tackles the difficulty of incorporating student wellness into PA
a once-in-a-lifetime event to honor all that the Physician Assistant Program has accomplished.

We are so proud of our heritage, from our first graduates of the medical extender program (MEDEX) to the current day. From our founding in 1971, our program has gone on to become one of the best PA programs in the country, ranking in the top 10 PA programs by US News and World Reports since rankings began in 2004.

Our programs are excellent because of our people. UPAP faculty and students have been at the forefront of many important medical achievements. The hundreds of hours of volunteer work done by faculty and staff over the decades has helped Utah become a better place for everyone. Through our work, we have had the opportunity to build greater health outcomes across the state, including important work with migrant, refugee, and Native Peoples communities.

Our program has come a long way from our original model of “medical extender” training. Now, alumni from our programs - including our satellite campus in St. George - are found in clinics worldwide, providing the benefit of their knowledge and training. As we celebrate our past, I am confident that we have even more to look forward to in the future.

UPAP NEWS and ACTIVITIES

New UPAP Appointments

UPAP continues to grow as our programs attract local and national attention. We are thrilled to welcome the following individuals to new positions and as new members of our team!
In addition to these amazing administrators and faculty appointments, the program has also had the chance to hire many excellent staff members in 2022. Click here to meet the staff whose hard work keeps our programs running!

Clinic Highlight

Maliheh Free Clinic

The Maliheh Free Clinic, located in Salt Lake City, gives Utah physician assistants and learners the opportunity to provide medical services to uninsured individuals and low-income families. This community-focused health clinic, established in 2005, provides training opportunities for UPAP students while helping to meet the needs of underrepresented individuals here in the Wasatch Valley. Named by founder Khosrow Semnani for his grandmother, Maliheh Abdollahi, the clinic embraces the principles of compassion, service, and health equity.

READ MORE
Read more about the exciting developments and honors at UPAP below.

- **UPAP was awarded an Excellence Through Diversity Award** in September 2021 for its longtime efforts to promote diversity in their program. The award reflects an institutional commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- UPAP faculty member and donor Kathy Pedersen, PA-C, MPAS was recently appointed as a Department Editor for the Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (JAAPA). For this new department, she will focus on articles regarding physician assistants and their analogues around the world.
- In January, the Physician Assistant Historical Society chose UPAP as their Featured Associate.