



Accreditation Review Commission on Education  
for the Physician Assistant, Inc.

**John E. McCarty**  
Executive Director

March 23, 2006

Benjamin L. Cohen, DO  
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Operating Officer  
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Dear Dr. Cohen:

At its most recent meeting, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) reviewed the application and supporting materials submitted from the **Western University of Health Sciences Primary Care Physician Assistant Program**, sponsored by **Western University of Health Sciences**.

The ARC-PA is pleased to notify you that the program has been awarded **Accreditation**. Please note that the program is approved for up to **196** students, the maximum student capacity as specified in the program's application. The approximate date for the next full review of the program by the ARC-PA will be **2010**. The program will be contacted by the ARC-PA in advance of that review regarding specific details of the application, reports, and site visit.

An accreditation letter often includes the word(s) "note" or "general/additional comments". The definitions for these words as used by the ARC-PA are as follows:

**Note** - An explanation that often will accompany a citation in the accreditation letter or other correspondence dealing with program compliance with the Standards. The purpose of the "note" is to clarify the issue of noncompliance with a specific Standard for the program and not to specify "how to" comply with the cited Standard.

**General/Additional Comment(s)** - Narrative that may be included in the accreditation letter or other correspondence with the program from the ARC-PA that may or may not be linked with a specific Standard(s) that conveys a concern or expresses congratulatory comments. The purpose of the "Additional Comment(s)" is to clarify for the program a more global issue between the ARC-PA and the program but not to give advice or specify "how to" resolve the issue(s).

During its review of the program, the ARC-PA noted the following citations related to noncompliance with the *Standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). The citations listed have been referenced to the *Standards* under which the program was evaluated.

**Standard B6.2d** While specific clinical rotations are not required for each clinical discipline listed below, the program must document that every student has clinical experiences in - prenatal care and gynecology.

*Standard B6.2g* While specific clinical rotations are not required for each clinical discipline listed below, the program must document that every student has clinical experiences in - psychiatry/behavioral medicine.

*Standard B6.2h* While specific clinical rotations are not required for each clinical discipline listed below, the program must document that every student has clinical experiences in - geriatrics.

Note: (In reference to B6.2 d,g,h.) These citations are based on the fact that the site visit team could not conclusively validate that each student had clinical experiences in prenatal care and gynecology, psychiatry and behavioral medicine, and geriatrics.

The program responded that every student receives clinical education in prenatal care and gynecology occurring in one of three education courses: 1) Obstetrics and Gynecology, 2) Community Health/Public Health, or 3) Family Practice. Learning objectives were supplied for these clinical education courses and did contain these areas. As documentation, the program supplied approximately 300 pages of student summary sheets listing the various disease states seen on an average of 4 rotations. It appears as if the students are seeing one pelvic inflammatory disease case, one psychiatric problem (not delineated), etc. The patient populations were broken down by type of insurance, and Medicare is prominent. However, no instances of prenatal care could be found by reviewing all the voluminous material. The commission's interpretation of the response was that there might have been an attempt to "overwhelm" the reviewers while failing to provide adequate documentation of these clinical experiences. If the program had data, the data should have been analyzed and presented in summary fashion.

*Standard B6.3* Clinical experience should be provided in ambulatory, emergency, inpatient, and long-term care settings.

Note: There was insufficient documentation to validate that clinical experiences are provided for students in 1) inpatient settings and 2) long term care settings. The program response simply states that all students have general surgery rotations and that constitutes inpatient settings for them. The program further states that the clinical coordinators are reviewing clinical information data for validation of long term care settings for each student.

General/Additional Comment: When a program does not have a specific rotation within a discipline, it is incumbent upon a program to document student experience in a very transparent manner. The program should also establish thresholds as to the amount of activity required within a discipline. While students undoubtedly do have some experience in the areas cited it is not clear as to how much experience is enjoyed by the student nor can one discern the quality and breadth of that experience.

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While there are no citations regarding objectives, the program should consider reworking clinical learning objectives to be age appropriate and not simply state students should seek experience in the pediatric, adult, and geriatric manifestations of an entity.

By **July 14, 2006**, the program should submit a report indicating the manner in which the citations have been addressed/resolved and details about how the program plans to assure compliance in the future. The program needs to submit a detailed plan as to how they will adequately document student clinical experiences in geriatrics, prenatal care, gynecology, and psychiatric/behavioral with a represented sample of analyzed data. The plan should also include how documentation will occur for inpatient settings and long-term care. (Note: The commission does not want the program to submit individual logs for the commission to compile and analyze.)

The program should submit its report **electronically as an attachment to [arc-pa@arc-pa.org](mailto:arc-pa@arc-pa.org)** and mail **one original and three copies (two sided, three hole punched, no staples or binders, secured with clips or rubber bands) to:**

John E. McCarty  
Executive Director  
Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant  
12000 Findley Road, Suite 240  
Duluth, GA 30097

Failure to respond satisfactorily to the above citation(s) may result in a reconsideration of the program's accreditation status or an earlier scheduling of the next comprehensive review.

The ARC-PA would like to remind the program to review the newly revised *Standards* for which the program will be expected to be in compliance with after September 1, 2006 and to review Section F, regarding maintenance of accreditation.

The ARC-PA appreciates your commitment and dedication to quality PA education as demonstrated by your participation in the accreditation process. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



John E. McCarty  
Executive Director

JM/tw

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c: Roy Guizado, MS, PA-C, Program Director ✓  
Gloria M. Stewart, EdD, PA-C, Chair, ARC-PA  
Lynn D. Fleisher, PhD, J.D., Legal Counsel, ARC-PA

The ARC-PA web site ([www.arc-ap.org](http://www.arc-ap.org)) houses copies of the Educational Standards as well as other information that is designed to be helpful to programs. For example, the News section is updated to include materials from ARC-PA presentations at national meetings, the Continuing section/Application and Forms has information on data analysis, and the Accredited Program page contains data on the number of accredited programs, credentials awarded, most frequent citations, and the time between comprehensive reviews.