PREPARATION FOR BECOMING A PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (Tentative time-line)

- Choose a major in the sciences, such as Biology or Chemistry
- Most programs require the completion of a Bachelor’s degree.
- Visit the CSUS pre-health Home Page: www.csus.edu/prehealth/index.html
- Visit the Career Center, Lasse Hall 1013, during drop-in hours, M-F, 10 am – 4 pm, for information on identifying career options, writing resumes and cover letters; locating part-time, full-time, internships, and volunteer positions; writing personal statements for graduate and professional schools; and practicing your interviewing techniques.
- Complete the pre-requisite courses for the Physician Assistant Program
  - it is important to check with each school – the suggested required courses on the following page is what MOST schools require. Some schools may have additional requirements.
- Detailed information about specific Physician Assistant Programs and their prerequisites can be found in the Physician Assistant Education Association’s (PAEA) online publication: Physician Assistant Programs Directory: http://directory.paeaonline.org/
- Sign up for extracurricular activities such as internships, volunteer work and research opportunities; about 1,000-2000 hours of clinical experience in a health related field is required (some schools require 3,000 hours)
  - Examples: EMT, SCRIBE, Medical Assistant, Lab Assistant
- Join campus clubs and organizations, such as the Pre-Physician Assistant Club: ppac.csus@gmail.com
- Begin working on your personal statement (essay) – Visit www.csus.edu/prehealth/personalstatement.html and the Career Center to get started.
- Select schools
- Only 1 California School (University of Southern CA) requires GRE scores (“MCAT accepted in place of GRE”). Please check the requirements for all the programs you are applying to.
- Select faculty members that will write your letters of recommendation
  - Usually 3 letters are required (For some schools, one must be from a physician or physician assistant)
  - Schools will accept electronic letters of recommendation, processed through the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA): www.caspaonline.org
- About 195 PA programs participate in the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA), a service of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). Applications are available in April and accepted June 1.
- Arrange to have official transcripts sent to CASPA.
- Supplemental application material may be requested by individual programs.
- Interviews

Visit the web site of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) at www.paeaoonline.org for information about the CASPA and other helpful information about preparing for and applying to Physician Assistant Programs.

Other helpful sites: American Academy of Physician Assistant (AAPA): www.aapa.org;
GPA of Admitted Students; 2014 Entering Class (according to PAEA):

- Mean Science: 3.47
- Mean Non-Science: 3.6
- Mean undergraduate: 3.53

Required Courses for MOST Physician Assistant Programs:

**BIO 1**: Biodiversity, Evolution & Ecology

**BIO 131**: Systemic Physiology

- **BIO 2**: Cells, Molecules & Genes
- **CHEM 1A**: General Chemistry
- **CHEM 1B**: General Chemistry
- **STAT 1**: Introduction to Statistics
- **ENG 5**: College Composition
- **ENG 20**: College Composition
- **MATH 26A**: Calculus I (required by few schools)
- **PHYS 5A**: General Physics I (required by few schools)

Some California schools require a college level **Beginning Spanish** course

**Recommended Electives:**

- **BIO 195**: Internships
  - A course in **Medical Terminology** (required by some schools)
  - A course in **Organic Chemistry** is required by few schools

**Recommended General Education Courses (courses in bold are REQUIRED by most schools):**

**AREA A**

- A1: **COMS 4 or COMS 5**: Introduction to public speaking
- A2: **ENG 5**: College Composition
- A3: **PHIL 4**: Critical Thinking

**AREA B**

- Met by science prerequisites

**AREA C**

- C1: **ANY**
- C2: **PHIL 2**: Ethics

**AREA D**

- **PSYCH 2**: Introduction to Psychology
- **SOC 1**: Introduction to Sociology
- **ANTH 101**: Cultural Diversity
- **ETHN 100**: Ethnic America (writing intensive course)
- **PHIL 101**: Ethics & Social Issues (writing intensive course)
- **PHIL 104**: Bioethics
- **SOC 120**: Ethnic and Race Relations
- **SWRK 151**: Health Services and Systems
- **GOV 1 or GOV 150 & HIST 17A or 17 B**

**AREA E**

- **HLSC 124**: Consumer Health Education
- **HLSC 134**: Understanding Human Sexuality
- **NURS 160**: Human Sexuality
- **PHIL 100**: Ethics and Personal Values
- **PSYCH 151**: Psychological Aspects of Death/ Dying

*Natural Sciences Advising Center- Physician Assistant (PA)- Updated August 2015*