NOTES TO PROGRAMS
October, 2012

Below are many important Notes to all programs. Some provide clarification and some refer to documents to be posted on the ARC-PA web site Accreditation Resource page (http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/resources/). Others are or will be reflected in edited versions of the Policy Documents, *Standards* and Accreditation Manual.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY EXCERPTS FROM SEPTEMBER, 2012 MEETING

Accreditation Actions

- Acknowledged 14 new PD, 9 New IPD program changes, 7 new MD program changes, 1 IMD change
- 16 Continuing program applications
- 7 Provisional program applications
- 7 Program changes
- 8 Program reports
- 39 Expedited Reviews (30 reports due, 9 program changes)

(Accreditation actions are posted on the ARC-PA web site after each meeting)

The total number of **entry-level** accredited programs as of October 1, 2012 is **170**.
The total number of **clinical postgraduate** accredited programs at present is **7.**

Projected Workload
- The current projected workload includes an additional **72**new programs for provisional accreditation consideration through 2016.
- While the need for PA healthcare providers remains strong, the commission is concerned about the availability of clinical education sites for all types of healthcare students and qualified program leadership and faculty.

COMMISSION RETREAT

As part of its meeting, the commission held a retreat related to the ARC-PA business, practices, accreditation procedures and structure. Details will be forth coming of decisions made, in accordance with an implementation time line as determined by the commission.

ACCREDITATION PROGRAM MANAGEMENT PORTAL UPDATE

A demonstration of the portal was shared with the entire commission. The portal HELP manuals for program administrators and staff have been updated and are available on the portal. Programs that were on the ARC-PA agenda for Continuing or Provisional review at the meeting have received specific feedback about the portal with their accreditation status letters. All programs will receive a Portal Pointers in October specifically highlighting requirements for the Program Required Annual Report to the ARC-PA which is due December 31, 2012.

The ARC-PA refers to the programs' portals routinely for contact information for program faculty and institution administrators, as well as other data that was in the past collected via the Institution and Program data sheet. The ARC-PA staff plan to conduct webinars aimed at assisting program staff members in entering data.

The link to the Portal is found in the upper right hand corner of the ARC-PA web site. Questions about use of the portal should be submitted to the portal team at the email located on the bottom of each page of the portal (portalfeedback@arc-pa.org).

DISTANT CAMPUS EXPANSION POLICY AND PROCESS BEING REVISED

The ARC-PA is in the process of revising the policies, processes and documents related to program expansion to a distant campus (standard E 1.08). Prior to this point in time, such expansion was treated as a Change Request, which did not require ARC-PA notification prior to a program submitting a request and forms for review. Such requests were impossible to predict, making it difficult to plan for the workload of the commission. One change to the process, as noted below in "*Standards* Changes and Interpretation" relates to the requirement of site visit to the proposed distant campus as a component of the evaluation. New documents and guidelines will be available to all programs in November 2012 and posted on the ARC-PA website shortly thereafter. **New requests for expansion of a distant campus will not be considered at the March 2013 meeting of the commission**.

The commission reaffirmed that it will not consider an application for expansion to a distant campus and added that it will not consider an increase in class size from any program with continuing accreditation until the program has maintained five years of continuing accreditation without an adverse accreditation status. Policies will be updated accordingly and made available on the website.

COMMISSIONERS-AT-LARGE

At-large commissioners are former commissioners retired from the commission for at least one year before being eligible for election. At-large commissioners hold the same rights and responsibilities of the other commissioners, except that they are eligible to serve only one three-year term. As noted in the last Notes to Programs, two such commissioners joined the commission January 1, 2012. In July, two additional commissioners-at-large, Sue York and Dawn Morton-Rias joined the commission.

STANDARDS CHANGES

At its recent meeting, the Commission made several changes to the policies, processes and *Standards* related to Provisional Accreditation. The changes took effect immediately and will be used for all programs beginning with those on the September 2013 agenda. Those institutions/programs were notified of these changes.

Changes to Section D are summarized below and have been incorporated into the newest copy of the *Standards* which is available on the PAC-PA website.
- The program director must be hired by the institution on a permanent basis (D1.01)
- The program director must be in place 12 months prior to the date of the ARC-PA meeting at which the program application will be reviewed (D1.01)
- The program is expected to submit its curriculum and course design even if the teaching faculty has not yet been identified or signed a contract. (Annotation D1.04)
- The program is expected to provide the required course materials even if the teaching faculty has not yet been identified or signed a contract. (Annotation D1.05)
- The elimination of the 15 month window for having clinical sites identified (D1.07)
- The elimination of letters of intent and requirement for signed agreements (Annotation D1.07)

An annotation for standard E1.08 has been edited as below:

> ANNOTATION: Programs providing information about expanding to a *distant campus* do so using forms and processes developed by the ARC-PA for this purpose**. A site visit will be required as a component of the application process to expand to a distant campus.**

The annotation for standard E1.09 d & e has been edited as below:

> ANNOTATION: The maximum entering class size and maximum aggregate student enrollment numbers are approved by the ARC-PA upon review of the program during a comprehensive review or after a change request from the program. The number of student (≥ 10) or percentage ($\geq 15\%$) increase in class size and aggregate numbers are designed to be a transient increase to accommodate a unique situation such as students delayed in progress through the program. Such transient increases may occur without necessarily requiring additional resources or review by the ARC-PA. This flexibility is not designed to encourage a program to recruit beyond its maximum class size. These increases DO NOT modify or reset the ARC-PA approved class size or aggregate enrollment. They are not meant to be continually increased in successive years.

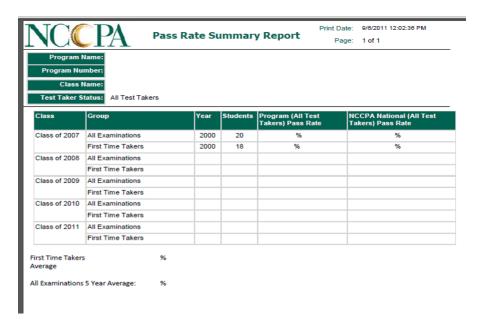### STANDARDS INTERPRETATION

Several of the standards require that information or materials be *readily available*, which is defined in the *Standards* glossary as "made accessible to others in a timely fashion via defined program or institution procedures." So what does the ARC-PA expect for the standards that include this term? The ARC-PA expects that someone searching for the information or material

in question on a web site would be able to find it with ease from the home page of the program, by category or by using the search function if available.

For example the required first time *PANCE* rates for the five most recent graduating classes (standard, A3.14 and its annotation), are most *readily available* when prominently found via a link from the program's home page to the NCCPA report document. This can be accomplished by downloading the PDF Pass Rate Report from the NCCPA portal page for your program. Alternately you could provide a link to this document within your program's web site within a category of certification results, graduate outcomes, PANCE or NCCPA results.

Providing the Pass Rate Report only within a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) may not be considered *readily available* as not all reviewing the website, i.e., prospective applicants, may know to look for the terms PANCE or NCCPA and not even know how to search the FAQs.

The ARC-PA expects that programs will **post a link to the PANCE pass rate PDF document** within their program web sites as obtained from the NCCPA through the NCCPA program portal. This document reports the last five years for first time and ALL Test Takers and the document will be populated and appears similar to the one below. **The commission will not accept any other document than the one provided by the NCCPA.** (Programs may include additional narrative concerning their PANCE performance, but **must post the results, or a link to the NCCPA document, as required**.) The ARC-PA expects programs to have the most current results readily available, posted on the web.

			Print Date:	9/6/2011 12:02:36 PM
NCCPA	**Pass Rate Summary Report**		Page:	1 of 1

Program Name:	
Program Number:	
Class Name:	
Test Taker Status:	All Test Takers

Class	Group	Year	Students	Program (All Test Takers) Pass Rate	NCCPA National (All Test Takers) Pass Rate
Class of 2007	All Examinations	2000	20	%	%
	First Time Takers	2000	18	%	%
Class of 2008	All Examinations				
	First Time Takers				
Class of 2009	All Examinations				
	First Time Takers				
Class of 2010	All Examinations				
	First Time Takers				
Class of 2011	All Examinations				
	First Time Takers				

First Time Takers Average	%
All Examinations 5 Year Average:	%

As always, those with questions about interpreting a standard should contact the ARC-PA at standardscomments@arc-pa.org

ARC-PA AT PAEA MEETING IN SEATTLE

The ARC-PA encourages programs to attend its two important sessions at the fall PAEA meeting in Seattle.

Wednesday November 8, 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm
ARC-PA Presentation: General Update and Hot Topics
This session focuses on the growth in the number of programs and the challenges this growth creates for the ARC-PA and all programs, new and old, as well as the ARC-PA's responses to the challenges. Hear how the commission is responding to the challenges with the new composition of the commission, with workshops, new focused topic webinars, and changes to the ongoing accreditation process. Learn news related to distant campuses, distant education, increased development and use of the portal and surveys.

Saturday November 10, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm
ARC-PA Presentation: Day-to-Day Issues for Programs and the ARC-PA, Open Question and Answer
This session focuses on the current comprehensive review process components and the roles of the individuals involved from the program and the ARC-PA. Hear how the process will be streamlined in the future and the importance of the portal in the process. Provide feedback to the ARC-PA about your needs in understanding the accreditation process, topics you need addressed, formats you prefer. This session includes time for open Q&A about ARC-PA related issues.

DEGREE DEADLINE REMINDER

The *Standards* require that programs which do not currently offer a graduate degree *must* transition to conferring a graduate degree upon all PA students who matriculate into the program after 2020. The degree *should* be awarded by the sponsoring institution.

Programs that are housed in institutions unable to offer a graduate degree, those that do not yet offer a graduate degree or those that currently affiliate with an institutions separate from their sponsoring institutions should review the ARC-PA document about the *Standards* degree deadline, available on the ARC-PA web site [Accreditation Resources Page](#).

Programs should review the [Change forms page](#) of the ARC-PA website to find the forms needed to and steps required to demonstrate compliance with the degree requirement. There are separate forms for programs changing degrees within their own institutions and those affiliated with a separate institution.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Programs that have questions or comments about these Notes, or any issue related to the accreditation process are encouraged to contact the ARC-PA by email or phone. All contact information is posted on the ARC-PA web site at http://www.arc-pa.org/contact/staff/