

Submitted by: Keith E. Whitfield, Provost

ESTABLISHMENT OF A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PATHOLOGISTS' ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the establishment of a Master of Science in Pathologists' Assistant program within the Department of Fundamental and Applied Sciences in the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, effective Fall 2017.

Background

The pathologists' assistant is a highly trained member of a healthcare team, performing gross surgical specimen examination and processing and postmortem specimen examination as an essential part of autopsy pathology. In addition, pathologists' assistants prepare tissue samples for specialized testing, including frozen sections, immunohistochemical staining, and other special studies. They function in anatomic and surgical pathology units within major medical centers, as well as post-mortem forensic pathology. The Wayne State University program trains pathologists' assistants in administrative, supervisory, surgical grossing, and autopsy pathology skills fundamental for effective delivery of quality diagnostic outcomes in healthcare.

Program Description

The bachelor's program in Pathologists' Assistant was established in . This program is accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) and is one of only nine programs in the United States and the only one of its kind in Michigan. The program prepares students to assist pathologists in the preparation and processing of surgical specimens and in conducting clinical and forensic autopsy postmortem examinations. The first year consists of didactic and student laboratory work, while the second year consists of clinical training offered in cooperation with the Detroit Medical Center, Crittenton Hospital Medical Center, Garden City Hospital, and the Office of the Wayne County Medical Examiner.

All accredited Pathologists' Assistant programs are being required by NAACLS to be at the master's degree level beginning in 2017. In this graduate program, students will complete a series of integrated courses in the first and second years in preparation for employment in a variety of professional medical settings. Once this graduate program has been approved by the Board of Governors and all students in the undergraduate degree program have graduated, a subsequent Board of Governors proposal from the Department will request discontinuance of the undergraduate degree program.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must meet requirements for admission to the Graduate School. The number of students accepted each year into the Pathologists' Assistant program at Wayne State University is limited by the availability of clinical affiliations and is currently set at twelve. However, an

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anticipated increase in the number of affiliated clinical sites will increase admissions by two students annually for each additional affiliated clinical site.

The Admission Committee considers work experience, letters of evaluation/recommendation, prerequisite science course grades, and overall GPA. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate knowledge of the profession, ability to communicate, and personal qualities of maturity, motivation, and integrity. Specific requirements include: (1) minimum cumulative and prerequisite undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0; (2) completion of the General portion of the Graduate Record Examination; (3) three letters of recommendation, preferably from a faculty member or supervisor who can endorse the applicant's eligibility; and (4) a 500-word narrative stating his/her personal and professional goals. Applicants whose native language is not English must complete the TOEFL. Final selection to the Pathologists' Assistant program is by committee interview, conducted by the program's Admission Committee.

Curriculum Requirements

The curriculum complies with accrediting agency (NAACLS) content requirements, and the structure of the 71 credit hour graduate program will consist of two years of coursework. Year I is comprised of core courses in human histology, human anatomy and physiology, biochemical pathophysiology, human embryology and pediatric disease, histochemistry, medical microbiology, anatomic pathology, laboratory management, clinical terminology and methodology, forensic autopsy techniques, applied general and clinical academic pathology, and a future trends and educational methodology course for a total of 45 credits. Year II consists of courses and experiences at clinical sites with a core focus on clinical autopsy pathology, clinical histopathology techniques, forensic pathology and autopsy techniques (medical examiner facility), surgical pathology, clinical pathology with case studies, medical photography portfolio, and a graduate seminar for a total of 26 hours. The graduate program will follow a Plan C option.

Graduation Requirements

All coursework must be completed in accordance with Graduate School policies and regulations governing graduate scholarship and degrees. Students may enroll on a full-time or part-time basis but must complete requirements within six years of admission. Students will normally complete all coursework (71 credits) within two years.

Program Administration

The Pathologists' Assistant program director will oversee all operational and financial management of the program; the Pathologists' Assistant medical director oversees and is responsible for clinical education in the second clinical year; an advisory committee reviews outcomes and guides program improvement processes. Program administration complies with specialized accreditation (NAACLS) guidelines.

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Budget and Resource Requirements

Budget and revenue projections were approved by the Associate Vice President for Budget, Planning and Analysis. An increase of 1.0 FTE faculty member has been requested for the change to a graduate program; this will require additional permanent funding of approximately \$124,700.

Accreditation

The current undergraduate program is accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), and this accreditation will subsequently apply to the new graduate program, as well.

Approvals

The proposal for the Master of Science in Pathologists' Assistant program was approved by the Faculty and Chair of the Department of Fundamental and Applied Sciences, the faculty of the College of the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, the Dean of the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Science, the Graduate Council, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the Provost.