At its September 2014 meeting, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) placed the Salus University Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Salus University on Accreditation – Probation status until its next validation review in September 2016.

Probation is a temporary status, usually limited to two years, conferred when a program does not meet the Standards and when the capability of the program to provide an acceptable educational experience for its students is threatened.

Once placed on probation, programs that still fail to comply with accreditation requirements in a timely manner, as specified by the ARC-PA, may be scheduled for a focused site visit and/or risk having their accreditation withdrawn.

Salus University, under the leadership of President Michael H. Mittelman, OD, MPH, is taking the Physician Assistant Accreditation-Probation –status change very seriously and has directed program administrators, in conjunction with the Office of the Provost, to ensure that all necessary and appropriate steps are taken to make corrective measures to meet or exceed the accreditation standards established by ARC-PA. The Office of the Provost has identified additional professional support to address the specific citations. It is the University’s expectation that the PA program will have its status of full accreditation reinstated in a timely manner with no adverse consequences to currently enrolled, admitted, or prospective students. This is among the University’s highest priorities.

**What is the program doing to address the areas of non-compliance?**

The University and the Program are actively working to resolve the issues of non-compliance. As per the requirements of the ARC-PA, the University submitted several reports including a modified self-study report and completed a focused site visit in July 2016. In addition, enhanced compliance activities have included to date:

- Identifying and adding rotations to the academic program to complement a more well-rounded clinical experience for the students.
- Reinforcing the overall program assessment process to include timely and more comprehensive data analyses as well as documentation and continuous monitoring of programmatic improvements.
- Communicating to key stakeholders, in accordance with ARC-PA guidance, the accreditation status of the program.
What is the ARC-PA?

“The Accreditation Review Commission on the Education for Physician Assistants (ARC-PA) is the accrediting agency that protects the interests of the public and physician assistant profession by defining the standards for physician assistant education and evaluating physician assistant educational programs within the territorial United States to ensure compliance with those Standards.”

What will happen in the event that the Program should lose accreditation?

ARC-PA Curriculum Teach Out Policy 10.4 states “programs no longer accredited but which remain actively engaged in delivering the curriculum to currently matriculated students are expected to teach out the curriculum in accordance with the Standards or to assist students in transferring to another ARC-PA accredited program in which they can continue their education.”

If this were the case, Salus University will “Teach Out” the curriculum and students will graduate from the Salus University Physician Assistant Program.

If I am in the program when it loses accreditation, will I still be able to finish the program, take the boards and/or become licensed?

The answer to all three parts of this question is yes. As part of the Teaching Out process, the school retains its accredited status until all matriculated students have had the opportunity to graduate or transfer to another program. The University will continue in the Teach-Out phase until all properly matriculated students have graduated. During this time however, the program cannot matriculate any additional students. Teaching Out according to ARC-PA allows “students already in the program to complete their education or assists them in enrolling in an ARC-PA accredited program in which they can continue their education.”

When is the earliest that the Salus University Program will be taken off of probation?

This is up to the ARC-PA. According to ARC-PA, “the program must provide clear evidence of its progress toward improving the program by its next ARC-PA review scheduled for September 2016. The maximum period of probation is two years.” However, once the commission has reviewed evidence of ongoing compliance with the standards by the program, the decision would be made to either return the Program to continuing accreditation status or to terminate its accreditation. The purpose of the focused site visit conducted in July 2016 was to verify, validate and clarify efforts made and evidence of demonstrated compliance with the standards by the Program. According to ARC-PA, “focused visits may be conducted at any time to evaluate a specific Standards related problem(s) identified by a site visit team, the ARC-PA, or in response to a concern received by the ARC-PA.” At that time, the program and institutional progress will be evaluated in addressing specific Standards-related problems.
Is a program that is on probation still considered to be accredited?

Yes. According to ARC-PA, probation is a temporary status of accreditation - limited to two years - when a program holding an accreditation – continued status has areas of non-compliance in the Standards set forth.

If I graduate from a program that is on probation, will I still be eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE)?

Students who graduate from an accredited program are eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE). Once a program is accredited, it remains accredited until “the program formally terminates its accreditation status or the ARC-PA terminates the program’s accreditation through a formal action.” The Salus University Physician Assistant program is still accredited. If the program was accredited at the time of the student’s matriculation, the students are eligible to take the PANCE. Students matriculating in August 2016 will be matriculating into an accredited program. Upon successful graduation from the Program, graduates will be fully qualified to take the PANCE.

How many students do you accept each year?

The program is approved to accept up to 50 students per class.

Specific questions regarding the Program and its accreditation should be directed to the Program Director, Donna Agnew, at (215) 780-1524.