



**Search for the Director of Clinical Education
A.T. Still University
College for Health Communities, Central Coast Physician Assistant Program
Santa Maria, CA**

THE SEARCH

A.T. Still University of Health Sciences (ATSU) and the newly established College for Healthy Communities (CHC) seek a collaborative, innovative, and student-centered leader to serve as the next Director of Clinical Education (Director) for their Central Coast Physician Assistant (CCPA) Program. This role calls for a visionary leader with a passion for excellence in physician assistant education, a commitment to advancing diversity in the PA workforce, and the leadership skills necessary to navigate the evolving landscape of the physician assistant profession.

The College for Healthy Communities, which houses [the Central Coast Physician Assistant Program](#), is one of the seven colleges and schools at ATSU, and the newest college added in the fulfillment of the university's mission of delivering whole-person healthcare, community-based learning, and integrating both the mind and body in patient care. ATSU is the founding institution of osteopathic healthcare, renowned for its preeminence as a multidisciplinary healthcare educator. The CHC, founded in 2019, to better address the healthcare needs of the underserved, joined with the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) to establish the ATSU CCPA Program. The ATSU CCPA program was founded upon a core institutional value of being a leader in community health and caring for our most vulnerable, underserved populations.

The CCPA Program specifically aims to train physician assistants to serve medically underserved communities with a focus on cultural humility and diversity. The majority of students accepted into the program identify as belonging to historically underrepresented groups, are first-generation college students, and are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The program actively recruits Hometown Scholars and Central Coast residents or applicants who have ties to the area. Many of the current faculty at the CHC came to be a part of the important mission of helping to train the underrepresented to serve underserved communities.

Students in the CCPA Program spend one year on the beautiful Santa Maria campus for the didactic phase of their education and then proceed to the clinical phase, which includes 35 weeks of supervised clinical

practice experiences at various medical centers and hospitals across the country that have a focus on community-based health, a steadfast mission of the program. Current clinical sites include locations in California, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, and Missouri, among others.

The Director will report to the Chair of the program. The successful candidate will be responsible for the strategic leadership, coordination, and guidance for all aspects of the clinical phase of the CCPA Program, leading a dedicated team of clinical faculty and staff. They will ensure the program's commitment to providing students with community-based experience while upholding the highest standards of care in healthcare and community service.

ATSU and the College for Healthy Communities has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

A.T. STILL UNIVERSITY

[ATSU](#) stands as a beacon of innovative academic programs, preparing highly competent professionals within a learning-centered environment. With a proud osteopathic heritage, ATSU emphasizes whole-person healthcare, underscoring the importance of treating each patient as an individual rather than a set of symptoms. The university's mission extends to a focus on community health, interprofessional education, diversity, and serving underserved populations.

Founded in 1892 with the establishment of the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, ATSU has grown into a multidisciplinary healthcare educator with a rich history of leadership in healthcare education and research. The university operates across three campuses located in Missouri, Arizona, and California, each fostering an environment of excellence in health sciences education.

ATSU offers a wide array of programs, including doctoral degrees in Audiology, Dental Medicine, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Osteopathic Medicine, and various master's programs across its seven prestigious schools and colleges. The university is also home to the Museum of Osteopathic Medicine, which houses over 80,000 artifacts, reflecting its deep roots and ongoing commitment to the osteopathic profession.

With a total enrollment of over 4,000 students, ATSU is a vibrant community of learners and educators. The university prides itself on being the first in whole-person healthcare and continues to lead with its innovative and comprehensive online and residential programs. ATSU's dedication to community health is evident through its partnerships with over 25 community health centers, providing students with real-world experiences that complement their academic learning.

CENTRAL COAST PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

In 2019, ATSU partnered with the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) to create the Central Coast Physician Assistant program, designed to educate physician assistants committed to providing whole-person primary care to underserved communities. The unique 24-month, 105-credit program is based in Santa Maria, California, where students spend their first year completing the didactic phase on campus. The second year involves 35 weeks of supervised clinical practice across various medical centers in the U.S., with a focus on serving in Community Health Centers to prepare students for careers in primary care. The CCPA Program emphasizes engaged scholarship, whole-person healthcare, and critical thinking, fostering a commitment to serving medically underserved populations from the outset.

The [Hometown Scholars program](#) supports ATSU's mission by offering an admissions advantage to applicants endorsed by local CHCs who demonstrate a commitment to returning to practice in their hometown communities. With a prodigious inaugural cohort of 90 students in 2024, the program's vision is to be recognized as a key source of PAs from historically underrepresented groups, providing culturally sensitive care to underserved populations. Its program goals focus on recruiting diverse students, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed for evidence-based, patient-centered care, and preparing them to address the unique needs of marginalized communities with cultural humility and empathy.

THE ROLE

The Director of Clinical Education will be involved in leading clinical education, managing faculty, and overseeing clinical site development, while also remaining engaged in teaching and scholarship. This individual will integrate didactic coursework with clinical experiences that uphold the program's mission.

The responsibilities of the Director of Clinical Education will include, but will not necessarily be limited to the following:

- Collaborate as a member of the programmatic leadership team, consisting of the Program Chair, Director of Didactic Education, Director of Clinical Education, and Medical Director to achieve a shared vision for becoming recognized as the principal source of PAs from historically underrepresented groups providing culturally humble care to medically underserved communities.
- Lead and manage the ongoing design, development, and implementation of an innovative clinical education model training PA students in Community Health Centers across the country in partnership with the National Association of Community Health Centers.
- Support the dynamic team of clinical faculty and staff to educate a highly diverse student body selected for their commitment to the CCPA mission using a holistic admissions process.
- Oversee the development of Supervised Clinical Practical Experience sites and recruitment of qualified preceptors.

- Oversee and contribute to the comprehensive assessment strategy for the clinical phase of the program.
- Ensure students are adequately prepared to achieve programmatic benchmarks for the PACKRAT and PANCE.
- Conduct in-person and virtual clinical site visits.
- Track clinical year student academic progression, retention, and completion strategies.
- Ensure ongoing compliance with ARC-PA accreditation standards and best practices in contemporary physician assistant clinical education.
- Develop and deliver academic courses as assigned.
- Participate in the holistic student admissions process.
- Conduct and disseminate scholarship.
- Serve on departmental, college, and university committees as assigned.
- Engage in community and professional service.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The incoming Director will face a range of opportunities and challenges, including:

Enhancing clinical productivity while maintaining the highest standards of patient care.

The Director will work to enhance the clinical productivity of the program while upholding the highest standards of patient care. This will involve leveraging the program's extensive network of clinical partnerships and externship sites, which provide students with a diverse array of hands-on learning experiences. These partnerships are essential for exposing students to a variety of patient care scenarios, from routine procedures to complex cases, across different demographic groups and communities.

The Director will work closely with these sites to foster an environment of continuous improvement and learning, ensuring that students are not only productive but are also developing the competencies and empathy required to deliver exceptional care. This dual focus on productivity and quality will prepare ATSU CCPA graduates to be proficient and compassionate healthcare providers who are well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of the communities they serve.

Fostering and creating external clinical partnerships.

The CCPA Program is dedicated to providing students with firsthand experience by rotating them through community health centers (CHCs), allowing them to serve diverse populations effectively. The Director of Clinical Education plays a crucial role in this process by recruiting and partnering with CHCs across the nation to secure sufficient placements for students. This involves leading the creation of partnership agreements, while managing existing agreements, that align with the program's mission and vision, ensuring that these collaborations enhance the students' clinical training while supporting the overarching goals of the program.

Developing and mentoring a diverse and exceptional faculty and staff.

A key aspect of the Director's leadership will be the implementation of retention and mentorship programs that not only help clinical faculty and staff excel in their current positions but also prepare them for future leadership roles. By aligning these initiatives with the university's core values—such as professionalism, accountability, and lifelong learning—the Director will ensure an energetic, engaged academic environment that encourages long-term commitment and satisfaction among faculty and staff, while continually enhancing the institution's reputation for excellence. Furthermore, through a steadfast commitment to inclusivity, the Director will foster a workplace culture that values each individual's contributions, promoting a supportive and collaborative environment where professional growth thrives.

Promoting a collaborative and collegial atmosphere within the program.

The Director will play a crucial role in fostering a collaborative and collegial culture within the program and across the university. This entails creating an environment where faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to collaborate, share knowledge, and support each other's professional and academic growth. By cultivating strong relationships, the Director will enhance the program's ability to innovate and adapt to the evolving landscape of the physician assistant profession and healthcare delivery.

In addition to internal interactions, promoting collaboration also involves engaging with other departments and schools within the university. The Director will be expected to promote shared learning opportunities and encourage community service projects that enhance the learners' experience. These efforts will not only enrich the educational experience but also contribute to a cohesive university community where diverse perspectives are valued. By championing interdisciplinary engagement, the Director will ensure that the ATSU CCPA program is at the forefront of physician assistant education while making a positive impact on public health.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The successful candidate for the Director of Clinical Education will possess:

- Prior academic experience commensurate with appointment at the rank of associate or full professor.
- Leadership experience in the design, development, and implementation of clinical education programs.
- Experience in the successful recruitment and development of clinical sites and quality preceptors.
- Substantial previous clinical experience.
- Experience working within a federally qualified health center is preferred.
- Effective communication and collaboration skills.
- Skilled in working with a variety of different student learning styles and collaborating with faculty colleagues.
- Ability to perform duties autonomously with minimal supervision and maintain confidentiality.
- Licensure in, or eligibility for, licensure in California as a PA.
- Current or emeritus NCCPA Certification.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION



The anticipated salary range for this position at the assistant professor level is \$97,800 to \$144,200; at the associate professor level is \$109,000 to \$161,000; and the full professor level is \$134,600 to \$199,400. ATSU CCPA Program is nestled in the Santa Maria Valley. Santa Maria Valley offers a blend of farm-fresh food, award-winning wineries, and diverse outdoor experiences, making it a great destination for those seeking a relaxed lifestyle. The region's year-round mild weather supports everything from grape growing to endless outdoor adventures like birdwatching, hiking, biking, and golf. The famous Foxen Canyon Wine Trail and Tepusquet Road provide scenic routes for cyclists, while local parks like Los Flores Ranch and Preisker Park offer beautiful spaces for families and nature lovers to explore.

For more information, please visit: <https://santamariavalley.com/>

TO APPLY

ATSU CCPA has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist the Search Committee for the Director of Clinical Education in its identification and review of candidates. Applications, including a cover letter and resume, should be submitted online:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/still-university-college-healthy-communities/director-clinical-education>

Jay Torio, Partner
Gigi Mensah, Associate
Sarah Sweeney, Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller, Inc.

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