



BETTY IRENE MOORE SCHOOL OF NURSING

Program Director, Physician Assistant Program
University of California, Davis, Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing
Sacramento, California

THE SEARCH

The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at the University of California, Davis seeks an experienced and collaborative leader, educator, and scholar to serve as the next Program Director for the Master of Health Services – Physician Assistant Studies Program (PA program). Reporting to the Associate Dean for Academics at the School of Nursing, the Program Director will provide leadership and strategic direction to the PA program, ensuring the program fulfills its mission, achieves optimal student outcomes, maintains full ARC-PA accreditation, and advances the School's commitment to preparing exemplary healthcare professionals who serve diverse communities, including rural and underserved populations. This role is an opportunity for a leader committed to excellence in physician assistant education and service to engage and inspire a dedicated community of faculty, staff, and students as the PA program enters its next chapter.

UC Davis Health, situated on a contemporary 140-acre campus in Sacramento, California, serves as home to a number of institutions, including the School of Nursing, School of Medicine, UC Davis Medical Center, a fully accredited Children's Hospital, and an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. As the region's only academic health center, UC Davis Health is focused on discovering and sharing knowledge and providing the highest quality of care. UC Davis is one of the nation's premier public research universities, with academic and research excellence across a broad array of disciplines, a vibrant health-science enterprise, an outstanding campus community, and a focus on sustainability.

The PA program is built on the principles of interprofessional education, leadership, and health equity. Ranked 35th in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report*, the program has enjoyed high demand – including more than 2800 applicants for 65 seats in the Fall 2025 cohort – and a high caliber of enrolled students. The school's dedicated faculty come from across the health sciences and health professions, supporting an interprofessional learning model. The program is also distinguished by its commitment to advancing health in California's underserved communities, with clinical placement sites and partnerships throughout the state. Students graduate with strong foundations in evidence-based practice, prevention,

and patient education, alongside the skills and competencies necessary to serve diverse constituencies within a rapidly evolving healthcare ecosystem.

As part of a world-class academic healthcare system, the PA program has access to unlimited opportunities for collaboration across the health sciences, which the new Program Director will be expected to tap into and nurture. The Program Director will champion excellence in curriculum and clinical education, strengthen partnerships across the School of Nursing, UC Davis Health, and the broader community, and position the program as a national leader in preparing physician assistants. This is a pivotal moment to build on the program's strong foundation, expand its reach and impact, and further UC Davis Health's mission to advance population health and promote equity for all communities.

UC Davis has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in the search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT UC DAVIS

The University of California, Davis was conceived in 1905, when the California state legislature passed the University Farm Bill, calling for the establishment of a site dedicated to science-based teaching and research to support the state's growing agricultural industry. Peter J. Shields, secretary of the State Agricultural Society, had lobbied on behalf of the idea of a "University Farm" after he recognized that California students were leaving the state in pursuit of agriculture degrees. University Farm began accepting non-degree students in October 1908 and enrolled its first 40 degree-seeking students from UC Berkeley in January 1909. In 1922, the campus was renamed the Northern Branch of the College of Agriculture and that same year, the first four-year undergraduate general academic program was established, graduating its first class in 1926. Following years of sustained growth, the Regents of the University of California declared UC Davis the seventh general campus in the University of California system in 1959.

UC Davis comprises four colleges – Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Biological Sciences, Engineering, and Letters and Science – as well as an Office of Graduate Studies and several nationally-renowned professional schools, the School of Medicine, Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing, Graduate School of Management, School of Education, School of Law, and School of Veterinary Medicine. UC Davis has 104 undergraduate majors and 97 graduate programs in its diverse academic programs. To learn more about UC Davis academic programs, please see: <https://www.ucdavis.edu/academics/colleges-schools>.

UC Davis has an academic staff of around 2,450. The university's distinguished faculty includes members of the National Academy of Sciences, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, American Law Institute, National Academy of Engineering, and other renowned academies. Among many other honors, university faculty, alumni, and researchers have won the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Pulitzer Prize, MacArthur Fellowship, National Medal of Science, Blue Planet Prize, Wolf Prize, and Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers. UC Davis is the only campus that is home to an Academic Federation, a group

of academic appointees who are not members of the Academic Senate, and who by percentage of appointment and duration of employment are eligible for membership. This organization is parallel in function to the role of the Academic Senate, and a key asset of the campus.

In the area of research, UC Davis continues to be a national leader in federally sponsored research and is distinguishing itself for its success in generating research support from state and private sources. The National Science Foundation ranks UC Davis 14th in the nation in research funding among public universities and 22nd among public and private universities overall; the National Institutes of Health ranks UC Davis 41st in the country in research funding received. The campus continues to see regular growth in annual external research funding, generating over \$1 billion in awards for the second year in a row in 2023.

For more information about UC Davis, see: <https://www.ucdavis.edu/>.

Strategic Growth

UC Davis is one of the world's leading transdisciplinary research and teaching institutions. Its current trajectory is guided by a strategic plan, "[To Boldly Go](#)", that outlines the aspirations and methods for guiding the University to new levels of distinction over the next 10 years. It draws on the campus's responsibility as a public land-grant university and maximizes its opportunities as a driver of innovation and economic growth for the public good. As part of its plan, UC Davis launched an enterprise master brand, themed "[Outgrow the Expected](#)", to continue raising its national profile and showcasing its research and advocacy.

In addition, [Aggie Square](#), UC Davis's ongoing \$1.1 billion addition to its Sacramento campus, opened its first phase in May 2025. The first phase includes over 1 million square feet of research, wet labs, commercial space, public engagement space, and housing. Aggie Square will bring world-class researchers and the communities they serve together with entrepreneurs, technical experts and industry partners who guide ideas from concept to market. By providing high-tech labs and large-scale facilities, Aggie Square will create the infrastructure needed to make discoveries not only possible, but scalable. Later phases could eventually span 25 acres of University-owned land.

In October 2020, UC Davis publicly launched a \$2 billion fundraising campaign, the largest philanthropic endeavor in its history. "[Expect Greater: From UC Davis, For the World](#)", supports the University's work to prepare future leaders, sustain healthier communities, and bring innovative solutions to today's most urgent challenges. In 2024, the campaign concluded, having exceeded its goal by raising \$2.09 billion.

UC Davis's new focus on [Grand Challenges](#) brings together practitioners, communities, and world-class scholars from all areas of study to find innovative solutions to wicked problems — significant and complex threats to human society and planetary health that demand collaborative action. Built from a foundation of grassroots work and prioritized by leaders across UC Davis, Grand Challenges aims to catalyze critical breakthroughs. These efforts support a compelling model of transdisciplinary collaboration, moving the

world forward with equity and resilience. UC Davis's current focus areas include [emerging health threats](#), [the climate crisis](#), [sustainable food systems](#), and [reimagining the land-grant university](#).

THE BETTY IRENE MOORE SCHOOL OF NURSING

The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis was established in March 2009 through a \$100-million grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the largest grant for nursing education in U.S. history, and the largest single grant to UC Davis. The school welcomed its first students in fall 2010, and now houses two doctoral programs, the Doctor of Nursing Practice – Family Nurse Practitioner Degree Program and the Ph.D. in Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership Program; two Master's programs, the Master of Health Services – Physician Assistant Studies Degree Program and the Master's Entry Program in Nursing; and the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certificate Program. All five programs are conferred by the Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership Graduate Group, an interprofessional team of faculty members from disciplines including nursing, medicine, health informatics, nutrition, biostatistics, pharmacy, sociology, and public health. Serving more than 200 students, the School of Nursing combines the potential of new ideas for the future of nursing education with a nationally recognized collection of research, academic, and health-care resources.

The diverse interests and expertise of School of Nursing faculty, coupled with robust collaborations with faculty across UC Davis and beyond, catalyze cutting-edge research from nursing-home and palliative care to chronic-disease and care management to disease prevention and health promotion. Researchers work to improve health care systems and design policies to ensure care is effective, efficient, and responsive. The School of Nursing offers highly regarded graduate programs and students have access to state-of-the-art research facilities and resources, including advanced laboratories, data analysis centers, and collaborative research spaces.

In October 2017, the School opened their new academic building, the Betty Irene Moore Hall. The building is home to the School of Nursing's graduate programs and supports interprofessional health sciences education. The \$50 million, 70,000-square-foot building features collaborative learning spaces rather than traditional classrooms. The building illustrates UC Davis's mission to reimagine education and provide innovative spaces to best prepare future health professionals in nursing, medicine, health informatics, public health and more. The building advances UC Davis's innovative use of and national recognition for clinical simulation. It features simulation labs, where clinical scenarios play out on one side and debriefing rooms on the other, in order to provide an environment to discuss bedside decisions. Simulation arenas include an inpatient eight-bed hospital ward, task and anatomy skills labs, a 15-room primary care clinic, and a one-bedroom apartment for home health simulation.

Leadership

Dr. Stephen J. Cavanagh is the Dignity Health Dean's Chair for Nursing Leadership as well as Dean and Professor at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis. Dr. Cavanagh leads the School of Nursing

and collaborates with the interprofessional Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership Graduate Group in the operation of five graduate degree programs as well as the development of new programs.

With a passion for health care workforce development and maximizing the use of advanced practice nurses, his research explores the understanding of innovation within the almost unique regulatory framework in which nursing operates — and the need for it within nursing education due to projected nurse shortages — a growing elderly population and the rise of technology in health care. He has also generated more than \$16 million in external federal, state, and foundation funding to develop nursing practice arrangements, support diversity in health care, and increase the nursing workforce.

Dr. Cavanagh earned a Doctor of Philosophy Degree from the University of Texas Austin School of Nursing, a Master of Public Administration and Master of Science in Health Care Management from the University of La Verne in La Verne, California, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Nursing from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne Polytechnic in England. He completed an Executive Certificate in Strategy and Innovation from the MIT Sloan School of Management. He was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Fellow, and a Johnson & Johnson/UCLA Health Management Fellow.

Dr. Cavanagh is a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing, the American College of Healthcare Executives and is a chartered manager. He was elected to the board of directors for the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) in 2022.

ABOUT THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Established in 1974 as the Physician Assistant Certificate program within the UC Davis School of Medicine, the Master of Health Services — Physician Assistant Studies Degree Program joined the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at the School's founding in 2009. Today, the PA program is home to approximately 130 students, 9 full-time faculty, and 14 part-time instructors including faculty from nursing, medicine, and pharmacy alongside professors of practice. The 27-month, full-time program prepares future PAs to become primary care providers who advance health in California's underserved communities and is responsive to the needs of an evolving health care system. The program maintains full ARC-PA accreditation and the approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be January 2027.

The PA program is highly regarded for its focus on interprofessional education, leadership, and health equity. All students complete academic coursework, simulation lab training, and more than 1,600 hours of supervised clinical practice, including eight required five-week clinical rotations across California in family medicine, pediatrics, women's health, psychiatry, emergency medicine, surgery, internal medicine and an elective rotation. The program maintains deep relationships with community partners throughout California and places students at more than 60 clinical supervision sites.

As part of UC Davis Health, PA program students benefit from rigorous academic training, immersive clinical experiences, and high-tech simulation. The curriculum emphasizes case-based learning, systems

thinking and technology, and draws upon a growing body of research that supports collaborative, interprofessional care. Students are part of a dynamic learning environment alongside peers in nursing and medicine. Supported by faculty across multiple disciplines, students gain experience that prepares them to lead, collaborate and innovate.

To learn more, visit <https://health.ucdavis.edu/nursing/academics/programs/mhs-pa.html>

ROLE OF THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Overseeing both the academic and administrative functions of the PA program, the Program Director will foster a culture of excellence and collaboration, refining the program's strategic vision to align with the goals of the School of Nursing and UC Davis Health and ensuring faculty and students have the resources needed to thrive in their roles. This role includes oversight of all aspects of the PA program—didactic and clinical curriculum, faculty coordination, student progression, program quality assurance, compliance, and operational management. A significant component of this position includes strategic leadership and stewardship of clinical education, including acquisition, development, and maintenance of clinical placement sites across UC Davis Health, affiliated health systems, community health centers, and rural community partners throughout California.

As a leader within the School of Nursing and UC Davis Health, the Program Director is expected to have a collaborative mindset and the ability to navigate complex systems. The Program Director will partner extensively across UC Davis, participating in School, Health System, and University committees and service roles. They will also serve as the PA program's primary public representative, championing its mission and values within the School of Nursing and beyond.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

To advance the mission of the Physician Assistant Program, the Program Director will successfully address the following opportunities and challenges:

Provide strategic leadership to grow and sustain the PA Program's impact.

In collaboration with faculty, staff, and School of Nursing leadership, the Program Director will provide strategic direction for the PA program's mission, vision, curriculum, and long-range planning, ensuring a distinctive vision that is aligned with broader institutional priorities. The Program Director will oversee organizational administration, including governance, policy development, resource planning, and fiscal management, while maintaining responsible stewardship of program budgets and resources. They will identify and implement strategies to achieve program goals and deliver high-quality educational experiences that remain responsive to evolving student and workforce needs. Additionally, the Program Director will represent the PA program at University, community, and national events, and ensure active participation in key ceremonies and activities that expand the program's visibility and impact.

Lead accreditation processes and develop internal systems to ensure ongoing compliance and excellence.

The Program Director will ensure full and ongoing compliance with all ARC-PA standards, policies, and reporting requirements, maintaining the PA program's accreditation status. This includes overseeing the preparation, submission, and accuracy of accreditation materials, annual reports, data tables, and self-study documentation, as well as leading and coordinating all ARC-PA site visits. The Program Director will manage the development and maintenance of policies, procedures, and documentation required for programmatic compliance, ensuring that all processes meet regulatory and institutional expectations. The Program Director will also guarantee that every Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) adheres to ARC-PA requirements, state regulations, and national standards, thereby upholding the highest level of quality and integrity in clinical education. With the completion of the current ARC-PA accreditation cycle in 2026, there will be an opportunity to establish continuing systems for data collection, documentation, and proactive program improvement, ensuring seamless reviews in the years to come.

Advance clinical and didactic education to develop exemplary healthcare professionals.

The Program Director will provide strategic leadership for acquiring, expanding, and sustaining high-quality clinical placement sites that meet the diverse needs of PA students. This includes building partnerships with UC Davis Health clinical services, regional hospitals, FQHCs, community health centers, rural clinics, private practices, and public health agencies to ensure robust Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs) across core disciplines. The Director will oversee all aspects of clinical placement compliance, including affiliation agreements, regulatory standards, and legal and contractual requirements, while ensuring sites deliver sufficient breadth, depth, and quality of learning experiences. Working closely with clinical leaders and preceptors, the Director will promote optimal learning environments, adequate supervision, and adherence to PA scope-of-practice parameters. Additionally, the Director will lead continuous improvement efforts through data-driven quality assurance systems and partner with faculty and staff to maintain operational processes that support seamless student clinical progression.

In addition to clinical oversight, the Program Director will provide leadership for the PA program's didactic and clinical curriculum, ensuring ongoing evaluation, innovation, and alignment with best practices in PA education. The Director will chair key program committees, lead faculty and staff meetings, and oversee annual self-assessment processes to drive data-informed improvements. Through strategic planning and collaboration, the Director will ensure the curriculum remains responsive to evolving healthcare needs and regulatory requirements. This will ensure that the PA program continues to draw the highest caliber of students and graduate competent, compassionate physician assistants who are well-prepared to serve their communities.

Recruit, support, and inspire the dedicated Program faculty.

The Program Director will provide ongoing leadership and oversight for principal and instructional faculty, ensuring a cohesive and high-performing academic team. This includes guiding all aspects of faculty recruitment, hiring, and onboarding, as well as fostering mentorship that supports professional growth and excellence in teaching. The Program Director will conduct regular faculty evaluations, support performance improvement, and promote ongoing professional development opportunities. In addition, the Program Director will evaluate and creatively manage faculty workloads and a hybrid work environment to maintain continuity in program delivery across University's quarter system. Through these efforts, the Program Director will cultivate an equitable, supportive culture that engages faculty and empowers them to excel in their work.

Diversify funding mechanisms and expand resources.

Working closely with the Associate Dean for Academics and the UC Davis Health development team, the Program Director will support program growth by identifying strategic partnerships and potential fundraising opportunities. The Program Director will develop a comprehensive understanding of diverse funding opportunities, including grants, industry partnerships, and government contracts, and work to develop innovative approaches to establish lasting funding relationships that support the program. They will also collaborate with the Dean of the School of Nursing, the Associate Dean for Research, and the UC Davis Health Development Office to engage potential donors in philanthropic efforts aimed at advancing programmatic initiatives.

Steward impactful collaboration and community engagement, both internally and externally.

The new Program Director will develop and maintain relationships with key internal and external stakeholders to facilitate collaboration while cultivating partnerships that advance the program's mission and raise its visibility. The Program Director will strengthen ties within the School of Nursing, advocating for the program's value and needs within the broader School. They will serve as a connector and bridge-builder within UC Davis Health, developing joint initiatives and opportunities for mutual learning as appropriate. In partnership with senior leadership, the Program Director will craft forward-thinking initiatives to advance the mission and reputation of UC Davis Health in the region and beyond.

Externally, the Program Director will represent the program and School of Nursing in regional workforce development collaborations and statewide PA education initiatives, positioning UC Davis Health as a leader in addressing critical needs in the field. There is a significant opportunity to engage in community outreach while strengthening relationships with rural and underserved communities to expand clinical training opportunities to support workforce needs. By bolstering existing partnerships and cultivating new opportunities, the Program Director will elevate the program's regional and national profile, positioning it for sustained growth and long-term success.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Successful candidates will demonstrate the following required qualifications:

- Graduate of an ARC-PA accredited PA Program;
- Current NCCPA certification;
- Master's degree required; doctoral preparation preferred;
- Eligible for California PA licensure;
- Minimum five years of clinical practice experience and three years of experience in PA education or academic administration;
- Demonstrated leadership, management, and interpersonal skills;
- Experience with curriculum development, accreditation, and program evaluation.

The following preferred qualifications and characteristics will facilitate success in this position:

- Experience developing or managing clinical site partnerships;
- Prior experience leading ARC-PA accreditation;
- Experience working with rural or underserved clinical education networks;
- Evidence of scholarly contributions to PA or health professions education;
- Excellent communication skills that foster effective interactions with a wide variety of audiences;
- Knowledge, insight, and negotiation skills regarding the political and regulatory environment of a complex university system or other complex organizational enterprises;
- The capacity to act as an effective agent of change in complex systems;
- A deep appreciation and understanding of the current transitional period in health care delivery, including funding, and the associated challenges for current models of academic healthcare.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The anticipated salary range for this position is \$175,000-250,000, commensurate with experience.

This position is based in Sacramento, California, the state capital, which sits in the northern part of California's Central Valley, in one of the world's most productive farming regions and at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Sacramento is a family-friendly city with major cultural resources, including museums, theaters, and a vibrant arts scene. It also offers numerous outdoor activities, from riverfront

parks to nearby hiking and skiing in the Sierra Nevada. Davis, the site of the general campus, lies approximately 20 minutes away by car. The UC Davis campus footprint is the largest of the UC system, spanning more than 5,500 acres in two counties and offering a dynamic academic and social environment. Sacramento is one of the most diverse and integrated cities in the United States, as determined by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, providing a rich cultural tapestry and a welcoming community. To learn more about Sacramento and Davis, see [UC Davis](#) and [California's College Town](#).

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-california-davis-betty-irene-moore-school-nursing/program-director>.

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<http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000376/NondiscrimAffirmAct>.

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