

# Improving Deceleration: Developing a Process that Works

2013 PAEA Annual Forum  
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9:00 – 9:50am

Presenters:

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# Objectives

- Identify deceleration policies used at various PA programs
- Recognize the implications of deceleration on both students & faculty
- Discuss strengths & weaknesses of deceleration policy designs
- Generate ideas for improving deceleration policies & procedures

# What is Deceleration?

**Deceleration:** The loss of a student from an entering cohort, who remains matriculated in the PA program (ARC-PA)

**Deceleration:** When remediation and/or extra efforts are not enough

How many PA students decelerate?

- PAEA data: 3.2% mean, 1.5% median<sup>1</sup>

For this presentation → **Academic Deceleration**

# Why Talk About Deceleration Now?

- Culture change?
- Educational hot topics
- We couldn't have made a mistake in admissions
- Give another chance, everyone makes mistakes
- Dismissed student actions (lawsuit/grievance/etc.)
- Tons of new PA programs

# Why is Deceleration Important?

1. ARC-PA *Standards*:
  - A3.17 The program *must* define, publish and make *readily* available to students upon admission academic performance and progression information to include:  
f) policies and procedures for *remediation* and *deceleration*
  - A3.19 Student files kept by the program *must* include documentation: ...student performance while enrolled, academic disciplinary action, meets requirements for graduation
  - Descriptive Report - C2.01 Data and self-assessment regarding student performance
2. Safety net and/or option for struggling students
3. Faculty time and well-being

# Challenges of Deceleration

- Rigorous & full course load/schedule
- Student costs associated (\$20,000+ in tuition)
- Increases length of PA program
- Report to University & ARC-PA
- Faculty pressure to pass
- Admit fewer in next class of students

What about the student who decelerates?

# PA Program Deceleration

Three common policies:

1. Leave & come back next year
  - Leave courses & join next cohort of students
  - Some have remediation involved
2. Attend PA classes part-time
  - Add on another year+ of PA school
  - Don't get benefits from other courses/students
3. Our policy is, there is no deceleration
  - Don't pass remediation = out of program

# Strategies & Solutions - Deceleration

- Must fit your PA program
  - Faculty buy-in
- Is it automatic?
  - Who decides & what circumstances are OK?
- Think about the Program & Student
  - Time away from education, classmates, financial implications, etc.
- Re-integration with program/classmates



# Focused Discussion – 30 minutes

## Instructions for each table/group:

1. Introduce self & **briefly** introduce your current deceleration policy
2. Choose a **scribe** & **speaker**
3. Choose **1** policy to discuss in-depth
  - Strengths/weaknesses
  - Effects on students & faculty
  - Ideas for refining/revamping
4. Share **innovative** ideas/**good** processes

**Table/Group**

**Innovative Ideas & Good Processes**

**Improving Deceleration:**

**Developing a Process that Works**

# Our Deceleration Policy

Learning Intervention & Remediation

1 “C”, 1 course, 1 time (didactic & clinical years)

If a student receives:

- 2 final course grades of “C”, or
- Fails to successfully remediate any course, or
- Final course grade of “F”, or
- Fails a course for any other reason,  
..... they may be decelerated.

Decision to allow deceleration is at discretion of PA Program

- Student must come before the PA Program  $\leq 7$  days to provide rationale for deceleration

PA Program will decide on a case-by-case basis & inform student of decision in writing  $\leq 7$  days

# Our Deceleration Policy

Prior to returning to PA Program courses, student must:

1. Pass a mutually agreed upon course ( $\geq 3$  credit hours)
2. Read each edition of *PA Professional* & *JAAPA* starting with 1st month of deceleration
3. Complete & turn in the monthly CME Post-Tests from *JAAPA* & score  $\geq 80\%$  on each test
4. Attest to spend 2 hrs/wk reviewing articles on Medscape, Medpage or UpToDate

Upon return, student must:

- Retake the course(s) not passed & audit the others
- Not allowed to receive a “C” or lower in any course or fail a course for any other reason

# References

- Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. *Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.* <http://www.arc-pa.org/documents/Standards4theditionwithclarifyingchanges12.2012fnl.pdf>. Accessed May 26, 2013.
- *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report on Physician Assistant Educational Programs in the United States, 2010 – 2011.* Physician Assistant Education Association; May 2013.
- Paul G, Hinman G, Dottl S, Passon J. *Academic Development: a survey of academic difficulties experienced by medical students and support services provided.* Teach Learn Med. 2009;21 (3):254-60.

# Questions & Input

**Thank you for Attending!**