With a first-time pass rate of 97%, the Class of 2010 is the fourth Touro University-California Joint Program class in a row to beat the national average for first-time PANCE pass rates, which was 94% in 2010.

The PANCE is the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination. Successful completion of the PANCE is a requirement to practice clinically as a PA in the United States, although individual states may apply further criteria before granting a license.

After passing the PANCE, PAs become NCCPA-certified, which entitles them to use the PA-C designation until the expiration of their first cycle (approximately two years). To maintain NCCPA certification and retain the right to use the PA-C designation, they must continually update their medical education and pass a recertification test every six years.

Dr. Lander served as associate director of former New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia’s Committee on Unity, a precursor to the city’s Commission on Human Rights, where he promoted key fair employment legislation and attacked discriminatory quotas in higher education. An ordained rabbi, he earned a doctorate in sociology from Columbia University.

Touro College derives its name from Judah and Isaac Touro, leaders of colonial America, who provided major endowments for universities, the first free library on this continent, community health facilities in the United States, and pioneering settlements in Israel. This generosity was exercised to better the lives of all people through the encouragement of education and charitable and vocational enterprise without regard for creed or color.
Manuela (Nellie) Gallegos, ’07

At what age did you decide to go into medicine, and when did you decide to become a PA?

When I was around 7 years old, my grandfather noticed I was fascinated by the local healers, who were incorporating native herbs and home remedies in their patient care. He planted the seed in my mind when he said, when I grew up, I, too, could provide care to the sick. My grandfather was a very positive influence on me even at a very young age. He always encouraged me to follow my dreams.

How did you decide to work where you are now, and move to Silver City?

Once I graduated, I wanted to work for a Federally Qualified Community Health Center that was approved by the National Health Service Corp (NHSC), Loan Repayment Program. The NHSC repaid my student loans in exchange for my working in a rural community. In 2010, the initial award was increased to $60,000 for a two-year commitment, and up to $170,000 for five years. I would encourage all PA students to look into and consider this option, especially those with student loans over $100K. NHSC opportunities are available in all the 50 states.

What specialties did you consider, why, and how did you decide on Family Practice?

Once I graduated, my first choice for specialty was Family Practice, because I wanted to be exposed and practice my medical knowledge and skills that I was trained for in the Physician Assistant program. During my first three years, it has been extremely beneficial and rewarding working in Family Practice, and I am very grateful for the experience.

What would you say now to Nellie Gallegos, PA-S, if you traveled back to September 2004?

Knowing what I know now, I would have said to her in 2004 to do her very best learning and absorbing as much of the information presented in the various classes of the PA program. In the clinical rotations you are assigned to, to take advantage of the preceptors’ experience - ask questions of anything you are not sure of or you do not understand - as well as utilizing all the resources available. If you ever become overwhelmed, do not give up - keep working hard, because if you are persistent you will succeed - organize a study group, if necessary.

Read the entire interview on our website: www.tu.edu/

The New College of Education and Health Sciences

The Colleges of Health Sciences and of Education have just completed a merger, and are now the College of Education and Health Sciences (CEHS).

Within this new college will be two schools: the Graduate School of Education (GSE), and the School of Health Sciences, which includes the MPH and Joint Programs.

Dr. Jim O’Connor, who served as the Interim Program Director for the Joint Program last year, is the dean of the newly combined college. He is a former Physician Assistant, and had served as the Dean of the College of Education since 2007.

Dr. Michael Clearfield served as Interim Dean for the College of Health Sciences for four years, concurrent with serving as the Dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM). He will now focus on COM’s ambitious plans, which include developing a post doctoral program by 2013.

The CEHS will be home to the planned School of Nursing, which is slated to open its doors in Fall 2012. A retreat was held in early January for CEHS faculty and staff, where integration of the three groups was discussed. Discussions were both lively and fruitful; the Joint Program is pleased to have access to the expertise of their new colleagues.
In April of 2010, the first preceptor survey was sent out to 151 preceptors; the reply rate was 40%. These were current and immediate-past preceptors of Joint Program students on PA rotations; the preceptors for the public health rotations were not included. The survey asked preceptors to both rank the students and to make suggestions for future didactic changes. Thirty-three (56%) of the preceptors who precept students from other programs stated that Joint Program students were better prepared.

Joy Dugan’s article

On May 5, 98 local high school students came to Lander Hall to experience ten different health occupations, under a grant from the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. Tracey DelNero PA-C and Robin Wempe PA-C showed the students how to properly wrap a sprain, and what a poorly-wrapped sprain felt like—prompting an “ohh” of recognition from many student athletes. Jessica Smith, MPH, ran the students through an outbreak of gastroenteritis and had them perform calculations to figure out the underlying cause. A number of Joint Program students from the classes of 2010 and 2012 volunteered their perspectives on the path to a health care career, including Planning Committee member Rick Nolley PA-C, MPH (Class of 2010) pictured below.

The 98 students were surveyed before and after the event, and their intent to enter a health-care career went from 52% to 69% - a 33% increase.

Class of 2012 White Coat Ceremony

The Class of 2012 White Coat Ceremony was held December 19, 2010 at Gaia Napa Valley. The keynote speaker was Patrick Killeen, PA-C, President of the American Academy of Physician Assistants.
JOINT MSPAS / MPH MISSION

Through the integration of the Physician Assistant and Public Health disciplines, the mission of the Joint MSPAS/MPH Program is to: 1) train quality PAs to work with underserved populations, 2) recruit applicants from these communities or individuals with a demonstrated interest in serving these communities, and 3) increase access to care for underserved populations.

Meet the Public Health Director:
Assefaw Tekeste Ghebrekidan, MD, DrPH

Dr. Assefaw Tekeste Ghebrekidan was born in Eritrea and earned his medical degree at Haile Selassie I University in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He returned to Eritrea in 1972 to practice medicine at Massawa General Hospital and was a key architect in rebuilding the national health care system after the country’s liberation in 1991. Eritrea’s health system has become a model of operational efficiency and effectiveness for other developing countries.

In 1994, he returned to academia as the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Asmara, and in 1999 became a Research Fellow in the School of Public Health at University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Ghebrekidan earned a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree for his study of corruption and its effect on health care in sub-Saharan Africa. He has served as Program Director and Associate Professor at Touro’s Public Health Program since 2002.

Credit: www.igh.org (cached); Photo: Diyosa Carter

Alumni Survey Results

The Joint Program now has 186 alumni! This year’s Graduate Survey had a response rate of 32%:

- In keeping with our mission of recruiting from underserved populations:
  - 73% of incoming students either self-reported being educationally or economically disadvantaged and/or were from Health Professional Shortage Areas/ Medically Underserved Areas or Populations
  - 29% are medically Under-Represented Minorities (URMs)
  - 59% (27) are from California
  - 53% (24) speak a language other than English: 16 speak Spanish (three of these speak yet another language), and one speaks five languages
  - 59% are female, and 41% are male
  - The average age is 28 (range: 22-50)
  - There are 11 University of California graduates, and 10 California State University graduates

Society for Emergency Medicine Physician Assistants, March 13-17, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Association of Family Practice Physician Assistants, March 24-26, Charleston SC
American Academy of Physician Assistants, May 30-June 5, Las Vegas, NV
Physician Assistants in Orthopaedic Surgery, August 15-19, Chicago IL