



UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

CONNECTICUT

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**UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH WELCOMES CARRIE WALKER, MPAS, AS FOUNDING CHAIR AND PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM**



WEST HARTFORD, Conn. (August 20, 2015) – The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) in West Hartford, Connecticut welcomes Carrie Walker, MPAS, as founding chair and program director for the Physician Assistant program, overseeing the development of a 27-month program educating Physician Assistants. In initial phases of planning and applying for accreditation, the program is slated to launch in 2017.

“I am delighted to have the opportunity to create a program at the University of Saint Joseph fostering exceptional skills for Physician Assistants, enabling careers that support optimal patient outcome. In keeping with the University’s original and continued commitment to social responsibility, I envision preparing students to realize their potential in service to others,” said Walker.

Walker leads the development and accreditation of the USJ program following her role as assistant program director aiding the successful development and accreditation of the Physician Assistant program at Bryant University (Smithfield, R.I.), where she also served as assistant professor within Bryant’s Physician Assistant program. After completing an undergraduate degree in Health Sciences from Saint Francis University in 2000, Walker obtained two master’s

degrees: master of Physician Assistant Studies in 2001 (also at Saint Francis), and master of science in Emergency Medicine at Alderson Broaddus College in 2006.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' most recent survey, jobs for Physician Assistants are expected to grow 38% from 2012 – 2022. Positions are plentiful due to several factors including the need for cost-effective primary care providers, an increasing shortage of physicians, an increasing prevalence of chronic diseases, and the opportunity to serve those insured by the Affordable Care Act, as well as fulfill the health care needs of aging baby boomers.

University of Saint Joseph President Rhona Free said, “We are delighted to create and then, provide this new program educating students to meet the high demand for Physician Assistants. The program is a natural extension of the University’s already strong programming in Nursing, Pharmacy, and Nutrition and we are honored to have Carrie Walker as founding chair and program director. Her exceptional skills combined with her dedication to compassionate care are a perfect fit for University of Saint Joseph.”

Walker expressed enthusiasm joining USJ in a phase of strong growth and innovation. In recent years, USJ: opened a School of Pharmacy in downtown Hartford, which graduated its first class in May, 2014; transitioned from Saint Joseph College to University of Saint Joseph; expanded faculty and increased enrollment; and built the following new academic programs: Pharm.D., Doctor of Nursing Practice; master’s in Autism and Applied Behavior Analysis; master’s in Social Work; bachelor’s in Public Health; and bachelor’s in Public Policy and Advocacy.

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*The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) offers a wide range of graduate, undergraduate, and certificate programs that combine a professional and liberal arts education with a focus on service. Coeducational graduate master’s and doctoral degree programs are taught on the University’s two campuses in West Hartford and Hartford, Connecticut; at off-campus locations throughout the state; and online. Undergraduate programs for women and for coeducational adult students take place on our beautiful suburban campus and include more than 25 majors and seven pre-professional programs, each of which provides personal attention in a caring environment. Founded in 1932 by the Sisters of Mercy, the University of Saint Joseph welcomes students from diverse backgrounds and religious traditions. To learn more, view our website at [www.usj.edu](http://www.usj.edu).*

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