

# Doctors Of Medical Science Graduate From SIU School Of Medicine

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CARBONDALE, IL – A formal hooding ceremony celebrated the inaugural class of graduates of the Doctor of Medical Science Program, a 1-year extension of physician assistant education and training launched in 2021. The event was held at the SIU Student Center in Carbondale on July 30.

The 46 men and women were the first to attain the doctorate level of education for physician assistants at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. Its Physician Assistant Program has graduated 660 clinicians and is ranked third nationally for the percentage of graduates serving in rural and underserved areas.

The DMSc degree program is designed to advance physician assistants' clinical and educational skills and prepare them for more prominent roles in leadership, management, and service to their organizations, patients, and to students. It is 1 of 6 DMSc programs in the United States, and the only one at a public institution.

Jacob Ribbing, DMSc, PA-C, director of the doctoral program, welcomed the assembled professionals, students, family, and friends, and led the ceremony on the “exciting and historic day.”

Janet Albers, MD, chair of the Department of Family & Community Medicine, delivered the opening remarks. She praised the group for its pioneering efforts and dedication, balancing additional years of education with the demands of full-time jobs as physician assistants and instructors.

Jennifer Orozco, DMSc, PA-C, president of the American Academy of Physician Associates, represented the class and gave the keynote address. Orozco discussed the current and pending strains on the nation's health care system, including a shortage of providers.

“We must all step up to be part of the solution to the pressing challenges facing health care,” she said. “You have a real opportunity to make change in this unprecedented moment. I urge you to be bold.”

Members of the Class of 2022 received diplomas and hoods, which symbolize their transition from learners to the role of teacher and contributor in the field. Don Diemer, DHSc, PA-C, physician assistant program director, hooded the graduates.

A trio of awards was also presented: Jennifer Orozco, DMSc, PA-C, received the PA Advocacy and Leadership Award; Angela Arnold, DMSc, PA-C, earned the Excellence in Scholarship Award; and Rachel Terrill, DMSc, PA-C, was named Faculty of the Year.

SIU School of Medicine's Physician Assistant Program uses problem-based learning, simulated patient experiences, and classroom lectures to train students. The first year of instruction takes place on the second floor of the SIU Center for Family Medicine at 300 West Oak Street, Carbondale. During the second year, learners train with faculty mentors at clinics throughout southern and central Illinois, as well as Southeast Missouri.

View a video of the Hooding Ceremony on [YouTube](#), and photos from the afternoon on [Photoshelter](#).

**Doctor of Medical Science Class of 2022**Christine AlbersJessica AlwerdtAngela ArnoldKeith BallingerNavneet Kaur BamrahHalley BarkeStacey BeckerJacob BoehmAlysse BoydJ. Paul BuezaJayson CobleBethany CottrillAgnes DelaneyDaniel HagermanJessica HalloranCheng Chung HsiehBridget JacksonBrian JacquotKassie JonesChristine LarsonCourtney Douglas-LedbetterMeredith LukensGabriel MartinZachary McKentyDale McKinneyCharles MiningerAmanda Phoenix MonteleoneEbony Sheng Yang MontgomeryKristine NicolettoJennifer OrozcoAnkita PatelCary RegisterHeather RiceRebecca RiepshoffJeffery RomigMindy SandersMichael SchetterMatthew SchneiderAllysen ShaughnessyJoshua SmithStephen SolumZachary SowaMackenzie SteenJennifer TerasaAutumn WillsAmanda Wittnam