
VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1
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EDGE-PA Newsletter

E-Newsletter



EDGE-PA NEWS INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Success of Year 3




SCAN ME

What is EDGE-PA?

The EDGE-PA program, an initiative of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU), is committed to addressing the opportunity gap in healthcare education. It strives to create a more equitable landscape in Physician Assistant (PA) education by offering targeted support and resources to underrepresented groups, including individuals from medically marginalized groups, those committed to serving underserved populations, and those who have overcome significant barriers in their lives.

More information can be found on our website [here](#).

Gratitude



The EDGE-PA team wants to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you—our incredible mentors, valued partners, and supportive friends and family. This program would not be possible without the unwavering support of our amazing “village.”

We deeply appreciate your belief in our mission and the shared vision of creating a more inclusive and diverse healthcare landscape. Together, we are paving the way for lasting change, and we look forward to building on this momentum with your continued support.



Funding and Expansion

We are excited to announce new funding for the EDGE-PA program. We are incredibly grateful to our funders. These funds will help us serve an expanded group of pre-PA students.

1. Genentech 
 - Funded over 3 years (2025-2027) to expand EDGE-PA program to an inclusive program.
2. Vituity 
 - Rodney Koenig PA-C, CDU alum, coordinated a donation to support students with CASPA fees & mock interviews.
3. Carolyn Stokes, PA-C
 - Donated towards general program expenses.

Sharing Success

EDGE-PA program overview and success was presented at:

1. Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) Conference, April 29-May1, 2024, Bethesda, MD.
2. American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) Annual Conference, May 18-22, 2024, Houston, TX.
3. National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) Summit, Sept 16-17, 2024, Atlanta, Georgia.
4. Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) Forum, Oct 8-10, 2024, Washington DC.
5. Genentech Leadership, Nov 18, 2024, Zoom.



Acceptance Rates

Our students have been accepted into A.T. Still University, Meharry Medical College, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, University of California, Davis, Emory University, Towson University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, and Morehouse School of Medicine.

Cohort Year	2021/22	2022/23	2024/25
Enrolled in EDGE-PA	9	18	28
Applied to PA Programs	8	15	28
Received at Least One Interview	8	11	20 (as of Jan 2025)
Accepted to PA Program	8	9	13 (as of Jan 2025)
Partnering PA Programs	7	15	17

Restructuring

In 2025, the program will open its doors to all genders, races, and ethnicities. With funding now available, program offering will be more robust. We will maintain the core tenets of EDGE-PA: mentorship and support for PA school applications. In 2025, we will enhance these services and add additional support including academic enrichments, networking, and shadowing opportunities. Students who matriculate to PA programs will continue to receive program support including academic enrichment and resources necessary to ensure academic success.



Changes for 2025

Enhanced Guidance and Mentoring	<u>Added Enrichment Opportunities</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentorship with Other PAs• Expanded Application Review and Guidance• Extensive Presentations by PA Admissions Teams• Presentations by CASPA Representative• Expanded Scholarships for CASPA Fees• Professional Mock Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Access to Academic Resources</u>• <u>Access to Coursework to Improve GPA</u>• <u>Tutoring Support</u>• <u>Access to Shadowing Opportunities</u>• <u>Attend Regional and National PA events</u>• <u>Financial Support for Travel to Interviews</u>• <u>Support for Matriculated Students</u>

Voices of Past EDGE-PA Students

“Everything about the EDGE-PA program was incredibly helpful. From having Charles Drew University professionals review our applications and personal statements to meeting with Dr. Shirani for guidance on overcoming self-doubt and building confidence, every aspect was invaluable. The testing strategies and interview preparation were especially beneficial.”

“For me, the overall guidance throughout the application process was incredibly impactful. Meeting so many like-minded aspiring PAs and networking with them, as well as with current PAs, medical professionals, and professors at Charles Drew who are already in the field I aspire to join, was invaluable.”



“Having visibility to several programs was extremely beneficial. It provided an opportunity for programs to meet with me and others, and to ask questions directly to staff from those institutions. Additionally, gaining insights from current and former students about the impact of their programs was invaluable.”



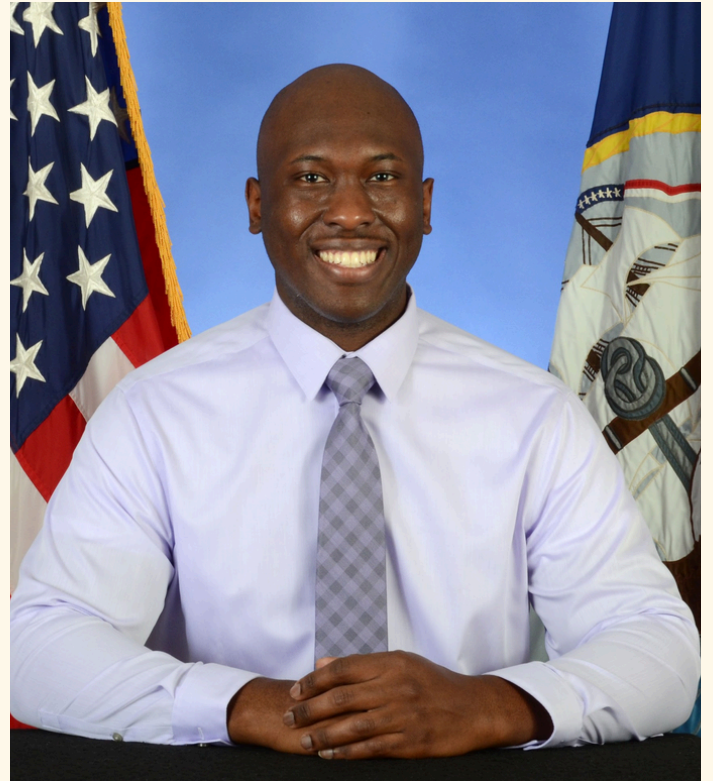
Spotlight on 2024 Cohort

Johnathan Louissaint

“After completing my undergraduate education, I felt the need to distinguish myself from my peers who were also applying to professional schools. I decided to enlist in the United States Navy as a Hospital Corpsman. This opportunity proved highly rewarding, as it provided me with extensive exposure to patient care across a broad range of healthcare settings and modalities. While deployed overseas, I decided to pursue a master's degree, determined to demonstrate my ability to succeed in graduate studies and prepare myself for applying to PA school.

Following my initial discouragement after the first attempt at applying to PA school, I received an email from the EDGE-PA program, a resource that assists underserved students pursuing careers as Physician Assistants. I believed this program would be the key to overcoming the barriers that had hindered my previous application. The EDGE-PA program's offerings significantly boosted my confidence during the application cycle.

The EDGE-PA program assisted me in achieving my goal of being accepted into the Physician Assistant program at the University of California, Davis.”



(Accepted to the University of California, Davis & Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science)

Carlos Wright

“I am extremely grateful for what the EDGE program has provided. I appreciate the mission of EDGE-PA and the opportunity to contribute to it. I am a second-time applicant and was accepted to Emory University to start Fall 2025. Even without the acceptance I received, the EDGE-PA program provides many fruitful opportunities for success.

To be specific on my success, I received no interviews in my first cycle; however, in my second, I received eight interview invites. The assistance I received with my personal statement was great and a key factor in my success. I also value the many speakers who took the time to speak and share their stories. They were very motivational and compelling. I also appreciated the individuals representing different PA programs providing info sessions. I believe these encounters with the staff can go a long way.”



(Accepted to Emory University)

Eloi Ferguson

“The EDGE-PA program aims to bridge the healthcare disparity gap by increasing representation in the growing PA field. The program offers many resources such as mentoring, personal statement review, mock interviews, and application submission reimbursement. EDGE-PA helped me navigate through the CASPA process to strengthen my application and become a more competitive candidate. With the support of EDGE-PA along with my perseverance and faith, I successfully gained admission to one of my top choice programs at Towson University’s Physician Assistant program.

As an adopted Haitian American, I aim to provide compassionate equitable care that recognizes every individual’s unique circumstances and cultural backgrounds to improve treatment outcomes. I am grateful to have been selected for the EDGE-PA program’s initiatives and am inspired to uphold their philosophy to promote diversity in healthcare. I am committed to mentoring Black male PAs, helping to pave the way for greater representation in the field.”



(Accepted to Towson University)

Thierno Bah

“The EDGE-PA program has been instrumental in shaping me academically and personally. Through its comprehensive support system, I gained valuable tools for interview preparation, personal statement editing, critical thinking, and networking, which were essential in navigating the path as a PA applicant. The mentorship and community fostered by the program provided not only academic guidance but also a sense of belonging and motivation to keep pushing forward.

As a result of the skills and confidence I developed through EDGE-PA, I’m thrilled to share that I received three interview invites and one acceptance. I have decided that I will be attending Charles R. Drew University in the Fall of 2025 to continue pursuing my dream of becoming a physician Assistant. This program has truly been a cornerstone of my success, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunities it has afforded me.

To any prospective students, I encourage you to take full advantage of what EDGE-PA offers. It’s a transformative experience that will empower you to achieve your goals and grow into the best version of yourself.”

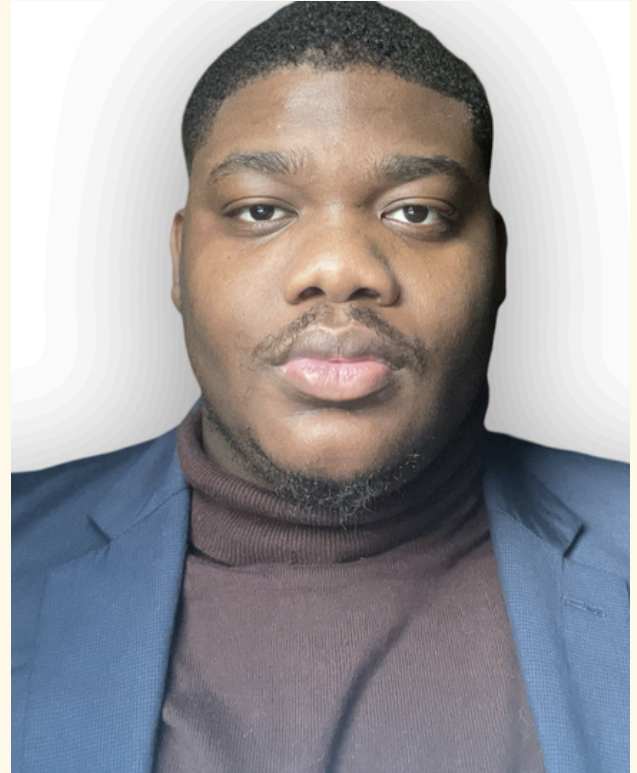


(Accepted to Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science)

Mikhail Hamilton

“The EDGE-PA program has helped me immensely throughout my journey to becoming a PA student. My first application cycle I received 1 interview out of 12 schools and was waitlisted. The EDGE-PA program reached out to me a few months later and provided me with numerous resources to strengthen my application for the upcoming CASPA cycle. I had the opportunity to speak to numerous schools before applying again which allowed me to gain more insight on the schools that match my academics and my personal mission. In addition, the EDGE-PA program provided free personal statement edits and also mock interviews which I believed strengthened my application.

In my second application cycle, I applied to roughly 9 schools and received interviews from all schools and received multiple acceptances. I have decided to attend the Charles Drew PA Program as the program matches my personal mission and seeks to revolutionize the outlook of the PA profession by training students as myself that came from an underserved community. As an immigrant from Jamaica, I can say with pride that I will be apart of the 5% of Black PAs in the US. Words cannot express my gratitude of the EDGE-PA program as in a few years I will be able to be of service to my community medically.”



(Accepted to Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science)

Ayooluwa Popoola

“The EDGE-PA program has been instrumental in my journey towards becoming a physician assistant. I first heard about the EDGE program through a promotional email in the Fall of 2023. Initially, I was skeptical because the offer seemed too good to be true. At the time, I was entering my second and final application cycle for PA school. I was accepted to be a part of the EDGE-PA program and it changed my life. My PA mentor, the mock interview, and the EDGE-PA partnering programs were the three most impactful resources that the EDGE-PA program provided. Daniel went above and beyond as a mentor by asking hard questions, offering encouragement, and generously giving his time. The mock interview gave me a framework through which I could critically assess and confidently answer questions.

The EDGE-PA partnering programs gave me the opportunity to show my passion for the PA profession to the faculty members of three PA programs. I am grateful to say, that this summer 2025, I will be attending the PA Program at the University of Utah, School of Medicine in Salt Lake City, Utah.”



(Accepted to the University of Utah)

Jahim Lawrence

“My name is Jahim Lawrence, and I am from Miami, Florida. I am a first-generation college graduate and former student-athlete who attended the University of Florida. I learned about the EDGE-PA program from a close friend and fraternity brother who was already well into his journey to becoming a physician assistant (PA). He urged me to apply for this amazing program, and I did just that—which turned out to be one of the best decisions I have ever made.

Being part of the EDGE-PA program has been an incredible opportunity due to the numerous benefits and resources it provides to each cohort. From assigned mentors to video presentations with multiple universities, as well as personal statement and interview preparation, the program has given me the added confidence and knowledge to apply to any PA program I aspired to join.

One of my favorite aspects of being a member of EDGE-PA has been the unwavering support and genuine care shown to everyone in the program. Despite not being accepted into a PA program during my first application cycle, EDGE-PA did not give up on me. Instead, they continued to guide and support me, giving me another opportunity to strengthen my application in significant ways.

The skills and professional growth I gained through the program proved to be instrumental during my second application cycle, leading to my acceptance into North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University’s PA program this upcoming fall. Getting into PA school is challenging, and succeeding in the program is even harder. However, the support and guidance I received from EDGE-PA, combined with the program’s mission to address underrepresentation in the PA profession, inspired me to persevere.

Both patients and providers benefit from increased diversity in medicine and healthcare, and programs like EDGE-PA play a vital role in creating a more inclusive future. I am forever grateful for the EDGE-PA program and cannot fully express how much it has impacted my life and my PA journey.

Thank you, EDGE-PA. I am committed to giving back and supporting the program and its future cohorts as they embark on their journeys.”



(Accepted to North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University)

Congratulations!
2024
COHORT



Spotlight on 2023 Cohort

Troy Adkins

“When I came across the EDGE-PA program, I learned they focused on increasing representation in the PA profession, which happened to be one of the many reasons I wanted to be a PA: to increase representation. Joining the EDGE program allowed me to have a Black male PA mentor who provided me with assistance on my applications and reviewed my personal statement. We met with several PA programs and guest speakers on Zoom and heard first-hand about their core values and what they look for in a candidate. In addition, we heard from a wide range of speakers about their journey into the PA profession advice on how to prepare for application submittals and interviewing, and words of encouragement.

Due to the many resources EDGE provided me, along with my perseverance, I was able to successfully obtain a seat in the Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant program! Receiving support from EDGE through the strenuous process of applying is highly recommended for any Black male like me looking to be a catalyst and aide in the lives and betterment of our communities.”



(Attending Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science)



(Attending Meharry Medical College)

Eb Odeh

“The EDGE PA program was a gift that I never expected to get. I was in my second cycle of applying after finishing in the NFL. In my first cycle, I submitted my application without knowledge and understanding of the process and what was required to be a competitive applicant. I needed help navigating CASPA and preparing for interviews. The program matched me up with a mentor who had a background similar to mine. The mentors gave me and my constituents advice and personal feedback to not only get into the room and secure an interview, but also have the knowledge to compete for a spot with other applicants. EDGE-PA provided us with mock interviews and CASPA reviews so that we were the most prepared applicants in the room.

The opportunity given to me by EDGE-PA is one that I am grateful for. I applied to 13 plus schools and received over 7 interviews! However, I chose to stay loyal to the founders of the program and attend Charles Drew University with hopes not just to become a PA, but also a mentor for the EDGE-PA program and to give back as well!”

Thomas Randle

I found out about the EDGE-PA program at an online seminar at the beginning of last year, shortly after my first attempt to get into PA school. Luckily, I was able to leave my information with the host of the session and he connected me with the application a year later. I can genuinely say the program was of monumental help to my success now. Along with mentors, mock interviews, and virtual sessions that helped to perfect my interviewing skills, I was connected with a team of PAs and professionals who believed in uplifting Black men in medicine.

With their help, through every step of the way, I was invited to multiple interviews, and gained acceptance into multiple schools shortly after. I could not imagine where I would be without participating in this program! I look forward to keeping up with the program as I continue throughout my schooling and beyond!



(Attending Drexel University)

Dante Miles

The EDGE-PA program afforded me opportunities that I wouldn't have otherwise had. I am forever grateful that a program like this exists to help underserved groups. I am the first in my family to earn a bachelor's degree and attempt an advanced degree in medicine. I had no idea the nuances and resources that I would need to apply to PA programs. This program has helped me to feel more prepared to start and complete a PA program. I'm reminded that I have the confidence and ability to succeed in a program and pass the PANCE. Even after being encouraged to pursue other careers, I knew that I wanted to be a PA. I'm happy to announce that I will be attending

I hope to give back to the EDGE-PA program and support other underserved groups in their journey to becoming PAs and diversifying healthcare.



(Attending A.T. Still University)



SPECIAL RECOGNITION



Bryant Rucker, PA-S, from the cohort of 2023 was accepted at the University of Utah PA Program where he was selected as a Social Mission Alliance Health Justice Fellow. This prestigious national fellowship is highly competitive, reflecting Bryant's exceptional dedication and achievements. The Social Mission Alliance, previously known as the Beyond Flexner Alliance, resonates deeply with our division and program goals. The fellowship provides interdisciplinary training for students, empowering them to become change agents who champion social mission and health justice. Through policy-relevant research, peer organizing, and advocacy, fellows are equipped to make significant contributions to advancing health equity.



(Attending the University of Utah)



(Attending Morehouse School of Medicine)

Ke'Von Hamilton, PA-S, from the 2023 cohort, was awarded the highly competitive National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Scholarship! This prestigious scholarship supports students pursuing primary care health professions by covering tuition, fees, and other educational expenses in exchange for a commitment to serve in medically underserved communities.

For over 50 years, the NHSC has been dedicated to placing passionate healthcare professionals in Health Professional Shortage Areas, ensuring that communities with the greatest need receive quality care. This scholarship is a testament to Ke'Von's dedication to serving vulnerable populations and his commitment to making a lasting impact in primary care.

The EDGE-PA program is incredibly proud of Bryant and Ke'Von for these well-deserved recognitions—congratulations!

Meet Our Team



Lucy Kibe, DrPH, PA-C

Founder & Executive Director

Dr. Lucy Kibe, Associate Professor and Founder of the EDGE-PA program, serves as its visionary Executive Director. Her dedication to education and equity has been instrumental in shaping the program's mission to support underrepresented students in achieving success in healthcare careers. She is passionate about fostering a new generation of diverse healthcare leaders.

Holly Johnson, MPH

Program Manager

Holly Johnson, MPH, is the Program Manager for the Physician Assistant (PA) Department at Charles R. Drew University. With her extensive experience in program management, Holly is dedicated to fostering student success and advancing diversity in healthcare through her leadership in the EDGE-PA program.

Olore Imoohi, BA

Program Coordinator

Olore Imoohi has been an integral part of the EDGE-PA program, bringing her passion for mentorship and equity in healthcare to the forefront. With a focus on empowering underrepresented students, she plays a key role in creating impactful opportunities and fostering a supportive community within the program.

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[Charles R. Drew University-PA Program](#)



EDGE-PA PROGRAM CALLING MENTORS & SHADOWING PRECEPTORS

MENTORS

Regular 3-4
hours/month (Feb-Dec)
virtual meetings to
support and advise
your mentee.

Connect mentees
with PA professional
opportunities.



SHADOWING PRECEPTORS

Dedicate at least 40
hours total between
Feb-Aug.

Expose students to
clinical skills,
procedures, and patient
care best practices.



- ★ Orientation and resources for successful mentoring and shadowing will be provided.
- ★ Mentors and shadowing preceptors will receive a stipend.

For more information email us at
EDGEPA@cdrewu.edu or
visit our website [here](#).

