



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents
FROM: Douglas E. Lentivech 
SUBJECT: Regents Permission to Operate in New York State:
Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine
DATE: July 2, 2019
AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Consent Agenda

Should the Board of Regents grant permission to operate for Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) to offer its D.O. program in Osteopathic Medicine in Elmira, New York?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute.

Proposed Handling

This question will come before the full Board at its July 2019 meeting for final action.

Procedural History

Board of Regents permission to operate is required by Section 224 of the Education Law which prohibits out-of-state colleges and universities from transacting business in New York without Regents permission.

Background Information

LECOM submitted an application to seek consent of the Board of Regents to offer its D.O. program in Elmira, New York, in accordance with §3.56 of the Rules of the Board of Regents. The College is a private, nonprofit institution under the LECOM

Health System. Its main campus is in Erie, Pennsylvania. The College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). The D.O. program in Osteopathic Medicine was established in 1993 at the main campus. The program is accredited by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA). Currently the D.O. program is offered at the following additional locations: Bradenton, Florida, and Greensburg, Pennsylvania (also known as LECOM at Seton Hill).

The D.O. program is designed to prepare physicians who practice within the osteopathic concept and to develop primary care physicians who practice in the osteopathic tradition. The program consists of 357.5 credits (117.5 pre-clinical credits and 240 clinical credits) and can be completed in four years. The first two-years of pre-clinical study begins with a 12-week course in Gross Anatomy. Following this, students study the basic medical sciences almost exclusively in the problem-based learning (PBL) format with groups of 8-9 students per faculty facilitator. After completing the first two years and passing the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination, students begin the two-year clinical phase including the core rotations and then medical and surgical electives. The core rotations will take place in a variety of hospitals in the rural areas and underserved hospitals in upstate New York, including Arnot Ogden Medical Center, Elmira; Eastern Niagara Hospital, Lockport; United Memorial Hospital, Batavia; Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Binghamton; Noyes Hospital, Danville; St. James Mercy Hospital, Hornell; Brooks Memorial Hospital, Dunkirk; and Wyoming Community Health Center, Warsaw.

To gain admission, students must have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university by the time of enrollment. Applicants from affiliated institutions will have completed three years of an undergraduate degree. In addition, applicants must have completed the pre-requisite courses in the following subject areas: biology, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, physics, English, and behavioral sciences.

The LECOM at Elmira student body will primarily consist of graduates from programs in biological sciences, physical sciences, or social sciences. The student population served by LECOM at Elmira will be nationwide and selected on an equal opportunity basis. Recruitment will concentrate on applicants from surrounding regions of New York and northern Pennsylvania, who will be more likely to practice in their home area after training. The projected enrollment at Elmira is 120 new students per year for the first five years.

LECOM is currently constructing a state-of-the-art building on the campus of Elmira College. This dedicated building will house all necessary classrooms and lab space, including 15 PBL discussion rooms, as well as faculty and staff offices. Two full-sized lecture halls in the medical school building will accommodate 150 students each and be fully equipped with high-definition video conferencing cameras and monitors for connectivity between the Elmira and Erie campuses when needed. The Osteopathic Principles and Practice (OPP) Lab will be equipped with 35 pneumatic treatment tables, rolling adjustable stools, and cameras and video monitors. The collaborative agreement

between LECOM and Elmira College gives students full access to all the various educational resources and recreational amenities already in existence at Elmira College. A physical library will be housed in the new building. In addition, students can use the electronic resources available through the LECOM-Erie library.

LECOM at Elmira will hire 16 new full-time and 9 new part-time faculty members. Faculty will be based at the Elmira site to teach in laboratories and serve as PBL facilitators, along with serving as academic advisors to the students and to participate in curricular and administrative functions of LECOM. Faculty members will either be licensed physicians (D.O. or M.D.) with teaching expertise, or individuals with doctoral degrees in relevant scientific and/or educational disciplines.

According to the *New York Physician Supply and Demand through 2030* by Center for Health Workforce Studies, School of Public Health, University at Albany New York, there was an overall growth statewide in physician supply. However, the Southern Tier region experienced physician growth of less than three percent per 100,000 population, a pace far too slow to keep up with demand of an aging population with increasing incidence of chronic disease and the ability of the newly insured to access care. The Western New York region – including Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties – experienced a one percent decline in primary care physicians. According to the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYYS), education and retention of physicians has been challenging for many reasons such as an aging primary care workforce, fewer medical residents choosing primary care, medical school debt, and lack of interest in practicing in rural/underserved areas of the state. The proposed LECOM at Elmira D.O. program is designed as a solution to the health care supply and demand imbalance in New York. Students will be placed in clinical clerkships sites in the rural/underserved areas. These sites and the nearby teaching hospitals have residency training slots available for the graduates. Studies have shown that location of clinical training is to some extent a predictor of where physicians choose to practice. Offering the D.O. program in Elmira is intended to address physician shortages in the Southern Tier Region and Western Region of New York.

Canvass Results: A canvass was conducted of all institutions in the Southern Tier Region of New York State and all New York institutions Offering M.D. and D.O. Programs. There were no objections.

Department Review: As part of the review process, staff members from the Office of the Professions participated in the readiness review site visit to assess the Elmira location's capacity to offer the D.O. program. Upon review of the proposal, the findings of the site visit, the College's response, and all other related materials, the Department has determined that the program meets the standards for registration set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education and the provisions for out-of-state institutions seeking to operate with a physical presence in New York state set forth in the Regens Rules, with the understanding that the Elmira location will receive final COCA approval before instruction begins and the construction of new building will be completed before the end of 2019.

Recommendation

VOTED, that the Board of Regents grant permission to operate for Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) to offer its D.O. program in Osteopathic Medicine in Elmira, New York. This permission to operate will be effective until July 16, 2020. Once the Department receives notification of COCA final approval and evidence that the D.O. program continues to meet program registration standards, it will be extended until July 16, 2025.

Timetable for Implementation

Once approved, the Department will send notification letter to LECOM.