



**TO:** The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

**FROM:** John L. D'Agati *John L. D'Agati*

**SUBJECT:** Touro College Middletown: Master Plan Amendment to offer a Master of Science (M.S.) degree in Interdisciplinary Studies in Biological and Physical Sciences

**DATE:** May 11, 2015

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** *Elizabeth B Berlin*

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)**

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment for Touro College to offer a Master of Science (M.S.) degree program in Interdisciplinary Studies in Biological and Physical Sciences at its branch campus in Middletown?

#### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by State regulation.

#### **Proposed Handling**

This question will come before the full Board at its May 2015 meeting where it will be voted on and action taken. A related charter petition for adding authority to grant the Master of Science (M.S.) degree at the Middletown branch will also be before the Board at the May meeting.

#### **Procedural History**

Touro College submitted a proposal for a Master of Science (M.S.) degree program in Interdisciplinary Studies in Biological and Physical Sciences at the Middletown location in September 2014.

Master plan amendment is required because this will be the institution's first master-level program in the disciplinary area of the Biological Sciences at this location.

## **Background Information**

Touro College received Regents approval to establish a branch campus in Middletown, NY in June 2014. The single program approved at that time was a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.). Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine, based in New York City at its Harlem campus, has offered an M.S. degree program since 2008 which provides the design for the program proposed at Middletown.

### **Purpose and Goals:**

The purpose of the program is to recruit and train a diverse population with a strong ambition to complete a medical education but who have been unsuccessful in gaining admission to medical school. By immersing these students in a curriculum similar to the first year of medical school, students can determine whether the content satisfies their academic curiosity, and Touro medical college faculty can evaluate a student's potential for professional success. Upon completion of the program, students would be awarded a Master of Science degree, increasing graduates' qualifications for future high-level work in medicine or other medical- or science-related fields. Students completing the M.S. degree program and meeting certain requirements gain acceptance into Touro's D. O. degree program. Touro College's mission emphasizes the enrollment of students from underserved student populations and the preparation of students for careers serving society.

### **Curriculum:**

The one year, 40-credit program consists of courses including anatomy, biochemistry, embryology, genetics, histology, immunology, microbiology, neuroanatomy, physiology, community service and medical law and ethics. Students must take and pass a comprehensive exam of approximately 200 multiple choice questions covering material from the entire year-long curriculum before receiving a degree.

### **Faculty:**

Ten full-time medical school faculty and two part-time faculty are available to teach in the proposed program. A number of Orange Regional Medical Center faculty contribute to courses. The hiring of three additional full-time faculty (all holding a PhD, DO or MD) and one part-time position is projected and budgeted.

### **Admissions:**

Admissions requirements include: a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college with an overall GPA of 3.0; a science GPA of 3.0 or better is preferred; prerequisite courses in English composition, behavioral science, biology with lab, general chemistry with lab, organic chemistry with lab or biochemistry, physics with lab, and mathematics with no grade below 2.5; an MCAT score of 20 or better (taken no more than 3 years ago); and three letters of recommendation. A student will be interviewed by telephone, computer or during a personal visit to the campus.

### Students:

The student body of the proposed program is expected to grow from an initial number of 30 to 65 students within five years of the program's start. Expected characteristics of the student body are 50 percent from Orange County, 20 percent from other areas of the State and 30 percent from out-of-state.

### Resources:

The College's current facilities and equipment are adequate to support the start-up needs of the program. All teaching areas are fully equipped for wireless internet access, digital presentations and audience response systems. The library will be primarily electronic, connected to the larger Touro College online library system.

### Employment prospects and need:

Touro states that a major shortage of primary care physicians has been observed nationwide and documented in the Hudson Valley. Graduates of the M.S. degree program are expected to be well-equipped for pursuit of higher-level education and training in medicine or other medical- or science-related fields. In its application for master plan amendment, Touro further states that the program will provide a pipeline for qualified medical school candidates who will eventually train and hopefully decide to practice in the Hudson Valley and other underserved areas of New York State.

### Planning review:

Following its standard procedure, the Department conducted a canvass of all colleges and universities in the Hudson Valley region. There were no objections to the proposed program.

### Department review:

The Department has determined that the program, if approved, would meet registration standards set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

### **Recommendation**

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment to authorize Touro College to offer its first master's degree in the discipline of Biological Sciences at the branch campus in Middletown. This amendment will be effective until May 31, 2016, unless the Department registers the program prior to that date, in which case master plan amendment shall be without term.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

If the Board approves the master plan amendment, the Department will register the program and the College will proceed to recruit and enroll students.