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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Ken Wingate, Chairman, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

FROM: Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Chairman, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

Consideration of Request for Initial License for Branch Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine, Blacksburg, VA at Spartanburg

Summary

Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) (www.vcom.vt.edu) requests approval to establish a branch in Spartanburg to offer a program leading to the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.). After approval by the Commission and initial branch inclusion by its accrediting agency, VCOM officials expect to build a campus in Spartanburg and implement the program at the new site in August 2011. The program will be offered on site. The branch campus will be VCOM's first and will be named the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Carolinas.

VCOM is a non-profit private institution located in Blacksburg, VA. The institution was founded in 2001 and admitted its first class of medical students in 2003. The establishment of VCOM is the result of collaborative efforts between local philanthropists, the Harvey W. Peters Research Center Foundation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), and the Via family. VCOM is a 501(c)3 organization with Harvey W. Peters Research Foundation as the sole member. The Foundation also serves as the sole member of the Harvey W. Peters Holding Corporation. The Holding Corporation is responsible for the property leases and physical plant construction for VCOM. The Corporation leases land from the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center on which VCOM has built its Blacksburg campus.

The American Osteopathic Association's Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) is the specialized professional accrediting agency for schools of osteopathic medicine and is approved by the U.S. Department of Education. COCA has accredited VCOM since April 2007. VCOM submitted a branch campus application to COCA in August 2009 and anticipates initial approval to operate a branch campus in December 2009 or April 2010. The COCA will conduct an on-site visit to the branch campus at least six (6) months prior to the initiation of instruction at the branch campus to ensure compliance with the accreditation standards. The COCA will include the branch campus in the parent institution's accreditation after verifying that VCOM of the Carolinas meets accreditation standards. COCA accredits 26 colleges of osteopathic medicine in the United States.

VCOM is certified by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to offer a program leading to the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine. The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system permits VCOM to operate third- and fourth-year clinical rotations in North Carolina. The College participates in the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) regional contract program and has agreements with Arkansas and Mississippi. The regional contract program gives students in SREB states the opportunity to earn a professional health degree from selected programs at public institutions at in-state tuition rates or pay reduced tuition at private institutions. The student's home state pays a tuition supplement to the school in which the student enrolls.

The following information from the U.S. Department of Education shows student loan default rates for VCOM in Blacksburg.

School	Type	Control	Programs		FY2007	FY2006	FY2005
Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine Blacksburg, VA	First Professional Degree	Private	Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) and Federal Direct Loan (FDL)	Default Rate %	0.0	0.0	0.0
				No. in Default	0	0	0
				No. in Repay	26	330	155

The U. S. Department of Education sanctions a school when the school's three most recent cohort default rates are 25 percent or higher or if a school's current default rate is greater than 40 percent. Except in the event of a successful adjustment or appeal, such a school will lose FFEL, Direct Loan, and Federal Pell Grant program eligibility for the remainder of the fiscal year in which the school is notified of its sanction and for the following two fiscal years. VCOM's default rates are zero.

The Carolinas campus will be similar to the campus in Blacksburg, which has 60,000 square feet of classroom, administrative, and clinical lab space. The College has contracted with an architecture firm to design the campus. Upon completion of construction, VCOM officials will submit to Commission staff relevant evidence of compliance with local, county, and state codes. Commission staff will inspect the facility before issuing a license.

The facilities will include theater-style classrooms, small group study rooms, clinical labs, administrative and faculty offices, a student lounge, and a library. Lecture halls will have videoconferencing systems, LCD projectors, public address systems, large screens, media players, and computers. The Blacksburg and Spartanburg campuses and some hospitals will also have network capability. One floor of the building will be dedicated to clinical skills and anatomy laboratories equipped with anatomy tables, dissection tables, computer systems with virtual dissector programs, and other appropriate medical equipment. Key instructional equipment will be owned by VCOM.

VCOM of the Carolinas will have an on-site library of electronic resources and a select reference collection. The electronic library provides access to 180 online medical textbooks and more than 326 online journals. Each VCOM-affiliated clinical site will also have a small on-site library. VCOM librarians visit each clinical site each year to ensure that clinical library sites maintain the designated resources. The on-site and clinical libraries provide computer and internet access. The library director for the Carolinas campus will coordinate with the Library Committee in Virginia to ensure the library meets the needs of VCOM students and faculty and accreditation requirements. VCOM is also negotiating with Wofford College to allow VCOM students access to the Wofford campus library.

VCOM of the Carolinas has hired a vice dean who will oversee the campus. The vice dean will report to the dean and executive vice president at the Blacksburg campus. The president of VCOM will maintain responsibility for both campuses. The vice dean must hold a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from an accredited college of osteopathic medicine and must have more than five years of higher education, administration, and undergraduate medical education experience. Reporting to the vice dean will be the associate dean for medical education and dean of students, associate dean for biomedical division, chief of operations, and associate dean for clinical affairs. The director for clinical curriculum and assessment and the comptroller will have responsibilities to the vice dean as well as to the Blacksburg campus dean.

VCOM employs faculty who are classified into four categories: academic, research, clinical, and adjunct. Assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors must hold a doctoral degree or terminal professional degree in the subject area taught and must increasingly gain academic experience in order to advance toward full professorship. Clinical faculty members must hold Board Certification in their fields or be board-eligible and obtain certification within five years of completing postdoctoral training. Clinical faculty must also possess a state license to practice medicine and have no sanctions from a state board of medicine. Instructors must hold a doctoral degree or a master's degree with at least two years experience in the field. Graduate and assistant instructors must hold a professional degree in the area taught. Graduate and assistant instructors typically serve as post-doctoral fellows and entry-level research faculty.

Students applying for admission to VCOM submit an application through a centralized tool offered through the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service. Applicants must have completed 90 hours or three-fourths of the required credits for a college degree at a regionally accredited college; have at least a 3.2 science and cumulative GPA; have completed required undergraduate science courses; score competitively on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT); and meet technical standards for admission as outlined in the VCOM catalog. Students who meet minimum admissions requirements will submit a second application with two letters of recommendation, one by an osteopathic physician and one by the applicant's undergraduate premedical advisory committee, if applicable, or a science faculty member who is familiar with the applicant's work. VCOM's admissions office reviews the

application and documentation and, if it is acceptable, invites the applicant for an on-site interview. Upon conclusion of the interview, the interviewers forward their recommendations to the Admissions Committee, which in turn determines whether the applicant is accepted, denied, or placed on a hold list. Candidates must earn a baccalaureate degree prior to matriculation at VCOM.

VCOM officials project enrolling at the Carolinas campus an initial class of 150 students. VCOM focuses its recruitment efforts in South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and the Appalachian Region. VCOM received 34 qualified South Carolina applicants for the 2009 Blacksburg class. From its inception in 2003 through its current class, VCOM has enrolled 42 students from South Carolina. Approximately 35 percent of enrolled students at the Blacksburg campus are from Virginia; VCOM officials expect the same enrollment percentage for South Carolina residents attending the Carolinas campus. As part of its mission, VCOM actively recruits students from rural areas in order to fill physician shortages in rural areas. Applicants from rural areas and minority applicants receive priority in the admissions process.

Tuition for the 2011-2012 academic year is \$36,000 with an additional \$1,200 fee for health, recreation, and technology services. Average student loan debt for graduates of the Blacksburg campus is \$172,982. This figure includes undergraduate education loans.

Program of Study

The program leading to the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine at VCOM is intended to develop primary care physicians who focus on preventive health care and a holistic approach to patient treatment. Osteopathic medicine is defined as a system of medical practice based on a theory that diseases are due chiefly to loss of structural integrity which can be restored by manipulation of the parts supplemented by therapeutic measures (such as use of drugs or surgery). Traditional medical training programs teach allopathic medicine, which focuses onto combating disease by using remedies (such as drugs or surgery) which produce effects that are different from or incompatible with those of the disease being treated. Osteopathic medicine programs include enhanced training in the musculoskeletal system so graduates better understand the ways in which an illness or injury in one part of the body can affect another part of the body.

The D.O. program takes four years to complete. The program consists of two years of classroom-based science courses interspersed with early clinical experiences. During the third and fourth years students participate in rotations among various locations and specialties. The curriculum for the program is shown below:

<i>Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Curriculum-2009-2010 Academic Year</i>	
Year One consists of Blocks 1-4.	
Foundations of Medicine: Block 1	
Course Name	Credit Hours
Cell Biology and Physiology	3
Microbiology	2
Professionalism and Ethics	2
Nutrition	1
Epidemiology	1

Principles of Primary Care and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (PPC/OMM)	1
Anatomy	1
Pathology	1
Pharmacology	1
Medical Terminology	1
Total	14
Hematopoietic, Lymphatic and Skeletal System: Block 2	
Genetics	1
Immunology	2
Cell Biology and Physiology	1
Anatomy/Embryology/Histology	1
Anatomy Lab	1
Pathology	2
Pharmacology	1
Clinical Case Correlations	2
Medical Terminology	1
Principles of Primary Care and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine PPC/OMM	2
Standardized Patient and SIM testing	1
Total	15
Neurological and Muscular System: Block 3	
Cell Biology and Physiology	1
Anatomy/Embryology/Histology	3
Anatomy Lab	3
Pathology	1
Pharmacology	1
Clinical Case Correlations	3
Principles of Primary Care and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine PPC/OMM	3
Standardized patient and SIM Testing	1
Total	16
Eye, Ear, Nose, and Throat; Dermatology; and Psychiatry: Block 4	
Cell Biology and Physiology	1
Anatomy Embryology/Histology	1
Anatomy Lab	1
Pathology	1
Pharmacology	1
Clinical Case Correlations	2
Principles of Primary Care and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine PPC/OMM	2
Psychiatry	1

Dermatology	1
Medical Terminology	1
Differential Diagnosis	1
Standardized Patient and SIM Testing	1
Total	14
Year 1--Blocks 1-4: Total Credit Hours	
46	
Year Two consists of Blocks 5-8.	
Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Systems: Block 5	
Cell Biology and Physiology	2
Anatomy Embryology/Histology	1
Anatomy Lab	1
Pathology	2
Pharmacology	1
Clinical Case Correlations	4
Principles of Primary Care and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine PPC/OMM	1
Medical Terminology	1
Differential Diagnosis	1
Infectious Disease	1
Standardized Patient and SIM Testing	1
Total	16
Gastrointestinal and Endocrine Systems: Block 6	
Cell Biology and Physiology	2
Anatomy Embryology/Histology	1
Anatomy Lab	1
Pathology	2
Pharmacology	1
Clinical Case Correlations	2
Principles of Primary Care and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine PPC/OMM	2
Medical Terminology	1
Differential Diagnosis	1
Standardized Patient and SIM Testing	1
Total	14
Renal and Reproductive Systems: Block 7	
Cell Biology and Physiology	1
Anatomy Embryology/Histology	1
Anatomy Lab	1
Pathology	2
Pharmacology	1

Clinical Case Correlations	3
Principles of Primary Care and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine PPC/OMM	2
Medical Terminology	1
Differential Diagnosis	1
Standardized Patient and SIM Testing	1
Total	14
Integrated Medicine and Review: Block 8	
Integrated Medicine	3
Infectious Disease	3
Differential Diagnosis	2
Principles of Primary Care and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine PPC/OMM	3
Early Clinical Experiences	3
Standardized Patient and SIM Testing	1
Total	15
Year 2 Blocks 5-8: Total Credit Hours	
59	
Year 3 is nine months of clinical rotations. Each rotation is followed by a module and end-of-rotation exam. In addition, each student completes an end-of-year exam called the Objective Structural Clinical Exam (OSCE) and a comprehensive written exam.	
Rotation Name	
Emergency Medicine	12
Emergency Medicine Modules/Exam	1
Family Medicine	12
Family Medicine Modules/Exam	1
Geriatric Medicine	12
Geriatric Modules/Exam	1
Internal Medicine	12
Internal Medicine Modules/Exam	1
Obstetrics/Gynecology	12
Obstetrics/Gynecology Modules/Exam	1
Pediatrics	12
Pediatrics Modules/Exam	1
Psychiatry	12
Psychiatry Modules/Exam	1
Surgery	12
Surgery Modules/Exam	1
Under Served Care	12
Under Served Care Modules/Exam	1

Year 3 Objective Structural Clinical Exam (OSCE)	1
Year 3 Comprehensive Written Exam	1
Total Year 3	119
Year 4 is three medical rotations, two surgical rotations, and four elective rotations that the student takes over nine months. Students also complete a 4th year research paper. Each month-long rotation is 10 credit hours. The paper totals 1 credit hour.	
Total Year 4	91
Total program credit hours	333

Students are required to pass the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners' Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX) Levels 1 and 2-CE, including the Level 2 Physical Examination (PE) component. COMLEX Level 1 must be passed within five years of the date of matriculation and COMLEX Level 2-CE, including the PE component, must be passed within six years of the date of matriculation. Students who do not meet these requirements will be dismissed from the College.

During their final year of medical school, students apply for and are placed into internships or residency training programs. Students complete a common residency application through the Electronic Residency Application Service, which is a software program that matches applicants with residency positions. Students may apply for osteopathic or allopathic residency programs. Depending on specialty, residency programs last three to seven years.

In order to practice medicine in South Carolina, graduates of a college of osteopathic medicine must possess a limited or permanent license from the South Carolina Board of Medical Examiners. A limited license may be granted for residency training and is valid for up to one year. A graduate must submit an application and provide (1) documentation from the institution confirming recommendation for a medical residency or fellowship or a copy of a contract in which the applicant has been offered a position in a medical residency training program accredited by the American Council for Graduate Medical Education or the American Osteopathic Association; (2) a certification of medical education form from the applicant's medical school; (3) a supervising physician form from the chairman or residency director of the training program; (4) letters of recommendation from licensed physicians recommending the applicant for a limited license in South Carolina; and (5) verification of licensure in other states, if applicable.

In order to receive a permanent license as a D.O. from the Board of Medical Examiners, a applicants must 1) graduate from a school of osteopathic medicine located in the United States or Canada accredited by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation or other accrediting body approved by the Board and 2) document to the satisfaction of the Board successful completion of all parts of the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners Examination in approved sequence. In addition to meeting all other licensure requirements, an applicant must pass the Special Purpose Examination (SPEX) or the Composite Osteopathic Variable-Purpose Examination (COMVEX), unless the applicant can document within 10 years of the date of filing a completed application to an approved examination board. Graduates of approved medical or osteopathic schools located in the United States or Canada must document completion of a minimum of one year of postgraduate medical residency training. According to the American Osteopathic Association, there are 476 licensed osteopathic physicians in South Carolina.

According to data submitted by VCOM, South Carolina is a medically underserved state. A review by the National Center for Analysis of Healthcare Data shows that the state's population is outgrowing its number of physicians, particularly in rural areas. Twelve counties in the state contain fewer than 74 physicians per 100,000 people. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, employment of physicians and surgeons is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations. Job opportunities should be very good, especially for physicians and surgeons willing to practice in specialties such as family practice, internal medicine, and OB/GYN or in rural and low-income areas where there is a shortage of medical practitioners.

The University of South Carolina's School of Medicine and the Medical University of South Carolina offer allopathic medical programs leading to the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree. The USC School of Medicine is expanding its student clinical presence in the upstate. According to the Greenville Hospital System (GHS) University Medical Center website, "GHS is a training site for the third and fourth year medical students from the University Of South Carolina School of Medicine. By 2010, fully half of the third and fourth year USC medical students will be trained in the GHS system."

At a November 20, 2009, special meeting of the Committee of Academic Affairs and Licensing to which all Commission on Higher Education members were invited, representatives of VCOM provided background information about the institution; its curriculum; a comparison of osteopathic and allopathic practices; funding, need, sustainability, and viability; and its business model. As part of a panel led by Dr. Layton McCurdy other participants from the Budget and Control Board, National Center for Analysis of Healthcare Data, and Office of Rural Health reviewed with the Committee healthcare-related data and statistics.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commends favorably to the Commission initial licensure for five years to Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine to establish a branch campus in Spartanburg, South Carolina, to offer a program leading to the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.). The Committee further recommends that the Commission delegate to the staff authority to license the site in Spartanburg when the facilities have been developed.