



TO: Planning and Budget Committee

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AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION

Faculty of Medicine: Proposal for Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant (BScPA) degree and Memorandum of Understanding with Northern Ontario School of Medicine and the Michener Institute for Applied Health Science

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION

The Committee advises the Academic Board on planning and resource and proposals to establish, disestablish or significantly restructure academic programs. Implications might include significant planning and budgetary changes and significant effects on other divisions, the University as a whole and the public.

The Committee is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations concerning matters that impact relationships amongst divisions and between the University and the community at large. The Committee recommends to the Academic Board for consideration templates for agreements with external bodies.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN

HIGHLIGHTS

The Faculty of Medicine proposes the establishment of a Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant degree (BScPA) as a full-time professional, second-entry undergraduate degree program (Executive Summary Appendix 1). The program will be based in the Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM).

The BScPA will be a University of Toronto degree that will be delivered with the participation of two distinguished, healthcare-focused, educational institutions: Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) and The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences (Michener). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed to set out the responsibilities for the three institutions' and their contributions to the development, administration and delivery of the U of T degree program (Appendix 2).

A Physician Assistant (PA) is a mid-level health care professional who is considered to be a physician extender. PAs are authorized through Delegation of Controlled Acts and other

procedures to provide a broad range of medical and surgical services under the supervision of licensed physicians. A Certified PA is a graduate of an accredited PA education program and has passed the National Competency Exam. In Canada, the University of Manitoba offers a Master's-level PA program and McMaster University began a BScPA program in 2008. As outlined in the proposal, the BScPA program will offer students a balance in academic and clinical education, extensive access to healthcare-relevant resources and a curriculum delivery model that maximizes rural training and geographic accessibility throughout Ontario.

The full-time distance and distributed-learning program will require the completion of 6 consecutive semesters over 24 months. Expected total enrollment the first year will be 22 students with an anticipated increase to a maximum of 42 students per cohort by the second intake year. The BScPA is intended for professionals with prior experience in a health-related field and with commitment to contributing to healthcare in under-served and rural communities.

The Faculty and the Michener Institute have jointly offered a BSc (Medical Radiation Sciences) for the past decade, and the relevant MOU, was approved by Governing Council on November 1, 2008. A Joint Program Agreement Template between the two institutions was also approved. Building upon their current strong relationship, the Faculty of Medicine and the Michener began to explore the development of a new program in Physician Assistant education along with Northern Ontario School of Medicine. As the BScPA differs in that it is solely a UofT degree, not a joint degree program, and as the program involves a third institution, a distinct MOU has been developed. The Michener MOU and the Joint Program Template were used as guides.

The MOU is the formal agreement between the three institutions that outlines the principles of the academic relationship. The institutions will provide co-ordination and oversight of the program collaboratively through representation on committees. The three institutions will be responsible for assuring that the degree program meets the appropriate professional accreditation standards. The development of the curriculum will be shared by the parties and maintained collaboratively.

Consultations on degree plans have been undertaken with the University of Toronto Council of Health Science Deans, the Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, and the University of Toronto Scarborough Paramedicine program, as well as with external stakeholders. The BScPA degree and MOU were approved by the Faculty of Medicine Faculty Council on March 9, 2009. In accordance with governance procedures at the two institutions, the MOU has been approved by the Michener Institute President, office of the Chief Executive Officer and the Executive Leadership Team and by the Dean of Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

The BScPA degree proposal will be brought forward to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs on May 12, 2009.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The resources necessary to offer the degree program will be provided by a combination of one-time start-up funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) and tuition and BIU revenue generated by student enrolment. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has agreed the funding model will match that provided to the other PA program in the province (3 BIUs per 1.5 FTE). Students will pay tuition and relevant non-tuition fees to U of T, and U of T will transfer the allocated portions of the budget to Michener and NOSM semi-annually. There are no resource implications for the University's operating budget as a result of entering into the MOU with Michener and NOSM. The program will be self-sustaining from the outset with the one-time start-up funds from the MOHLTC.

The financial plan has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Medicine and by the Planning and Budget Office.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Be it Resolved that the Planning and Budget Committee concurs with the prospective recommendation of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

THAT the Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant (BScPA) degree at the Faculty of Medicine Department of Family and Community Medicine be approved, with enrolment to the program commencing January 2010.

and

Be It Recommended to Academic Board

THAT the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Toronto, The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine be approved, effective immediately.