STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance and Asset Management Committee

WWAMI Spokane Partnership Update

INFORMATION

This item is for information only.

BACKGROUND

University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSoM) operates a regional medical education program known as WWAMI (an acronym representing the states it serves – Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho) is consistently recognized as one of the most innovative medical education and training programs in the country.

The program has five primary goals:

- provide publically supported medical education
- increase the number of primary-care physicians
- provide community-based medical education
- expand graduate medical education (residency training) and continuing medical education
- provide all of this in a cost-effective manner

The program has been recognized by the Association of American Medical Colleges with the Outstanding Community Service Award and has been identified as the nation's top primary-care, family medicine and rural medicine training school by U.S. News & World Report for the past 23 years.

Partnership is at the core of WWAMI. UWSoM partners with higher education institutions in each WWAMI state to provide the first 18 months of medical education. In addition, UWSoM partners with hospitals and community clinics throughout the five-state region to learn and experience very different facets of medicine. The goal is to provide a rich array of clinical experiences in a variety of settings, mentored by community-based clinical faculty.

Up until 2014, the UWSoM’s partner institution in Washington was Washington State University (WSU). WSU initially provided medical education exclusively at their campus in Pullman. However, in 2008, UWSoM and WSU expanded WWAMI to Spokane.
The Spokane WWAMI program has always been a focus for growth and development in WWAMI. For example, in 2013, UWSoM started a two-year pilot program to expand the second year of medical education, previously done exclusively in Seattle, to Spokane. Lessons learned from this pilot helped inform the development of WWAMI’s new, state-of-the-art medical education curriculum that officially launched this academic year.

In 2014, WSU opted to pursue its own separately accredited medical school and ended their WWAMI partnership with UWSoM. Subsequently, in the 2015 legislative session, the legislature affirmed their support for WWAMI Spokane and providing funding to expand enrollment in the program to 60 students per year.

UWSoM is currently operating WWAMI Spokane independently in Spokane for the 2015-16 academic year. However, after UWSoM’s partnership with WSU ended, UWSoM and Gonzaga University (GU) began preliminary discussions about potential partnership opportunities in medical education and research.

Partnership discussions have been in progress for the last year. Discussions have included both external consultations with Spokane community members and internal conversations with faculty and staff. In December, President Cauce met with the Gonzaga University Board of Trustees to outline potential partnership models and discuss shared goals and interests.

A public-private partnership structure is anticipated to be final by the end of February. The partnership will be formalized in a services agreement between GU and UW. The value of the contract is anticipated to be less than $15 Million and within the President’s delegated authority.

The purpose of this item is to bring the Board up to date on progress with GU, the proposed partnership structure, ongoing legislative conversations regarding program investment and growth, and anticipated next steps. Since new information develops daily, details about the proposed partnership structure will be provided at the meeting.