STANDING COMMITTEES

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

UW School of Medicine – Gonzaga University Regional Health Partnership and WWAMI Update

INFORMATION

This item is for information only.

BACKGROUND

In the early 1970s, the University of Washington took on a bold challenge to train and prepare physicians to care for patients and communities throughout the WAMI states, Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho (Wyoming joined in 1996). Today, this regional medical education program known as WWAMI (an acronym representing the states it serves) is known as one of the most innovative medical education and training programs in the country. The program has five primary goals:

- provide publicly 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.

A majority of the students training in the program choose to remain and practice medicine within the five-state region, and over half choose careers in primary care, helping to stem the shortage of primary care physicians, especially in rural areas. More than 20 percent of the population in the five Pacific Northwest states lives in rural and largely underserved communities.

The University of Washington School of Medicine MD program hosts 6 foundations phase site locations within the WWAMI region, each of which offers a unique regional experience. The six sites include:

- Seattle, Washington
- Spokane, Washington
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- Laramie, Wyoming
- Anchorage, Alaska
- Bozeman, Montana
- Moscow, Idaho

CURRICULUM RENEWAL

The UW School of Medicine began a curriculum renewal process in 2010, prompted by UW School of Medicine’s commitment to providing exceptional training for tomorrow’s leading physicians and advancing knowledge across the medical field. The curriculum aligns with new national standards of medical education brought about by broader shifts in the healthcare landscape. To ensure that the new curriculum reflects the needs of students and aligns with national standards, an extensive process was undertaken to engage stakeholders within and beyond the School of Medicine.

The new curriculum is an innovative, competency-based model with three integrated learning Phases: a Scientific Foundations Phase, a Patient Care Phase and a Career Exploration and Focus Phase. Each Phase includes highly integrated curricula with active learning modalities – approaches made possible by new developments in technology and new understandings of how students best learn. Implementation began with first-year students in the fall of 2015.

UW SCHOOL OF MEDICINE – GONZAGA UNIVERSITY REGIONAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

For more than 40 years, the UW School of Medicine has provided medical education in Spokane and eastern Washington. Today, more than 500 faculty in 18 communities throughout eastern Washington serve as educators and mentors for UW medical students.

WWAMI is constantly growing and changing to meet the needs of the region. In 2008, the University of Washington expanded its first-year medical education program in Spokane. In 2013, the program expanded further with a two-year pilot program to offer the second year for up to 20 second year students. The expansion allowed medical students to spend their almost their entire four years of medical school in Spokane, with some clinical training provided throughout the WWAMI region.

Up until 2014, the UW School of Medicine operated in Washington (Pullman,
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Spokane) in partnership with Washington State University (WSU). 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 operated 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 discussions about potential partnership opportunities in medical education and research. A formal partnership agreement was executed in February 2016 creating the University of Washington-Gonzaga University Regional Health Partnership.

This academic year, the University of Washington School of Medicine-Gonzaga University Regional Health Partnership welcomed its largest-ever entering class to dedicated facilities on the Gonzaga University campus. Gonzaga faculty will recruit, teach and mentor medical students together with UW faculty utilizing the UW’s new, award-winning medical curriculum. A request to the state legislature to expand the class size to 80 students per year is planned for the 17-19 biennium.

The UW and GU will also embark on a collaborative Regional Health Initiative to develop shared facilities and high-impact, applied research. A dedicated executive director at Gonzaga, Spokane-based UW School of Medicine leadership, and a new Community Advisory Board will guide the development of the partnership.

Attachment
UW School of Medicine – Gonzaga University Regional Health Partnership
Spokane Leadership

William Sayres, MD
Assistant Dean, Foundations Phase

Darryl Potyk, MD
Assistant Clinical Dean, Spokane

John McCarthy, MD
Assistant Clinical Dean, Central and Eastern Washington

Courtney Law, PhD
Director, Regional Health Partnership, Gonzaga University
What is WWAMI?

• UW School of Medicine is the sponsoring institution for WWAMI, the regional medical school for Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho

• “WAMI” is a 45-year partnership (Wyoming joined in 1996 as the second “W”), providing high-quality, cost-effective medical education

• Partner institutions: Gonzaga University, University of Wyoming, University of Alaska Anchorage, Montana State University, and University of Idaho
WWAMI History of Success

- #1 in Family Medicine
- #1 in Rural Medicine
- #1 in Primary Care
- #1 public medical school in NIH research funding
- High quality, cost effective medical education
- Over 50% of graduates practice in their home state
- Over 65% of graduates practice in the region
- One of 20 medical schools chosen to participate in AMA’s “Accelerating Change in Medical Education”
Leading Change

- Explosion of medical and scientific information
- Explosion of information technology
- Enhanced patient knowledge and understanding
- Generational characteristics of students
- Changes in learning styles and new knowledge about how students learn
- National movement to active learning modalities
- Changes in the roles of physicians in rapidly evolving healthcare system
New Curriculum

• Most significant curriculum change in the School of Medicine’s history

• Collaboration among hundreds of faculty, staff, and students across WWAMI

• Represents a major culture shift

• Unique in the nation in geographic reach and the collaborative development of a common curriculum
New WWAMI Curriculum

Foundations

• Foundations Phase - first 18 months at regional sites
• Early meaningful clinical experiences in practice settings
• Integrated blocks in classroom settings; clinical relevance emphasized
• Fewer and shorter lectures, more active and independent learning
• Key topics threaded into all blocks (anatomy, pathology, pharmacology)
• Important themes woven throughout
New WWAMI Curriculum

Patient Care

• Patient Care Phase – 12 months
• 6 required clinical training experiences in family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics/gynecology and surgery
• Competency-based
• Basic sciences integrated back into clinical training
New WWAMI Curriculum
Career Explore and Focus

- Career Explore and Focus Phase – 15 months
- 4 required clinical training experiences in neurology, emergency medicine, advanced inpatient, and advanced outpatient
- Clinical electives
- Transition to residency
- Scholarship
UW Medicine in Spokane and Eastern Washington

- UW School of Medicine has provided medical education in Spokane and eastern Washington for nearly 45 years
- 500 faculty in 18 communities throughout eastern Washington serve as educators and mentors for UW medical students
UW-GU Regional Health Partnership

- UW-GU Partnership welcomed 60 first-year medical students, our largest-ever entering class in Spokane
- Dedicated teaching facilities located on the Gonzaga campus
- Partnership is grounded in a shared commitment, educational excellence and community economic impact
- Next steps include: community advisory board, development of new facilities, research plan, class-size expansion (80)
Spokane learners

Current students

Recent graduate