

LAKE ERIE COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
BRADENTON, FLORIDA

Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) is opening a campus in Lakewood Branch, Florida. The name of that campus is the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, Bradenton Campus (LECOM-BC). The target date to begin its first class of 150 students is September 13, 2004. It expects to enroll up to 600 students in what it heralds as the only Problem-Based Learning Pathway (PBL) program. According to the LECOM website: "Problem-Based Learning (PBL) emphasizes a clinical context for learning, developing skills in working with a group, and encouraging self-directed study."

Approval to pursue a branch in Florida was given to LECOM by several entities. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education gave provisional approval for expansion for a campus in Florida in May 2003. In Florida, The Commission for Independent Education (CIE) heard LECOM's plans for the Bradenton Campus at its May 16, 2003, meeting and granted a provisional license for the campus on June 4, 2003. The provision approval from CIE is valid through July 31, 2004 (Refer to attachments).

LECOM receives its accreditation from the American Osteopathic Association (AOA). A national association, AOA has several councils and bureaus that are involved in the accreditation process. A recommendation for the campus was given by AOA's Bureau of Professional Education in October 2003. AOA Council on Predoctoral Education met to hear LECOM-BC's academic plans (along with other business) on December 6-7, 2003, and voted to permit the opening of the campus and acceptance of students. The AOA Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation met on January 17-19, 2004, and granted approval of its Council on Predoctoral Education recommendations for LECOM-BC. According to AOA staff, approval was given for LECOM-BC to accept students and begin operations. AOA will conduct its next review of the College six months after it begins operations.

Admissions standards require completion of a baccalaureate degree at time of enrollment and at least a 3.0 GPA (and at least a 2.7 in science courses) and a Medical College Admission Test score of at least 8.0. All successful candidates must also meet six Health and Technical Standards. They attest to each candidate's ability to function "in a broad variety of clinical functions and to render a wide spectrum of patient care."¹ The Standards are: Observation; Communication; Motor; Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities; Social and Behavioral; and General Health. In addition, all students are expected to develop palpatory (examination with fingers and hands) skills during the two year program and will participate in Osteopathic Principles and Practices Laboratories to develop those skills. Interested candidates must complete a web-based application with the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Services. A supplemental application with LECOM also is required.

Tuition and fees are not known. An admissions counselor at the Pennsylvania Campus indicated that they are still being researched.

¹ Sources: This quotation is from LECOM's website, www.Lecom.edu/Florida/default.htm, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. That website and AOA's website, www.AOA-Net.org/, American Osteopathic Association, provide the bases for this overview. Supplemental information was provided by staff of the CIE and AOA.