

# STUDY GROUP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

March 24, 2009

## Study Group Purpose

In November 2008, the University of North Texas System Board of Regents, the Chancellor, and the UNTHSC President requested an evaluation of the likely benefits and liabilities of adding an MD degree to the portfolio of academic degree programs at the UNT Health Science Center. A high-level Study Group was formed to gather the various community, professional, and institutional perspectives. The Study Group worked closely with a core group of UNTHSC administrators, faculty, and staff referred to as the Study Group Staff to assist in compiling information and documentation. The plan was to hold three Study Group meetings in order to submit a recommendation about adding an MD degree program to UNTHSC to the Board of Regents at the May 2009 meeting. In February 2009, the Chancellor informed the Study Group that no action would be taken by the Board on the MD degree program until at least November 2009 to allow additional time for discussion and development of an implementation and business plan, if requested by the Board. Based upon the revised direction, the Study Group worked towards documenting their findings in this report to be presented at the special called meeting on March 26, 2009.

## Study Group Members

Barr, Kenneth (Chairman)-Business and Community Leader, Former Mayor, City of Fort Worth  
Amparan, Oscar-Harris Methodist Fort Worth Hospital, President  
Bates, Gus S.-The Gus Bates Company  
Berdan, Barclay E.-Texas Hospital Association, Board of Trustees Chairman  
Brotherton, Stephen, MD-Texas Medical Association Board of Trustees Member  
Brown, Bobby, MD-Amon Carter Foundation, Trustee  
Buchanan, Sam, DO-Retired TCOM Faculty and Alumni  
Froelich, James, DO-American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians  
Deluca, Robert, DO-TCOM Alumni Board, Past President  
Earley, Robert-JPS Health Network, Interim President and CEO  
Floyd, Gary, MD-Tarrant County Medical Society, Past President  
Franklin, Clayton-Plaza Medical Center of Fort Worth, President and CEO  
Gachman, Arnie-UNTHSC Foundation Board, Chair  
Garretson, Melissa J., MD-Tarrant County Medical Society, President  
Hawthorne, Doug-Texas Health Resources, President and CEO  
Jackson, Lee-UNT System, Chancellor  
Jennings, Devoyd-Fort Worth Black Chamber of Commerce, President and CEO  
Maenius, G. K.-Tarrant County Administrator  
Merrill, Rick W.-Cook Children's Health Care System, President and CEO  
Mitchell, Charles, MD-UNT System Board of Regents, Member

Mitchell, Robert-UNTHSC Board of Visitors, Member  
Montgomery, Steve-Tarrant County Hospital District, Chair of Board  
Navejar, Rosa-Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, President and CEO  
Newton, Steve-Baylor All Saints Medical Centers, President and CEO  
Ransom, Scott B., DO-UNTHSC, President  
Richwine, R. Todd, DO-Texas Osteopathic Medical Association, District 2 President  
Robinson, John H.-Amon Carter Foundation, EVP  
Schrantz, Damon, DO-UNTHSC Faculty Senate, Chair  
Tilley, Rice-UNT System Board of Regents, Member  
Toler, Jessica-TCOM 3rd Year Student  
Troutman, Monte, DO-Texas Osteopathic Medical Association, President  
Vincent, Rick-Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, President and CEO  
Wall, Jack-UNT System Board of Regents, Member  
Wallace, William, DO-TCOM Alumni, Past President and UNTHSC Foundation Board, Member  
Weiss, Stanley, DO-UNTHSC Foundation Board, Member and Retired TCOM Faculty  
Wilkie, Val-Sid Richardson Foundation, Executive Director  
Williams, Nancy-The Health Industry Council of the Dallas-Fort Worth Region, President

## Limitation of Report

This report is based on the comments received in the open survey that was conducted online from December 19, 2008 through January 9, 2009 along with input from the Study Group, Study Group Staff, and others via memos, letters, emails, etc. Respondents self-identified themselves and we received 635 responses. The study was not a scientific analysis but rather a consensus of opinion and the survey was one of the tools used to gather input. Numerous discussions and meetings were also held including Town Halls by the President of the UNTHSC, meetings with members of administration, and discussions led by the Chair of the Study Group Staff. The Study Group was careful to avoid considering how a potential MD degree program would be implemented on the UNTHSC campus. Rather the group focused on gathering community input to present the perceived advantages, perceived risks, and ways to mitigate those risks for both adding an MD degree or maintaining the DO degree only.

## Recommendation

Should the UNT System Board of Regents decide to pursue exploring the MD degree program further, the Study Group recommends that a full analysis – including needs assessment, implementation issues, curriculum focus, admissions processes, program start-up costs, and financial analysis – be conducted resulting in an academic and business plan. Regardless of the direction chosen, this study identified many initiatives that would benefit the UNTHSC and TCOM.

**If the UNT Health Science Center (UNTHSC) adds an MD degree program accredited by the LCME and continues the DO degree program accredited by COCA, then...**

**Perceived advantages for adding an MD degree program:**

1. Enable the establishment of one or more additional teaching hospitals to support expansion of class size and assure consistent clinical education experiences for all UNTHSC medical students.
2. Enable expansion and diversity of graduate medical education opportunities in Tarrant County in concert with the demands of current and future UNTHSC medical students.
3. Increase the UNTHSC's competitiveness for extramural grant funding for all programs.
4. Expand clinical research opportunities between the UNTHSC and its partner hospitals.
5. Increase the appeal of the UNTHSC in the recruitment of a broader base of faculty and students.
6. Increase the appeal of Fort Worth and surrounding communities in the recruitment of new physicians.
7. Increase economic development for Tarrant County through expansion of revenue dollars passing through the UNTHSC.
8. Increase the competitiveness of the UNTHSC to receive special item funding from the state legislature.
9. Raise visibility of the UNTHSC and its efforts to become a "top ten" institution.
10. Establish a new focus of pride for Fort Worth and the medical community.

**Perceived risks to adding an MD degree program:**

1. Failure to establish adequate additional teaching venues to support a new degree program, creating greater competition for existing training opportunities.
2. Increased financial burden to the UNTHSC, unless additional revenue stream is identified.
3. Reduced number or percentage of the UNTHSC graduates entering primary care.
4. Loss of the traditions of osteopathic health care from the UNTHSC's culture.
5. Loss of philanthropic, civic, and research support from the local and national osteopathic community.
6. Current confusion and distraction to the existing students in TCOM that may continue after establishment of any future MD school

**Ways to mitigate risks and improve probability of success when adding an MD degree program:**

1. Secure written commitments from hospital partners to provide uniform access for all of the UNTHSC medical students, regardless of degree program.
2. Secure written commitments from a sufficient number of training venues to support projected growth in all the UNTHSC programs.
3. Secure extramural funding to allow development of the MD degree program without encumbering current resources needed by existing programs.
4. Adopt strategies that assure continued predisposition of the UNTHSC medical graduates to enter primary care and rural medicine.
5. Adopt strategies to foster continued support for the UNTHSC from the local community, TCOM alumni, and osteopathic organizations.

**If the UNT Health Science Center continues with only the DO degree program accredited by COCA, then...**

**Perceived advantages for continuing with the DO degree program only:**

1. Expanding the number of osteopathic students provides the greatest opportunity for maintaining the UNTHSC's commitment to adding primary care providers to the physician workforce of Tarrant County and the State of Texas.
2. Enable the UNTHSC to satisfy expectations that encourage continuing support from TCOM alumni, the state osteopathic association, and other osteopathic organizations.
3. Enable recruitment of osteopathic clinical faculty to the UNTHSC.
4. Encourage continued extramural funding of osteopathic research at the UNTHSC.
5. The DO program's focus on training primary care physicians may be lost with the addition of an MD degree to the campus.
6. Conserve resources for enhancement of existing degree programs at the UNTHSC.

**Perceived risks for maintaining the DO medical degree program only:**

1. Inadequate clinical opportunities and no additional teaching hospital(s) to support projected growth in undergraduate enrollment.
2. Inability to secure exclusive partnerships for nationally recognized graduate medical education in North Central Texas.
3. Limited appeal to external philanthropic, civic, and research funding sources.
4. Potential for establishment of a competing medical school in Tarrant County or vicinity.
5. Limited opportunities for special item funding from the state legislature.
6. National recognition remains unchanged with untapped opportunities to achieve the vision of higher ranking as a center for primary care medicine.

**Ways to mitigate risks and improve the probability of success for a DO degree program only:**

1. Create unique program tracks that increase appeal to existing and future hospital partners.
2. Adopt faculty recruitment strategies that assure the availability of resources for academic and research development.
3. Maintain and enhance collaborative relationships with other health science centers to satisfy requirements of our hospital partners.
4. Adjust growth strategies and expectations to bring them in line with funding projections and available clinical resources.
5. Identify additional training venues throughout Texas and establish regional academic centers.
6. Increase efforts to obtain special item funding on behalf of the UNTHSC's primary care and rural programs.
7. Increase education in the community to reduce any perceived bias toward osteopathic medicine