



# The LECOM Primary Care Scholars Pathway: An Innovative 3 Year Curricular Design - The First Class

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## ABSTRACT

There is a growing concern within the US that a shortage of primary care physicians will become a reality since the number of students graduating from US medical schools and entering postgraduate primary care programs is declining. As a leader in graduating physicians dedicated to primary care, LECOM has made it beneficial for students to pursue such a career with the Primary Care Scholars Pathway (PCSP) where advantages exist such as an earlier career start, a lower loan repayment, the chance to fulfill a national need, and the opportunity for a focused education. The curriculum is accelerated where graduation is reached in 3 years by eliminating "audition" electives while maintaining the traditional pre clinical courses.

The first class holds five dedicated students chosen from a Primary Care Interest Group. They have completed all the coursework of the two preclinical years and have started the 3 clinical rotations within their OMS 2 year. The preclinical years are modular in structure with directed studies having biweekly faculty discussion encounters. Enhancements within this pathway include: an extensive OPP education beyond the LECOM standard with an intensive second year course resulting in table trainer experiences prior to clinical rotations; early clinical experiences with primary care mentors building relationships throughout the three years; extensive regimental and individual clinical skills experiences; enhanced teaching methodologies and evaluation tools designed to stimulate communication, professionalism, and critical thinking; an enrichment module to enhance humanism in medicine; and opportunities to excel as educators. The OMS 3 final year contains 13 rotations.

The PCSP has become a respected addition to the overall curriculum with all five students being academically successful. It has proven to be a driving force for primary care and a coveted position in the student body. The students are expected to be highly sought after in postgraduate training.

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## BACKGROUND

- Primary Care specialty selection is decreasing with 3 main reasons:
  - High cost of medical education
  - Future income to cover debt load and reimbursement for services
  - Decreasing number of mentoring primary care physicians
- LECOM has developed the three year Primary Care Scholars Pathway (PCSP), initiated with the incoming 2007 year, and expects to graduate students in 2010.
  - An entire year of student tuition and living expenses saved
  - An independently oriented directed study program at LECOM
  - Student Faculty Ratio of 1:8
  - Enrichment opportunities engaging primary care physicians, services, and experiences

## OMS 1 & 2 PCSP ENHANCEMENTS

- The PCSP uses several innovations to enrich and enhance the student scholars involvement and education in primary care.
  - 1. Mentorship by Primary Care Physicians (PCP)
    - Mentoring by rotating Primary Care Physicians during the first 20 months
    - Choosing one mentor to follow as a guide and counselor through the 16 rotations of the clinical years
  - 2. An Enrichment Module
    - Encountering weekly "enrichments" designed to humanize the medical school experience during the OMS 2 summer
    - Engaging the many facets of primary & specialist care
    - Shadowing specialty care in hospice and public health centers
    - Observing patients as they encounter procedures in the specialties of GI, Cardiology, Pulmonology, and Pharmacology
  - 3. Examination and Testing
    - A uniquely designed testing strategy
    - Oral Exams before a panel of professors completing the system modules
    - Essay and short answer questions enhancing the multiple choice exam
  - 4. Osteopathic Enhancement
    - Summer Osteopathic immersion into OMS 2 OPP Course
    - OMS 2 table trainer responsibilities
    - OMM Rotation with OMM Enrichments with all Rotation Capstone Sessions
  - 5. Physical Diagnosis Enhancement
    - OMS 1 intro to the patient encounter with standardized & simulated patients
    - Focused summer session with more standardized patient encounters
  - 6. State and Local Conferences
    - Promoting primary care issues
    - Engaging the political makeup of the profession while promoting change

## 3 YEAR CURRICULUM

### PCSP Timeline

Basic Science Years have been enhanced without deletions

#### An Overview of the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine Accelerated Primary Care Scholars Pathway

An Overview of the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine Accelerated Primary Care Scholars Pathway		
OMS I	Gross Anatomy	H&PE 1
	Histology	Pharmacology 2
	Embryology	Pathology
	OPP/OMM 1	Genetics
	Med Ethics/Spirituality	Immunology
	Health Care Mgt	MSK System
	Physiology	Nervous System
OMS II	Biochemistry	OPP/OMM 2
	Microbiology	Human Sexuality
	Pharmacology 1	
	(Summer Session)	
	OPP/OMM 3	H&PE 2
	Heme/Onc	Cardiovascular
	Behavioral Health	Respiratory
OMS III	Public Health	Medical Jurisprudence
	Geriatrics	Pediatrics
	Enrichment Module	Renal
	H&PE 2	GI 1
		OPP/OMM 3
13 Rotations as OMS III		

### PCSP Rotations

PCSP Students participate in 16 rotations

Order	Rotation
1	Family Medicine
2	Clinical Overview
3	Pediatrics or OB/Gyn
4	OB/Gyn or Pediatrics
5	Internal Medicine 1
6	Internal Medicine 2
7	Surgery
8	Medical Selective 1
9	Psychiatry / Comprehensive Review
10	OMM / Comprehensive Review
11	Medical Selective 2
12	Ambulatory Medicine 1
13	Ambulatory Medicine 2
14	Otolaryngology/Ophthalmology
15	Emergency Medicine
16	Sub Internship
<b>Graduation</b>	

PCSP present location

## THE CURRENT PCSP CLASS OF 2010

- Pathway Enrollment Progression
  - 29 students showing interest in the Spring of 2007, pre-enrollment
  - 6 students selected to begin the PCSP, Fall of 2007
  - 2 students switching to other pathways
  - 1 student withdrawing from LECOM during the 1<sup>st</sup> year
  - 1 student entering at the end of the OMS 1 Year
- PCSP completing its second year with the First Class in April 2009
  - 4 currently enrolled students on OMS 2 rotations
  - PCSP Class of 2010 completed the first rotation in Family Medicine
  - Anticipating COMLEX Level 1, May 2009
  - Awaiting COMLEX Level 2 CE & PE, Nov/Dec 2009

## ~RECENT SUPPORTING EVIDENCE~ RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE JOSIAH MACY, JR. FOUNDATION

- The Report noted many issues we believe are addressed by PCSP.
- "Regarding the Core mission of Medical Schools"
  - "ensuring that all medical students retain their enthusiasm for medicine and remain committed to its societal missions"
- "Regarding the Debt Burden of Medical Students"
  - "organizing the curriculum to allow students the option of meeting graduation requirements in three rather than four years"
- Report found at: <http://www.josiahmacyfoundation.org/>

## CONCLUSION

- This three year curricula will lead to a resolution of issues confronting Primary Care.
- LECOM's innovative program is designed to encourage and teach exceptional, scholarly primary care physicians.
- Current strides with recruitment have shown an increased interest by incoming applicants. (7 students enrolled in the PCSP Class of 2011)
- This successful program will encourage other COM's to follow LECOM's example in encouraging more primary care career interest.
- The original concept encourages postgraduate enrollment in the local OPTI institutions; with expanding enrollment, distant OPTI institutions will benefit as well.