

**WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS – ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

**Friday, March 27, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.**

**Location: Conference Center, WVSOM Student Center**

**I. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum**

The meeting of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine Board of Governors Academic Committee was called to order at approximately 9:30 a.m. Dr. Santer convened the meeting and requested that roll be called. Following the roll call, it was confirmed that a quorum of committee members was present, allowing the Academic Committee to proceed with official business in accordance with governance requirements.

Present: Caitlyn Santer, D.O., Randall Belt, D.O., Courtney Eleazer, Ph.D., Jacob Bartlett, OMS III

**II. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the January 29, 2026 Academic Committee meeting had been previously circulated to committee members for review. Dr. Santer asked whether there were any revisions or corrections to the minutes as presented. Hearing none, Dr. Santer requested a motion to approve the minutes.

A motion was made by Dr. Belt to approve the minutes of the January 29, 2026 Academic Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Santer. Dr. Santer called for discussion, and no discussion was offered. She then called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were approved as presented.

**III. Committee Item**

The committee received an informational presentation regarding the potential development of an additional master's-level academic program, tentatively described as a Master of Science in Medical Science. Dr. Gail Swarm explained that the proposed program is being explored as a compassionate academic off-boarding option for students who successfully complete the first two years of the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine curriculum but are unable to progress further due to unsuccessful board examination outcomes.

Dr. Marina Diiioia explained that under existing policy, students are limited in the number of board examination attempts permitted before dismissal or withdrawal is required. The proposed master's program would allow such students to receive academic credit recognizing the substantial coursework they have completed. The concept includes transferring completed credits into a separate degree pathway and requiring completion of a capstone project, potentially lasting six months to one year, rather than additional coursework. Examples of capstone activities discussed included research posters, case reports, or literature reviews.

The committee was informed that similar programs exist at other institutions, although they are not widely advertised in order to preserve student dignity. At least one comparable program has reportedly received approval through the Higher Learning Commission, while another has been approved by a different accrediting body. The anticipated number of affected students was estimated at approximately four to five students per year. The ongoing academic and financial impact to the institution was described as minimal, with the primary responsibility being coordination and mentorship rather than the creation of new courses, aside from the capstone component.

Discussion included the potential professional benefits for students earning the master's degree, including improved transcript representation and enhanced employability in areas such as teaching at the community college or secondary education level, laboratory work, research roles, and other healthcare-related support positions. Committee members discussed accreditation considerations, financial aid implications, faculty involvement, and student support resources. It was emphasized that the concept remains in an exploratory phase and that no formal submission has yet been made to the Higher Learning Commission.

Dr. Swarm and Dr. Diioia indicated that, should the committee be receptive to the concept, a more detailed proposal would be developed and brought back to the committee for review prior to any formal accreditation action. This future proposal would include financial analysis and additional program details. No action or vote was requested at this time, as the item was presented for informational purposes only.

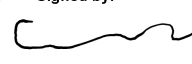
#### **IV. Next Committee Meeting Date**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Governors Academic Committee was announced as Friday, June 5, 2026.

#### **V. Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the committee, Dr. Santer requested a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Belt and seconded by Dr. Santer. The motion passed unanimously, and the Academic Committee meeting was adjourned.

Approved on August 28, 2026

Signed by:  


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Caitlyn Santer, D.O., Chair