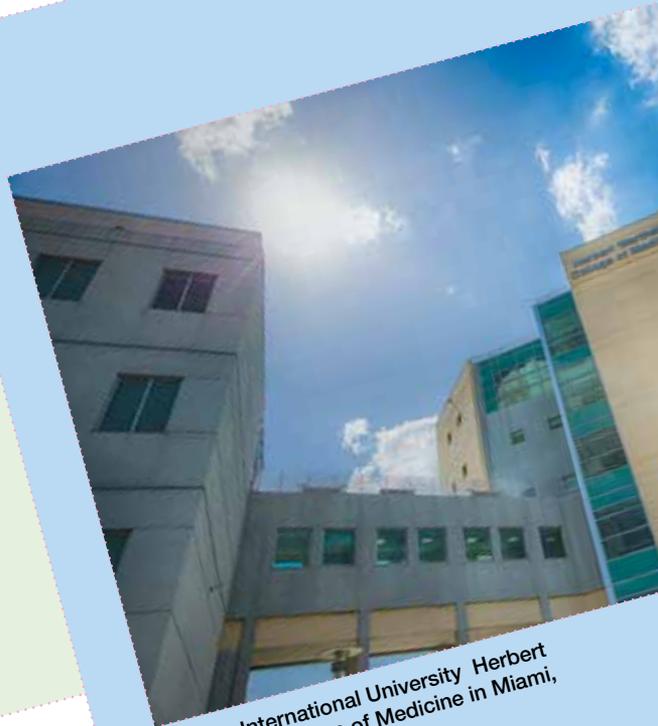




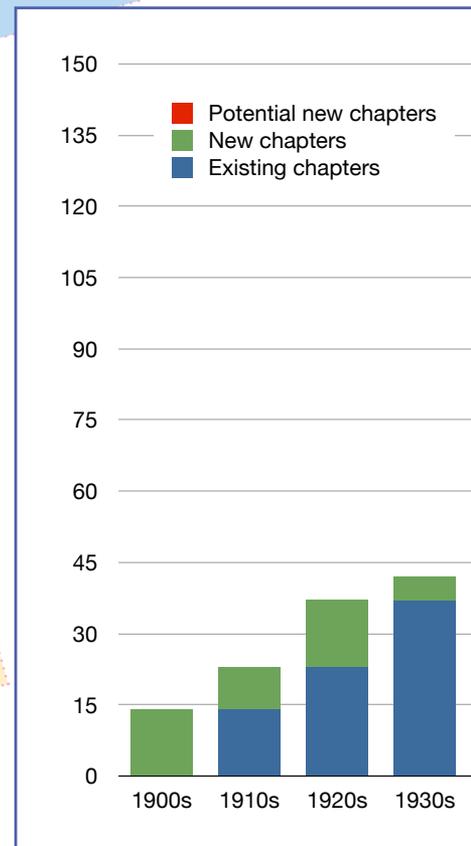
University of Central Florida College of Medicine in Orlando, Florida—Zeta Florida



Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine in Miami, Florida—Epsilon Florida



Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of Medicine in El Paso, Texas—Theta Texas





## *Editorial*

# New chapters for Alpha Omega Alpha

**Richard L. Bynny, MD, FACP**

The Board of Directors of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society (AΩA) has approved new chapters of the society at three new medical schools that recently received full accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). They are:

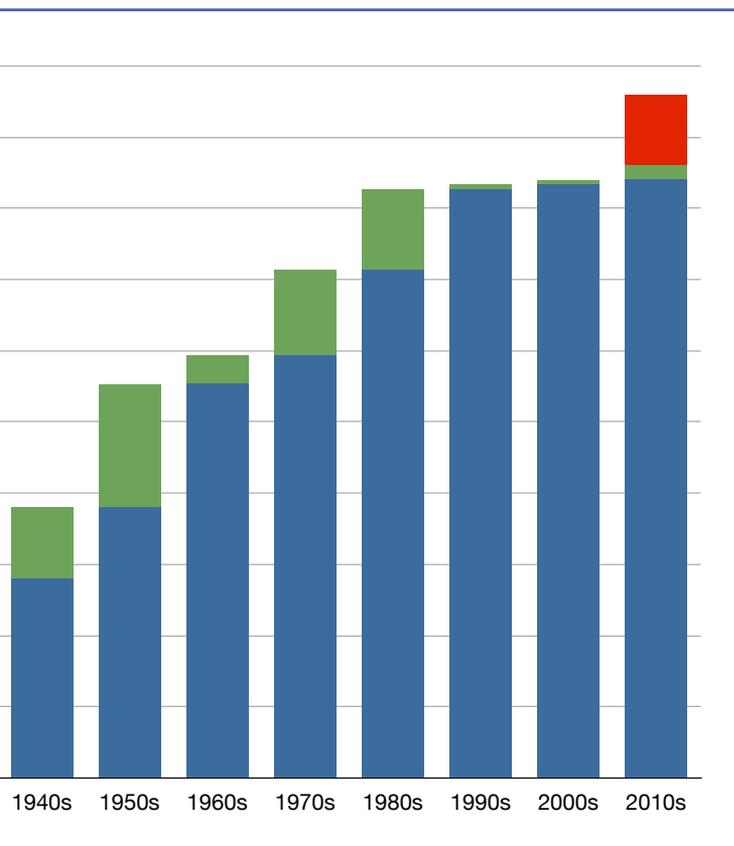
- Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine in Miami, Florida—Epsilon Florida
- The University of Central Florida College of Medicine in Orlando, Florida—Zeta Florida
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of Medicine in El Paso, Texas—Theta Texas.

These new chapters join the 120 active AΩA chapters in the United States and Lebanon. These are the first newly accredited medical schools in the United States since Florida State University School of Medicine in 2005.

The bar chart illustrates the growth in new AΩA chapters since our society was established by William Root in 1902.

Founding deans John Rock, MD, of Florida International University Wertheim College of Medicine; Deborah German, MD, of University of Central Florida College of Medicine; and J. Manuel de la Rosa, MD, of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of Medicine each requested establishment of an AΩA chapter in their new medical schools. Schools may petition for an AΩA chapter charter once they have received provisional LCME accreditation status, and may be granted charters once the school has been granted full LCME accreditation.

Each of these new medical school deans requested chartering of an AΩA chapter because they felt that their schools'





Florida International University Wertheim College of Medicine. From top, clockwise: AΩA member Kaiming Wu celebrates after learning he's going to Mass General Hospital/Harvard Medical School for his residency in Radiology. HWCOM students practice in a simulation room. HWCOM students on Thanksgiving Mission to Haiti.

values align with those of AΩA: academic achievement, leadership, professionalism, service, teaching, and research. They also wanted their medical schools to be a part of the AΩA community and to learn from established chapters how to continually evolve and improve their schools. They wanted their students to be recognized as exceptional and qualified students who meet the same high expectations and standards of medical students in other established schools.

The AΩA board's Immediate Past President Ruth-Marie Fincher, MD, and I conducted rigorous site visit evaluations of each school. We confirmed that these medical schools had met the society's constitutional and additional requirements and recommended to the Board of Directors that an AΩA chapter be chartered in each school. The AΩA Board of Directors unanimously approved granting each school a charter for an AΩA chapter once each school had received full LCME accreditation. All three schools have nominated medical students for membership in the inaugural AΩA class for their schools.

The AΩA Constitution provides the following guidance for establishing new AΩA chapters:

#### Article IX: New Chapters

Section 1: A chapter may be chartered at a College or School of Medicine that meets the Society's requirements and has received LCME accreditation. An application signed by the Dean and by at least six members of the Faculty of Medicine who are members of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society shall be sent to the President along with full information about the school's financial status, admission criteria, curriculum, faculty, and scholarship aid. The President will refer the application to the Committee on New Chapters for evaluation of the application and to make a site visit to the school. Upon receipt of a favorable report from the Committee on New Chapters, the President shall submit the application and recommendation to the full Board of Directors. If the Board of Directors approves the application, the proposed charter shall be granted, and the school may appoint a councilor and nominate junior and senior members after the date of the granting of the charter. The Councilor and the six members signing the application in collaboration with the office of the Dean will make nominations for student membership.

Section 2: Form of Charter. The form of the granting of charters shall be as follows:

DEVELOPING MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS			
Applicant Schools	Candidate Schools	Preliminary Accreditation	Provisional Accreditation
California Northstate University College of Medicine, Rancho Cordova, California	There are no candidate schools at this time	University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix, Phoenix, Arizona	Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida
Palm Beach Medical College, Palm Beach, Florida		University of California, Riverside School of Medicine, Riverside, California	The Commonwealth Medical College, Scranton, Pennsylvania
King School of Medicine and Health Science Center, Abingdon, Virginia		Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University, North Haven, Connecticut	Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, Roanoke, Virginia
		Central Michigan University School of Medicine, Mount Pleasant, Michigan	
		Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, Rochester, Michigan	
		Western Michigan University School of Medicine, Kalamazoo, Michigan	
		Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, Camden, New Jersey	
		Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine at Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York	
		University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Greenville, South Carolina	

Source: LCME. <http://lcme.org/newschoolprocess.htm>.

“Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, by virtue of the authority granted to it by the State of Illinois, herewith grants to . . . . . the power to establish a chapter of this Society at . . . . . subject to the Constitution governing said Society. In token of these presents are herewith affixed the signatures of the President and the Secretary, with the corporate seal of the Society.”

Requirements for new medical schools requesting an AΩA charter consist of:

- Provisional accreditation (to initiate the request) followed by full accreditation (to approve the charter) by the LCME
  - A letter of application from the dean of the medical school
  - The names of six or more faculty members who are active members of AΩA, with their CVs
  - An estimate of the number of full-time faculty who are members of AΩA
  - A copy of the school’s College of Medicine Bulletin
  - The plan for the school’s support of the chapter once established
  - A plan for election of students using the criteria of academic achievement to determine eligibility, and documentation of leadership, professionalism, service, teaching, and scholarship
  - The names of the founding councilor and secretary-treasurer
- The founding Councilors and Secretary-Treasurers of the

schools are:

- Florida International University—Councilor J. Patrick O’Leary, MD, and Secretary-Treasurer Robert Dollinger, MD.
- University of Central Florida—Councilor Maria Cannarozzi, MD, and Secretary-Treasurer Colleen Moran-Bano, MD
- Texas Tech Paul L. Foster School of Medicine—Councilor Dan Blunk, MD, and Secretary-Treasurer Shaked Laks, MD.

**New medical schools**

New medical schools are being developed based on the perception that we will be facing a physician shortage by 2020, although the only generally agreed-upon shortage is projected to be in primary care. At the same time, the number of underserved areas and people in the United States is significant, and new medical schools could supply at least part of that need. New medical schools hope to tap the large available pool of highly qualified medical school applicants to meet the increase in the number of physicians needed to serve a growing and aging population. These new schools and current medical schools that are expanding enrollment should provide an increase of about eighteen percent in new physicians over the next ten years. In addition to these recently accredited medical schools there are fifteen additional medical schools that are being developed. They are listed in the table. Some of these schools have initiated the process to establish an AΩA chapter when they are fully accredited by the LCME.

## New chapters for Alpha Omega Alpha

Most of the new schools are publicly funded; states hope in this way to increase the number of primary care physicians who will provide care to their underserved populations. Some new schools are associated with large research universities, and most are connected to networks of teaching hospitals with established residency programs where they can provide the clinical experiences for the schools and their students.

While there are many skeptics about the perceived need for more doctors, the new schools do appear to be innovative and different from traditional medical schools and seem to be enrolling a cohort of students interested more in primary care and caring for the underserved.

The development of these new medical schools is very interesting. While they certainly must comply with rigorous LCME requirements, new schools are not burdened by historical institutional academic culture and practices that often impede educational innovation. The physical facilities at the schools we visited are very impressive, as are the combination of the longstanding educational concepts and patient-oriented clinical curricula used in successful medical schools with approaches that include extensive simulations and technology. In anatomy, for example, all cadavers have a

full body CT scan with the images available during dissection to supplement gross anatomy learning; anatomy is frequently taught in a team with an anatomist, radiologist, and pathologist; cadavers are effectively utilized to teach and evaluate most common medical procedures.

These new medical schools feature excellent problem-based team learning. Ethics, humanities, and professionalism are integrated throughout the curriculum. Students are involved early with the people and communities served by the institution.

Although there are many examples of traditional and innovative curriculum and programs in these new medical schools, I will highlight a few that I found interesting:

- The Florida International University Wertheim College of Medicine's curriculum requires a longitudinal, inter-professional four-year community health experience starting in the first year, utilizing the Green Family Foundation Neighborhood HELP program. Health care teams made up of medical students, nursing students, law students, and a preceptor meet regularly with a poor family, including children, parents, and grandparents, to understand their health concerns, culture, and expectations. The communities requested



Dr. James Turkson in lab. Dr. Andrew Payer demonstrates the use of ultrasound, and Dr. Shazia Beg teaches the examination of the lower extremity.





Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of Medicine. From top, clockwise: The testing center, anatomy lab, and the Lab for Education in Molecular Medicine(LEMM)

and the school provided a medical van service to supplement the team-based health learning. It appears that this program has not only helped educate the students and families, but has decreased emergency room visits from the communities.

- The Texas Tech Paul L. Foster School of Medicine has made special efforts to enhance the diversity of the class by admitting students from groups in the community that are underrepresented in medicine and/or who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The school invests four percent of its endowment for student scholarships to minimize student educational indebtedness. The program requires four years of Spanish language, with an emphasis on medical Spanish, to prepare its students to better serve the people of El Paso and southwestern Texas. Many of these students acquired Spanish as their second language; they confirm their communication competence with Spanish-speaking patients.

- The dean of the University of Central Florida College of Medicine recognized the need to enroll outstanding students in the first medical school class to establish the excellence in the student body. She raised private funds from the community to provide full four-year scholarships for all forty-one of the incoming founding class. The medical school is planned as the center of a new medical city in Orlando on 7000 acres that will include the medical school, University Hospital, VA Hospital, Children's Hospital, Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, health center library, a satellite Florida State Dental School campus, a biomedical research park, housing and

commercial development, and K-12 schools.

In all the medical schools we visited, we found the commitment of the faculty and administration to be outstanding.

Although the students at these schools took a calculated risk in choosing to attend a new medical school, they have been rewarded and take part in the process of shaping the curriculum and expectations, as well as setting standards for academic excellence, professionalism, service, and learning. These students have demonstrated exceptional leadership in their roles as the first class in a new medical school with a new curriculum. By national standards of GPA, MCAT, and personal qualities these inaugural students were well prepared academically to enter any medical school. They have demonstrated their competence through NBME standardized exams Part 1 and 2 and in their placements in residencies. Many of them had taken nontraditional routes to enter medical school and most are clearly community oriented. Many are from the communities the new schools hope to serve.

There are currently another fifteen medical schools in the process of receiving full LCME accreditation, as noted in the table. Many of them have requested information on how to apply for chartering an AQA chapter at their institutions.

We welcome the new AQA chapters, their councilors, secretary-treasurers, chapter members, and newly elected medical students. We also look forward to working with the other new medical schools in establishing active chapters of AQA.