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DIVISION of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
Office of the Provost & Vice President

June 25, 2015

Jennie C. Hunter-Cevera, Ph.D.
Acting Secretary of Higher Education
Maryland Higher Education Commission
6 N. Liberty Street, 10th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Dr. Hunter-Cevera:

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore School of Pharmacy and Health Professions (UMES SPHP) and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore strongly recommend that the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) **disapprove** the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine's (LECOM) application to create an out-of-state degree-granting institution in Maryland. With three high performing schools of pharmacy in Maryland, this proposal presents unnecessary duplication which would damage the current programs which are serving Maryland.

Within the UMES SPHP, the School of Pharmacy is dedicated to developing exemplary pharmacy professionals and scholars who are committed to patient-centered care, lifelong learning, discovery, and service for diverse communities of the Delmarva Peninsula, the State of Maryland, and around the world. As a school at an HBCU, we are committed to diversifying the pharmacy workforce to meet the needs of citizens. Our location on the Delmarva Peninsula is key to serving the rural Eastern Shore, as well as Delaware, which does not have a pharmacy school, and tidal Virginia. With a three-year, accelerated, year-round curriculum, we produce practice-ready pharmacists in a cost-effective manner.

Our program is just becoming established. We have graduated our third class, and we know from the Class of 2015 that 27% were from the Delmarva Peninsula when they matriculated, but 31% stayed to work. This is helping those areas which are medically underserved with improved access to pharmacy services. However, for our program to continue to prosper, we have prioritized construction of the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions building and advocated for support from the Chancellor and the Board of Regents. The school will be better able to prepare professionals for America's health care teams and interprofessional practice once facilities are adequate. It does not make sense to create more duplication which would disadvantage our school.

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There are extreme competitive factors in pharmacy education this year. We know that there was a 9% decrease in applications for all schools (and 10% for UMES), and 48% of those applicants to whom we offered acceptances had at least one additional offer. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data projecting a 14% growth in the need for pharmacists (2012-2022) does not fully apply to Maryland. With many changes in health care delivery, we encourage our graduates to prepare to be flexible in order to compete in the marketplace.

We would encourage MHEC to critically look at the much larger markets in which LECOM currently operates. Pennsylvania and Florida employ over 32,000 pharmacists, while Maryland has just over 5,500, not including self-employed pharmacists according to the BLS website <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes291051.htm>.

A critical component of pharmacy education is experiential education which is 30% percent of the curriculum. In order to develop relationships with practice sites such as community pharmacies, health systems, clinics, and health departments, our faculty and students commit to engagement with state associations. We offer preceptor development to deliver first-rate experiences for student pharmacists. All of this is built on relationships over time. It does not seem fair for an out-of-state institution which has not worked to develop sites and preceptors to step in and reap the benefit at the expense of current schools in Maryland.

Based on the quality of the three Maryland schools, the UMES SPHP commitment to the health of Maryland citizens including those who are medically underserved, and our goal to create a more diverse workforce in pharmacy, we urge you to deny approval of the LECOM request.

Sincerely,



Patrick R. Liverpool, DBA
Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs



Cynthia J. Boyle, PharmD, FAPhA
Professor and Interim Dean