

ACTION ITEM #1

Naming of the Washington State University College of Medicine (Daniel J. Bernardo)

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

DATE: September 18, 2015

SUBJECT: Naming of the Washington State University College of Medicine

PROPOSED: That the WSU Board of Regents approve the naming of the current College of Medical Science to the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

SUBMITTED BY: Daniel J. Bernardo, Interim President

SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

The College of Medical Sciences was approved by the Board of Regents and established in 2014. With the addition of two departments this academic year, the College will be comprised of three academic units: Clinical Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, and Speech and Hearing Science. The College will also house the university's recently authorized medical school.

This proposed change in name is comprised of two parts. First, a change to the College of Medical Sciences, a more conventional name for colleges containing a medical school; and second, the naming of the College in honor of the former President of Washington State University, Dr. Elson S. Floyd. The WSU Faculty Senate has communicated their approval of the first component of the name change, and the attachment of a personal name to a college is within the purview of the Board of Regents, based upon the recommendation of the president.

The naming of university colleges, schools, programs and professorships, is a practice that honors both the university and the honoree. For the university, it acknowledges distinction. For the honoree, it acknowledges a unique contribution, one easily distinguishable from all others. Usually monetary, it should be no surprise that over 80% of the nation's business schools/colleges are now named by a significant donor. Colleges with a public service purpose are less frequently named. Today, less than 20% of the nation's medical schools/colleges are named.

New colleges of medicine are rare. A 35-year hold on the accreditation of new U.S. medical schools has been lifted only in the last decade. The new schools that have emerged over the last few years are in direct response to public service and need. Health care systems are undergoing dynamic change to better deliver quality, affordable, and accessible health care regardless of where or how our citizens live.

In examining the emerging medical schools in this new era, the Washington State University medical school is distinctive. Like the nation, Washington has some of the best and worst quality and access to health care anywhere. Washington State University took on the issue with the skill, urgency and passion that resulted in legislative approval in March 2015.

Washington State University would not be starting a medical school today without the vision and leadership of President Elson S. Floyd. Though it took many to achieve this accomplishment, President Floyd stands alone as a distinctive contributor. His vision can be traced back to the years of consolidating the health care professions on the Spokane campus, moving the colleges of pharmacy and nursing. His leadership was remarkable, and undoubtedly fueled by his own personal background, experiences, and obstacles overcome. From humble roots in rural North Carolina, he went on to be the first black graduate from Darlington School, the first graduate from college in his family and many other firsts as he has transcended race, class, and opportunity. These are accomplishments he rarely mentioned and have culminated in his ability to deliver unprecedented accomplishments in his third presidency at Washington State University.

The qualifications for naming a college are indeed high. I submit there could not be a greater value contributed to the Washington State University medical college than the philosophy, history, and spirit of Elson S. Floyd. Naming the medical college in his honor will serve as an enduring inspiration to the students and the state.