

## Proposed med school goes before accreditation board

BOISE — A proposed for-profit osteopathic medical school in Idaho may have to delay its opening date a year if a national accreditation agency does not sign off on its plans this month.

That could postpone other projects, including a proposed \$3 million expansion to Idaho State University's anatomy and physiology laboratory that the new school plans to fund and use.

Dr. Robert Hasty, dean of the proposed Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine, met with the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation in Washington, D.C., on Friday. The school can't legally start construction until it wins pre-accreditation status.

"I am not sure as to when the commissioners will officially respond, but we, of course, are hoping it is sooner than later as we are excited to break ground," Hasty said in an email Saturday.

He said the school still plans to start work in April or May and open its doors to students in fall 2018.

Earlier this year, Hasty said that if work does not get underway by the end of April, the opening would be pushed to 2019.

When it opens, the school aims to admit as many as 150 students in its first year, charging around \$40,000 in annual tuition. Doctors of osteopathic medicine are licensed physicians who provide a range of services, such as prescribing drugs and performing surgery.

Critics have raised concerns that the region lacks enough residencies to accommodate all those would-be doctors when the first class graduates in 2022.

Officials with the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine have said that about 78 new residencies had been secured by January, but an Associated Press review that month revealed those spots didn't yet exist. Hasty declined to say whether the school has established any new residencies since then.

The accreditation commission deferred a decision on whether to grant the school pre-accreditation status in December. In the meeting Friday, Hasty was expected to answer questions and address any deficiencies or concerns raised by the commission.

The commission was expected to take action that day, but it could be some time before its decision is made public, American Osteopathic Association spokeswoman Sheridan Chaney said. It won't be finalized for 30 days to allow interested parties to appeal or provide extra information if needed, Chaney said.

Officials with the Idaho Board of Education and Idaho State University said they expected to hear the outcome soon. They were awaiting word before moving forward with some plans.

###