

Minutes of the meeting of Committee on Educational Policy and Curriculum
SUNY Downstate College of Medicine
Jan 26, 2012
Seminar Room 2-1

Present: L. Eisner, M. Erogul, J. Libien, R. Ovitsh, K. Perkins, B. Trauner, S. Hrabetova, S. Hahn, K. Twomey, C. Brunson, J. Odackal, J. Lampert

Guest speakers: Dr. Klara Papp and Dr. Sass

Introduction of Dr. Papp

Dr. Papp introduced herself to the committee. She is the former director of Student Assessment and Program Evaluation at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio and also worked on a number of NIH grants. She stated that it is important for the CEPC to provide curriculum governance at Downstate. Currently Dr. Papp's office collects information from students. She hopes that in the near future her office might also collect information about the curriculum from the faculty in a systematic way. Dr. Papp would like this data to be available to this committee to help make better-informed decisions in overseeing the curriculum at Downstate. She has created drafts of evaluation forms for electives, residency program directors and postgraduate students at the end of their first year of residency. She would like to discuss these surveys at a future meeting.

Pass/Fail Grading

Dr. Sass stated that based on a 2010 student survey, 60% of students preferred a pass/fail grading option in the first two years. After reviewing the survey, the steering committee of the new curriculum recommended that the foundation years would be pass/fail. Since the learning environment will be different, the steering committee felt that having a pass/fail option in the foundation years would decrease stress. Once students are less stressful, they can focus on studying. Dr. Papp stated that other medical schools have changed to a pass/fail option in the basic science years. This can give the opportunity for faculty members to effectively partner with students to help them achieve the learning objectives.

Questions were raised about how AOA, rank, the Dean's letter, etc... would be affected by this change and if the number scores are being used isn't it then misleading students. Dr. Papp stated that this proposal eliminates ranking students on the basis of their first two years of performance. This would now be awarded on the basis of core clinical rotations and beyond.

Dr. Papp stated that in the new curriculum assessments will change. She hopes to make assessments tied more to reasoning about the facts and not tied so closely to classroom instruction. She explained further that the evidence in educational psychology shows that students are likely to forget things unless they can use them to solve problems. Dr. Papp stated that the performance grade for each unit would be comprised of performance on requirements for all 6 ACGME competencies. If students do not meet the requirements, they will have to be remediated. Students can fail for poor professionalism and communication skills. For example, if a student is chronically showing up late, once it has been brought to his attention, a time management plan can be created.

Students and faculty discussed their concerns of the proposed grading change. After a lengthy and vigorous discussion, the committee decided to accelerate meetings and possibly meet in one week for more brainstorming. [Ultimately a meeting for all MS1/MS2 Block Directors and Unit Directors was scheduled for Feb 2.]

Hematology-Oncology Block Evaluation

The Hem-Onc committee met and created guidelines for all block directors to adopt.

New Elective

Dr. Gabbur has submitted a new elective proposal (Boot Camp for Surgery Residencies). Elective approval and edits will be done by email.