

**Minutes of the meeting of Committee on Educational Policy and Curriculum**  
**SUNY Downstate College of Medicine**  
**July 12, 2012**  
**Seminar Room 2-1**

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**Present: L. Eisner, K. Perkins, S. Ostrow, S. Hrabetova, K. Perkins, B. Trauner, J. Odackal, J. Lampert**

Minutes from the June meeting were approved.

**MS3 Core Clinical Two-Week Electives**

It was announced that thirteen students were going through the first two-week block and so far 70 students have registered for these electives. The most popular choices were Ophthalmology, ENT, Radiology, and the sub-specialties of Medicine. The committee discussed the structure and requirements of the new MS3 Core Clinical electives, especially in light of the confusion over what was decided at the Dean's Council Meeting. The learning objectives of 13 electives were approved. It was confirmed that the electives are graded Pass/Fail starting with the class of 2014 and that they will count towards 10 credits allowed for a specialty. The CEPC voted to have the two-week electives count towards the 20 credits required for graduation and that they should be treated the same as all two-week electives in MS3 and MS4. The rationale was to increase motivation to take these electives instead of vacation time and to use them productively. It was thought that a separate class of electives should be avoided. [On July 31 the Dean's Council discussed this issue and decided to keep these electives separate from graduation requirements and call them Selectives.]

**Use of Lecture Notes in the New Curriculum**

The committee discussed John Lewis's proposal on Lecture Notes (v4). Unanimously, the committee believes that students need adequate guidance to navigate the curriculum and know what information they should learn. The following concerns raised included:

1. The merging of normal and abnormal makes it unlikely that one textbook will contain all information needed. Multiple sources would have to be listed. The time that students would have to spend to find and integrate the information and determine what is important is significant.
2. A black market of unofficial old transcripts of past lectures will flourish.
3. Faculty will be inundated with anxious students trying to figure out what to study and where to find the information.
4. There just is not enough time in the day for students to do all this literature searching on their own.
5. There are conflicting explanations of topics in different texts.
6. To teach one topic, faculty use multiple sources in preparing a lecture. This will be even more true with the merging of normal and abnormal. Will students be able to do this themselves for every topic?
7. There may be inadequate explanations in the textbooks.

A student member expressed concern whether the learning objectives would clearly direct learning expectations. "Students should be provided both textbook references and the handouts

formerly called lecture notes. If students are given a very clear list of learning objectives and some guidance on how to navigate through the textbooks and lecture notes provided, students will be able to pick the learning resources that work best for them. As students move away from learning every detail presented in lecture to learning NBME exam content ... more students will reach for textbooks because they can offer a comprehensive picture in a story-book narrative. However, many professors have put together amazing supplements (or comprehensive reviews) for a given topic and these should also be provided to students. Students will then be able to choose which learning resources to use - and ultimately asking students to choose the resource that is appropriate for their learning seems like an end-goal in and of itself."

The CEPC appreciates that the aim of the Office of Education to eliminate the provision of home-grown teaching materials to students is consistent with adult and independent learning. However, we feel that the volume of material that the students must learn is huge and we should make every effort to guide them in the efficient use of resources that will be required or suggested. The CEPC recommends that faculty have substantial input in deciding what learning materials should be made available to students for a lecture or other teaching activities. Faculty notes should guide students to pages that are helpful in each of the textbooks recommended or assigned. Furthermore, if the relevant faculty determine that coverage in the textbooks is inadequate, out-of-date, incorrect or too scattered to be efficiently used by students, then learning materials on specific topics could be prepared and distributed. We expect that this will occur more often than is implied in the proposal referred to. There have been numerous faculty discussions on this topic and the consensus is clear that students should have more guidance than is specified in the proposal.

#### **Review of Curriculum Design and Management Chart for LCME Self Study Report**

The draft of a chart prepared for the report was presented to CEPC. Suggestions were made to redraw it to try to reflect a more accurate representation of who (or what committee) reports to who. The draft plus the suggested revisions will be attached to the minutes.