Minutes: Meeting of November 8, 2000

Revised by MEC, 12/13/00

Present:
Drs. Thomas Drake, Ron Edelstein, Theodore Hall, David Johnson, Joan Kaplowitz,
Theodore Miller, Mark Noah, Neil Parker, Margaret Stuber, John Tormey (Chair),
LuAnn Wilkerson, and Michael Wilkes
Student Members: Karin Jacobson (MSII), Sarah Kennedy (MSI), and Dawn Ogawa
(MSI)
Guests: Susan Baillie, Ph.D., Kim Crooks, Ph.D. and Charlotte Myers
Staff: Pat Anaya, Gezelle Miller and Christina Yoon

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Tormey introduced Dr. Margaret Stuber as the new co-chair of the MEC.

Dr. Tormey provided a revised statement to clarify the language in the section of the
October 11th meeting minutes regarding posting course evaluations on the Web. Dr.
Wilkerson moved that the revision be accepted as the official statement for the record; the
motion was seconded and unanimously approved. Otherwise, the minutes were approved
as submitted.

As an addendum to the discussion of evaluation from last month, the suggestion was
made to post a statement from each course chair on the course changes that have been
implemented; if a statement is not submitted, the notice will indicate that the chair of this
course has failed to comment on changes.

Report from the Third Year Clerkship Chairs’ Committee

Drs. Mark Noah and Neil Parker are the Co-Chairs of the Third Year Clerkship Chairs’
Committee, which also serves as a Progress and Promotion Committee for the third and
fourth years. The Committee met in September on the following issues.

New Third Year Curriculum: In general, it was felt that the new clerkship curriculum
placing all required rotations in the third year is a "work in progress." There have been no
consistent problems in any of the courses.

Timely Evaluations. There have been several attempts to ensure that all
evaluations/grades are turned in within six weeks of the end of a rotation; too frequently,
there is a delay of six months or longer. It is often very difficult for course chairs to get
narrative evaluations from the faculty with whom students worked. Obtaining grades for
teaching in the ambulatory setting promises to be even more difficult. Substantial
discussion ensued on how to both encourage faculty members to submit grades on time
and to make them responsible. The FEC approved that faculty evaluations for first and
second year courses must be turned in within ten days of the course examination;
similarly, students must complete their on-line evaluations within seven days of the final
examination. There seemed to be consensus that the FEC should make a statement to the

faculty that as one of the responsibilities of teaching, evaluation must be completed in a timely manner. The narrative of the evaluations is extremely important to the composition of the Dean’s Letters; it would be a serious disservice to our students if there were no appropriate verbiage in the clerkship evaluations.

The general consensus was to reaffirm that clerkship grades are due within six weeks after the end of a course and that that students will be required to submit course and faculty evaluations within seven days of the final examination.

The Third Year Clerkship chairs responded very seriously to this matter, recommending that letters be written to faculty members with copies to the department chair and the dossier. The administration must provide assistance in the form of an online evaluation system to help course chairs accomplish the tasks of requesting evaluations, tracking grades and comments, compiling a summative evaluation, etc. An online system for submitting grades and evaluations is being sought by the Student Affairs Office to facilitate collection and submission of student assessments.

The FEC should convey the importance of this responsibility and begin to change the culture, even though this may require a period of years. Careful consideration must be given to the consequences of failure to comply with a request for student evaluation, possibly including loss of faculty appointment. A system of evaluation cards or a Web based system is being studied to aid in submitting and tracking timely evaluations. Students will also be encouraged to initiate requests for on-the-spot evaluations. Clerkship Chairs do not have much leverage and faculty members are very busy. Such measures would require a gradual indoctrination process with several warning steps. Some faculty development will be necessary on addressing uncomfortable evaluation issues, providing constructive feedback, and including meaningful comments.

The FEC may not be willing to take drastic measures at this time and is looking for alternate methods. They are also considering incentives such as a supporting letter for consistently on-time submission of evaluations and/or perhaps for the high quality of evaluations. A quorum was not present at the October FEC meeting, thus the issue will be raised again in November.

There was a motion that the MEC recommend to the FEC that grades and narrative evaluations for students on clerkships must be submitted within six weeks after the course final examination. Letters should be sent by Clerkship Chairs to a faculty member and his/her dossier both documenting failure to submit grades on time as well as for timely, high quality evaluations. This recommendation should receive full discussion and consideration by the FEC and by the Clerkship Chairs. The motion was approve on a unanimous vote of the committee members.

**Should Students be Required to Have PDAs?** Many students are already using handheld computers as a management tool. The issue is whether they should be required of students, thus making financial aid available to assist some students in purchasing their palm computers? Lots of software is already available, ranging from medical databases, decision analysis tools, phone information, databases for tracking patients Weblog, etc.
Dr. Parker will submit a written proposal to serve as the basis for discussion at the December 13th meeting of the MEC.

Peer Review of School of Medicine Courses

It is commonly agreed that dossiers should include peer review of teaching. In 1976, the UCLA EPCC conducted a review of all courses, but there has been little else in the way of formal peer review of teaching. UCR has recently implemented a first time peer-review system of their courses, and Drew employs a peer evaluation system that has been in place for about two years. Leaders from each school were invited to share their experiences.

Drew

Dr. Edelstein reported that the Drew EPCC is conducting a systematic review of all clerkships. The review process, designed by Dr. Karlon Johnson, consists of four parts: (1) a report of student evaluations is presented to the EPCC, (2) a subcommittee conducts a site visit, (3) a focus group is held with students, and (4) the data are presented to the EPCC for follow up. A report is presented to the department(s) responsible for the clerkship and to the Faculty Council.

This system has been working very well for two years. Substantial changes have been made in clerkships and resource allocation, and one clerkship chair was replaced. More formal evaluations by students through the UCLA online evaluation system are helping the process, though the student response rate needs to improve. Common themes are lack of resources and lack of administrative support. The current COE grant will help them hire more administrative support. Inconsistencies in reports (e.g., a course report may indicate that twelve lectures were presented, whereas the student report may indicate that eight of the lecturers didn’t show up) are investigated, clarified and recommendations for improvement made.

The effort to review clerkships this way cannot be quantified, but the evaluations are very labor intensive (running focus groups, collecting and analyzing data, site visits, etc.) The process requires a faculty champion to keep the process moving. They plan to continue the peer evaluation into the new college curriculum using current information as baseline data for comparison. The process has helped some clerkships to obtain additional resources.

Riverside

Dr. David Johnson, Chair of the Education Policy Committee of the Biomedical Sciences at UCR reported on the process at UCR which initially generated some negative feelings among the faculty. They are following a two-year cycle, reviewing 6-7 courses per year. The assessment committee consists of two course coordinators (typically a first- and a second-year coordinator are paired) acting as primary and secondary reviewers. One of the outcome goals is to improve integration in the curriculum through better vertical connections between the first and second years, creating better social interactions.

The reviewers are given course syllabi (both from UCR and UCLA to review the comparability of the materials), examinations, and student evaluations of courses. The
reviews focus on content and organization of the course rather than on the faculty. They also review fourth year student survey comments, USMLE Step 1 results (compared with UCLA student performance) and review of Subject Examination performance in clerkships. Part of a course coordinators meeting is devoted to course review; first and second year medical students are invited to attend. One hour is allocated to each course review. The course coordinator describes his/her course and then responds to questions. A secretary prepares a written report of the meeting which is emailed to the reviewers and forms the basis for preparing their report.

The process should become a stimulus for implementing changes. The report includes strengths, concerns, comparative data with the UCLA curriculum, and recommendations for improvement. A copy of the report is given to the course coordinators for comment. The review often brings on internal improvements, independent of outside intervention.

The reviews do not focus on individuals, but on course content and organization, including how the course is delivered and teaching formats. It is difficult to separate the teaching from the course in some cases, but the process is not intended to embarrass any one. Quality of teaching is addressed through the evaluation system and by the chairs and Dean.

Some advantages of this form of review are that it will

1. fulfill LCME accreditation requirements
2. be easier and faster than external reviews
3. minimize faculty anxiety associated with outside reviews
4. foster interactions/dialogue between clinical and basic science faculty
5. provide a vehicle for vertical and lateral integration of instruction.
6. encourage periodic re-thinking of each course structure and presentation.

The disadvantages are that

1. there may not be enough time to perform an adequate review, in which case the reviewer can recommend that a special committee be assigned for course reorganization or further study.
2. non-expert reviewers are more likely to miss substantive course program deficiencies.

It was suggested that a template to guide the process would be helpful, with a set of essential questions for the reviewers, in order to be most effective and efficient and to be sure all courses are reviewed on the same elements. The UCLA Curriculum Survey of fourth year medical students would have helpful information to this process; it will be forwarded to Dr. Johnson.

Other
The Dental School review process has been in place for a few years and is based on speed and simplicity. They review courses as rapidly as possible, although there are many more courses in the four-year dental curriculum in than in the medical curriculum. A student and a faculty member analyze a course starting with information from an existing
database. They write a brief summary of the course, responding to questions such as "Does the teaching method encourage student development?".

The MEC will consider these processes as well as its own history with course reviews. The Drew model may well be useful in evaluating the second year of the new clerkship curriculum, although Drew has the advantage of being smaller in size; e.g., the Medicine clerkship is conducted at six sites and would require site visits to six locations which would be extremely labor intensive. A primary issue to review is the quality of the clerkships across sites. The differences among sites are useful, but each site should be delivering the same basic curriculum.

Dr. Noah reported that the residency programs are reviewed for reaccreditation and outside reviewers are not used. At least three people review evaluations and focus on what is done well and what is not done well. Training sites value the feedback loops.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.