Minutes: Meeting of December 18, 2002

Present:  
Drs. Craig Byus, Ronald Edelstein, Theodore Hall, Mark Noah, Neil Parker, Stuart Slavin,  
Michael Sofroniew, Susan Stangl, Randolph Steadman, Margaret Stuber (Co-Chair),  
John Tormey (Co-Chair), and LuAnn Wilkerson and Janice Contini.  
Student: Emily Dossett.  
Guests: Drs. Sue Baillie, Bruce Howard, Heather Krell, Shelley Metten, Lee Passman,  
and Janet Pregler.

Course Descriptions - Dr. Neil Parker

Dr. Parker reminded the members that the College Chairs Committee has been reviewing  
the clinical electives for the past several months. The College Chairs Committee began  
reviewing the courses with the highest student enrollment. During this review process,  
the Committee has looked at the descriptions for the various course levels (200-, 300-,  
400- levels). At its last meeting, they discussed and revised the course descriptions.

Currently, the 100-level courses are non clinical and do not count for licensure. Students  
can count up to 6 weeks of these courses towards the minimum weeks of course work  
required for graduation. The 200-level courses are clinical, but they are often not very  
intense. The 300- and 400- level courses are called subinternships. The 400-level courses  
are always inpatient subinternships, and the 300-level courses are not.

The College Chairs Committee looked particularly at the 300- and 400- level course  
descriptions and made the following recommendations:

300-level:
In the old description, it required students to work up three patients a week. The College  
Chairs Committee proposes increasing the minimum to five patients a week (one patient  
a day) in an inpatient consult or inpatient ward experience. Drs. Noah and Stangl  
wondered if there would be enough patients admitted for students to see. This concern  
will be looked into further. For the ambulatory or outpatient settings, students should see  
a minimum of two patients for half a day. The MEC members did not object to this  
number.

400-level:
The old description stated that the 400-level courses had to be 90% inpatient. The  
College Chairs recommended changing this to 80% and that the experience is the same as  
a subinternship.

Subinternship requirement:  
The College Chairs think that students should take at least three electives (9-weeks total)  
that are a mixture of 300 and 400 level courses.
Dr. Parker asked for the MEC’s approval so that he could take it to the FEC. **Dr. Noah moved that the students take a total of 9 weeks of subinternship and that it be a mixture of 300- and 400-level courses. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.**

Dr. Parker will bring back the revised 300-level course description at the January meeting.

**Minutes**

The minutes were approved as written.

**Block 3 Presentation - Drs. Bruce Howard and Janet Pregler**

Dr. Pregler made the presentation based on the attached set of slides. A draft week by week schedule was handed out and discussed. Please download for details. [Slides (PDF, 47 KB)](slides.pdf) [Draft Schedule (PDF, 79 KB)](schedule.pdf)

**Discussion**

One of the stated principles of Block 3 is to combine histology, physiology, and biochemistry into common lectures. Dr. Wilkerson asked how the various disciplines were being integrated. Dr. Howard answered that one area of great redundancy is histology. He hoped that the histologists would not only talk about structure but also talk a little bit about the other related areas and disciplines. Students can also learn various materials on their own (example: tissue). The draft schedule does not reflect this idea because they have not been able to meet with the right faculty to flesh out the plan in detail. Dr. Wilkerson asked if a physiologist would be invited to give such lectures. Dr. Howard emphasized that physiology and histology is integrated with biochemistry.

Drs. Howard and Pregler informed that they met with a few faculty members and had them review the proposal. It was accepted with positive feedback. However, they have not yet completed meeting with key individuals. Dr. Stuber was concerned that not all of the department and courses that are to be integrated in this block have been informed. Dr. Howard informed that this proposal is very similar to the one that was proposed by the previous planning group, which consisted of faculty from various departments. Dr. Pregler asked for specific faculty names so that they can contact them in order to move the planning forward. They were asked to contact Dr. Jonathan Braun for Histology and Dr. John Tormey for Physiology and have them review the current proposal for feedback. Other suggested names for future consultation included Nancy Wayne, Gautam Chaudhuri, and Roger Gorski.

Dr. Tormey felt that the proposal presented today was a rough draft with some sequencing problems that could be cleaned up before January 15th. It is important to inform key faculty by having them review the current proposal and give them the opportunity to provide any feedback they wish to provide.
Dr. Stuber commented that all four blocks would eventually need to determine who would be on a planning committee to flesh out all of the details of their proposal. The Chairs will be encouraged to think of some recruitment ideas and faculty they would like to invite.

Dr. Passman suggested including the names of faculty who have been contacted for feedback in the actual proposal document. Dr. Slavin commented that in spite of a few sequencing and political fixes, the proposal looked good and commended the Block Chairs.

**Block 4 Presentation - Dr. Michael Sofroniew**

Dr. Sofroniew made a PowerPoint presentation. Please download [Presentation (PDF, 169 KB)](#) for details.

The Block 4 planning team has decided that the materials in the Block cannot be properly taught in a simplified form in year 1 then revisited in year 2. They propose to teach the Block as a single course, a 14-week continuum in year 1 with one-week exam period in the middle.

**Discussion**

The pressing issue for Block 4 is the 14-week continuum. The MEC needs to decide if this continuum would be moving forward.

With a 14-week continuum for Block 4, the first year would conclude the third week of June, rather than in May, with all of the exams completed. In order to still have a lengthy summer break, this would require starting year 2 later, but year 2 would also be shorter. In other words, the 14-week proposal means that the first and second years would be asymmetrical in the way that they are laid out.

Dr. Tormey commented that when the Planning Oversight Group reviewed looked at the plans for all of the blocks over a year ago, they Block 4 did not seem to hold together well when broken into two eight week courses for years 1 and 2 respectively. The current Block 4 planners have greatly improved the situation with their proposal for a 14-week continuum.

Emily Dossett stated it could get pretty stressful by Christmas time, especially for first year students. She felt that the proposal looked great but encouraged adding either a full week of break between Blocks 3 and 4 or having a break somewhere in the middle of the Block 4 continuum.

Dr. Noah was very impressed with the content of the new curriculum for Block IV. He felt that we would be teaching much more in less time. Dr. Sofroniew commented that the new curriculum would require that there be alternative instructional approaches to the
anatomy and less free-form dissection. He felt that it was possible to cover the upper limbs in two labs if there are prosections.

Dr. Slavin stated that because the new curriculum is theme based, it would be more difficult for students to be lagging behind. Dr. Wilkerson suggested to Dr. Sofroniew that Block 4 look into recollecting the components from earlier in the year that are relevant to recall during this block. All of the blocks may need to do this as well.

Dr. Metten commented on an apparent lack of pathology in Block 4. Dr. Sofroniew answered that this could be discussed further and possibly some time for pathology labs could be carved out. Dr. Tormey indicated that much of the bone pathology is already part of Block 3; some of the missing topics might be taught in somewhere in year 2.

Dr. Wilkerson recommended that Block 4 check with histology faculty for feedback on their proposal before the FEC meeting. Block 4 was also prodded to form a planning team for further planning.

**Dr. Tormey moved that the MEC endorse the proposal to change the organization of Block 4 from two 8-week courses separated between by nearly a year into a single 14-week course to be completed at the end of the first year. This motion was seconded and approved unanimously.**

**Writing Requirement?**

Dr. Howard asked if students should be required to write a paper during their first year. Dr. Tormey suggested that this be discussed as part of the Informatics Thread since one of the topics they deal with is the importance of communication in a variety of forums as well as the ability to draw from a lot of information resources. Janice Contini agreed with this suggestion, and Dr. Tormey volunteered to bring it up at the next Informatics Thread meeting.

Emily Dossett commented that it was highly important for students to know how to write. She informed that the Nutrition paper is done as a competition so students put more attention to it in order to stand out from the rest. She felt that it was important to incorporate writing in the first two years.

Dr. Wilkerson thought that this topic should be on the next month’s agenda. Dr. Sofroniew felt that verbal communication as well as written communication should be integrated into the Informatics Thread. This topic will be discussed next time.

**Next Meeting**

It was decided to move the January meeting date from the 8th to the 15th. Christina was asked to send out a notice to all of the members.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.