Minutes: Meeting of February 13, 2002

Present:
Drs. Thomas Drake, Ronald Edelstein, Theodore Hall, Mark Noah, Neil Parker, Shobita Rajagopalan, Stuart Slavin, Randolph Steadman, Margaret Stuber (Co-Chair), John Tormey (Co-Chair) and LuAnn Wilkerson, and Joan Kaplowitz.

Students: Mailan Cao (MS I), Emily Dossett (MS III), Sarah Kennedy (MS II), Amy Olin (MS II), Apoor Patel, Amy Stenson (MS III), Anne Walling (MSIII) and Donna Zulman (MS I).

Guests: Drs. Susan Baillie, Kim Crooks, Dotun Ogunyemi, and Lorraine Williams-Smith, and Pat Anaya, Gezelle Miller, Charlotte Myers and Christina Yoon.

Review of actions at December and January meetings

At the December and January MEC meetings, members unanimously approved a series of motions regarding credit requirements for graduation and administration of the elective courses. The Co-Chairs of the MEC presented the following two recommendations to the FEC where they were approved.

1. The number of required weeks of instruction in the third and fourth years was increased from 78 to 80.
2. Responsibility for evaluating and improving elective courses was reassigned from an ad hoc subcommittee of the MEC to the College Chairs Committee.

After the January meeting, student representatives from the third and fourth year classes as well as class Presidents reminded the MEC Co-Chairs that they were not present at the January meeting and requested an opportunity to share their concerns and ideas with the Committee on two proposals that were approved, viz:

1. Students will have all courses noted on their transcripts. This will include required, elective and "extra" coursework. "Extra" coursework is that which is done during required clerkships or credited electives, either research or clinical. All courses will be noted with the time the course was taken and include the relative weight of time spent (e.g., weeks).
2. Students will not receive "credit towards graduation" for "extra" coursework done during the time they are also doing required clerkships or credited electives, either research or clinical.

The Co-Chairs of the MEC postponed presentation of recommendations on these matters until the Committee, including third and fourth year representation discusses them. Decisions will be taken to the FEC at its February meeting.

Continuation of discussion on credit toward graduation

Dr. Stuber briefly summarized the rationale for each of the original motions that were passed. Then the students provided input.
There was concern that students were able to take longitudinal courses at the same time they were taking required courses, begging the question of what constitutes a full time course? There was a strong sense that students should not earn full time credit for taking two courses simultaneously. However, courses that meet on weekends, in the evening, or the early morning fit into a different category. The issue is not about getting credit, but credit toward graduation.

Emily Dossett (MS III) stated that courses such as Medical Spanish, Ethics, and Literature in Medicine et al. are really worthwhile. Students put a lot of energy and time into them and feel they should earn credit toward graduation.

It was noted that students could still take the electives for credit, just not credit toward graduation, they would be recorded on transcripts.

Another student comment was that these courses are manageable in terms of doing well in both the course and the clerkship. She has taken some of these courses, and there was no conflict between the two responsibilities and added value to the third year. Student representatives objected to this reasoning, arguing that when students put in additional time and gain additional information, they should earn credit toward graduation. Credit provides more incentive to attend the course and do the required work.

Students also felt that these courses should be treated as equals and not sub par. Dr. Slavin countered that not giving credit toward graduation is not making a value statement about the course.

All agreed that since Doctoring 4 is mostly accomplished during regular course time, it is reasonable to not give credit toward graduation.

Dr. Stuber reviewed the following guiding principles for giving credit to longitudinal electives:

1. **No conflict**: Two courses may not be taken simultaneously except longitudinal courses. However the longitudinal course must be taught in time outside of the time the required or elective course is scheduled in the Handbook.
2. **Credit appropriate to the time required**: Credit in the third and fourth years is calculated in units of "weeks". The credit given will be calculated on amount of time of direct participation calculated in weeks.
3. **Credit for courses**: All courses, including longitudinal courses, must have learning objectives, supervision, and evaluation of students and the course.

There was some disagreement about the first issue of "no conflict". There was general consensus that students should not get credit for being in two places at the same time. Dr. Stuber mentioned that each clerkship would have to clarify what its regular times are. The times of participation for elective courses are already included in the Handbook.
Dr. Slavin suggested that if students are not getting weeks of credit toward graduation, the Dean’s Letter could include a note indicating the student’s participation above and beyond the requirements.

There may be a problem with the way the courses define themselves in terms of weeks. The burden of proof should not be on the course directors as to whether they are within or exceeding the hours that are advertised for their various courses. The burden of proof should be on the electives and the students taking the electives. Structuring it into the Handbook would make it easier for students to schedule their courses accordingly.

Apoor Patel stated that the minority of the students are actually "playing the system" by trying to finish early. He is not convinced that students in his Class are ending any earlier than students in other Classes. He reminded the Committee that the students started earlier, by losing a summer in the second year. Most students are ending around or a little after Match Day.

Amy Stenson commented that at a prior meeting, there was some discussion about the possibility of limiting a 52-week period to having 52 weeks of credit. She felt that this was a good compromise. She also stated that these longitudinal courses are very worthwhile. She thought it would be beneficial to cast a wider net to encourage more students to take these kinds of courses, and attributing credit toward graduation would be a great incentive.

Under guideline #2, it is possible that certain courses may receive a fraction of credit. Some thought there should be a minimum of one-week. Dr. Slavin commented that certain valuable courses would not meet the one-week requirement but should not be excluded from being offered. Dr. Steadman thought that the original intent of looking at this issue was to increase accountability for these electives and not be restrictive. The School should encourage faculty to offer new and innovative courses.

Dr. Stuber reminded members that these are general guidelines by which the MEC would judge future electives. Individual courses can be dealt with after that. Dr. Slavin expressed concern that the one-week minimum, if implemented, might discourage some faculty/students from offering/taking a course. However, what the minimum indicates is that in order to count for graduation, a course needs to be more substantial.

Dr. Noah moved to approve the proposal as written. This motion was seconded and the following discussions ensued.

Dr. Wilkerson asked if this motion includes the fact that the 40-hour minimum would be discussed further and voted upon separately. Dr. Drake clarified that if members approve this motion, they would be voting to give credit but to defer how it would be actually implemented. Excessively detailed rules could be counterproductive.

To make things concrete, under these guidelines, the following would take place:
1. Doctoring 4 would not get credit toward graduation but will get credit on the transcript because it is a daytime activity and takes students out of other clerkships.
2. Medical Spanish would get a portion of credit because it is outside the regular hours.
3. Other longitudinal electives that meet on weekends or at times that other clerkships/electives do not meet, earn credit toward graduation.

It was suggested amending the proposal to specify that credit means credit towards graduation in this proposal. Dr. Parker informed that this applies only to #1.

Amended motion:

1. No conflict: Two courses may not be taken simultaneously except longitudinal courses for credit towards graduation. However the longitudinal course must fall in time which is outside of the time the regular course is scheduled in the Handbook.
2. Credit appropriate to the time required: Credit in the third and fourth years is calculated in units of "weeks". The credit given will be calculated on amount of time of direct participation calculated in weeks.
3. Credit for courses: All courses, including longitudinal courses, must have learning objectives, supervision, and evaluation for students and the course.

The motion was approved with the following votes: ten in favor, three opposed, and one abstention.

Medical education at Drew

Drs. Edelstein and Rajagopalan reviewed and updated the Committee on Drew activities. Dr. Edelstein introduced several Drew faculty members who attended the meeting: Drs. Lorraine Williams-Smith (ENT Clerkship Director and Foundations Program Chair) and Dotun Ogunyemi (Clerkship Director for Gynecology).

Please see Dr. Edelstein's slide presentation and Dr. Rajagopalan's slide presentation for details. Here are some highlights:

A new Dean, Dr. Marcelle Willock, will start in May 2002. There is a new curriculum, a new thesis program, and new faculty leadership roles. Drew, in partnership with UCLA, won the Outstanding Community Service Award in 1998, which is the highest academic award for community service. There is also an excellent track record in the Match. There is a new magnet high school on the Drew campus.

Drew’s mission is to conduct medical education and research in the context of service to a defined population so as to train persons to provide care with excellence and compassion to this and other underserved populations.
There are 24 students in each class of the undergraduate medical education. Training for the first two years is conducted at UCLA, then the students move to Drew for their clinical training. There are 15 residency training programs, and a transitional program has been approved to begin this year. Drew is nationally recognized for some of their research.

For LCME purposes, the Administrations must define what equivalence is between Drew and UCLA, and they are fostering more participation in the basic science curriculum in the first two years. They will track their alumni. Drew has developed an Office of Curricular Affairs, and the Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee will work through this office.

Drew has a Clinical Clerkship Peer Review process developed by Dr. Karlon Johnson. Every month, a different clerkship is reviewed. There is a focus group of randomly selected medical students and there is a field evaluation where selected faculty go to the site to determine whether objectives are being met. Feedback is given to the Clerkship Directors. The process has been very well received.

Drew is in the process of building a Drew Liaison Team that will foster greater participation between the two institutions in the first two years. The only difference in the third and fourth year curriculum is that they have added Foundations in Primary Care Research. The Foundations is scheduled for July 1-3. Also, a module on Bioterrorism will be added in this Foundations as well as in the Clinical and College Foundations.

Dr. Rajagopalan reviewed the Clinical and College curricula in detail. Student interest groups have been incorporated in the College. There is a research requirement that has evolved into a thesis requirement. There is a new Drew website, which is much easier to navigate than the former one. Student research projects are posted on the website for review.

The Core Clerkships at Drew and at UCLA are separate. The fourth year electives are open to students at both institutions and earn credit toward graduation.

**Approval of new Year IV electives**

The College Chairs Committee reviewed the new electives at its last meeting. The MEC must determine a process for approval of electives.

The College Chairs Committee was thanked for their careful review and consideration. Dr. Stuber informed that 11 electives were reviewed and recommended for approval. Some were not recommended for approval.

Members felt that more information should be made available; hence, it was agreed that the PDF files of the recommended electives (which has a detailed description) be made available on the Web for the MEC members to review before they make a final vote of approval. In the future, these PDF files will be attached to the minutes and agenda notices.
The eleven electives recommended by the College Chairs Committee were approved with one abstention.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.