Minutes: Meeting of May 8, 2002

Present:
Students: Mailan Cao (MSI), Emily Dossett (MSIII), Sarah Kennedy (MSII), Dawn Ogawa (MSII), Amy Olin (MSII), and Donna Zulman (MSI)
Guests: Drs. Sue Baillie and Josh Goldhaber and Pat Anaya, Joyce Fried, Louise Howard and Charlotte Myers
Excused: Drs. Drake, Noah and Rajagopalan

Class of 2004 Presentation - Sarah Kennedy & Amy Olin

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The second year student representatives reviewed an "ideal" day of a medical student concluding that there just is not enough time in a day to study. They surveyed the class on issues including attendance, Boards, and the new curriculum. A total of 86 students replied.

They surveyed their peers about their study time (not including in-class time). Students indicated that they spend 13 hours/week studying for PPD, 13 hours/week studying for the Boards, 7 hours/week in preceptorships, and 7 hours/week in school-related commitments.

The students commented that there is not enough time to study and to do everything else that needs to be done on a given day. Those who do not attend lectures make that choice primarily because they feel they don’t have the time. Because afternoon commitments are required, they "sacrifice" the morning lectures. Students commented that four hours of lectures a day is too long, and they prefer a more interactive style. Attendance at lecture drops after Spring Break.

Potential action item:
Students were overwhelmingly in favor of moving the FCM preceptor visits, pediatric visits, and psychiatry visits earlier in the year. They felt that this would improve attendance at lectures. Students were frustrated that FCM visits continued through April when there were free afternoon in the fall. Currently, there are 10 FCM preceptor visits starting in October and ending in April. Students commented that preceptor experiences varied in quality and that there was some dissatisfaction with some preceptors. Dr. Wilkerson mentioned that moving the afternoon sessions earlier would give students more time to forget these skills before starting the third year. Sarah Kennedy expressed the expectation that students’ skills would be refreshed during Clinical Foundations, and suggested that FCM could be more efficiently structured.

Potential action item:
Student representatives felt that students would attend more lectures if they were case-
based, used a greater mixture of modalities (CPCs, patients, small group case reviews), and reviewed clinically and Board-relevant material. Students suggested shortening the total number of lecture hours from 4 to 2 a day and decreasing the number of afternoon commitments. Students preferred small group sessions.

Students indicated that they do not feel well prepared for Boards but also feel that Board scores are very important for their future. Students felt that they were getting mixed messages from peers and from the Administration about the Boards. They most often heed advice from their peers. The issue for students is not whether they will pass their courses, but whether they will score well on the Boards.

The student representatives felt that two hours of lecture time is enough. They see the value in lectures, but felt that lectures should be structured well and have a mixture of modalities. One student commented that the quality of the lectures is crucial. She felt that having a great lecture combined with great small group sessions to integrate the material and then having the afternoon to study on their own would be an appropriate structure.

**Potential action item:**
Dr. Parker suggested that in order for students to do very well on the Boards, the second-year curriculum needs to finish earlier, students should start some clinical work, and then have a break in the middle of the third year to re-study for the boards.

The second-year class was somewhat satisfied with the curriculum but feels that there is definitely room for improvement. Students favored the new curriculum proposal, indicating that they would prefer an organ-system based curriculum, less lecture, and more interactive tutorials.

In summary, lecture attendance declines after spring break; UCLA students feel they need more time to study for Boards; lecture attendance would improve if required afternoon commitments were rescheduled earlier in the year; less lecture time and more interactive small groups would improve student satisfaction; and views on the new curriculum are varied, but most students seem to want a change.

**Potential action item:**
Dawn Ogawa wondered if the idea of having bookends in the new curriculum was going to be revisited. A bookend was somewhat like the Foundations Block but would be held at the end to tie up everything that students learned. Once the new curriculum proposal is approved, these ideas can be revisited for further planning. There were two open forums, and one more session is scheduled. A vote will be taken on May 29th.

Dr. Tormey thanked the student representatives for a very informative presentation.

**Class of 2005 Presentation - Mailan Cao & Donna Zulman**

*Click here for PowerPoint slides* (Best viewed with Internet Explorer 5)
The following questions were sent via email to approximately 70 students who attended one of three presentations on the new curriculum in April 2002.

1. Are you in favor of the new curriculum as presented?
2. What aspects of the proposal will work well?
3. What aspects of the proposal will need to be reconsidered?
4. What comments, questions or concerns were not addressed by the presentation?

There were 20 responses. The respondents were self-selected and tended to be those who are more passionate about the curriculum and more interested in curricular change since they attended a meeting in the first place. All 20 students recommended that the committee take steps in the direction that was proposed in the new curriculum. Students are in favor of this change as a concept but do have several concerns about the implementation.

Students felt that the following would work well in the new curriculum (listed in order of number of responses received):

- Emphasis on integration, lifelong learning, teamwork, systems-orientation
- Emphasis on small groups
- Less lecture time
  - more time for research, community service, outside interests, teaching, work
  - lecture time must be more focused and ALL presented material should be pertinent; less lectures on one professor’s research
  - better quality teaching should result from less lecture time
- Coordination among departments to reduce overlap; eliminating redundancy
- Integrated, consistent lecture notes
- Weekly assessments in USMLE style
- Case studies, weekly themes
- Focus on clinical material and physical examination skills early on
- Opportunity for UCLA to take a critical look at what is working well and what isn’t and make changes

Students recommended that the following aspects of the proposal should be reconsidered:

1. Quality of teaching: There should be more investment in faculty development and the evaluation system
2. Lecture notes and other resources need to be well-written, consistent in format, and critically examined by Course Chairs and students. They need to be available before each block. A student focus group was recommended to critically examine the quality of resource notes.
3. Dr. Edelstein suggested inviting a representative from the NBME to UCLA to discuss content and direction of the examination. Dr. Wilkerson informed that this is one of the things she is working on.
4. Weekly assessments:
Shouldn’t be too difficult or too detail-oriented
May create a stressful learning environment that negates pass/fail system; changes UCLA atmosphere
Must be closed book to be effective
Should be bi- or tri-weekly
Should not be limited to board-style questions
Should be taken by all students on the same day/time to avoid cheating
Should be available as a learning resource, but should not required. (At Yale, tests are optional. One option could be to make these assessments optional.)

5. Independent Learning Time
   Consider replacing 2nd year Foundations with time at the end to study for boards.
   With fewer lectures, students will need more time to study on own.
   ILT should be incorporated into the curriculum to avoid overloading students.

Students recommend the following action steps:

- Collect comprehensive student input before and during implementation
- Form a task force to review successes and challenges at other schools
- Garner strong faculty, leadership and financial support
- Continue to promote curricular improvements in the current curriculum and do not neglect it because of focusing on the new curriculum. The first-year class does not want to be neglected.
- Notify the incoming class about the changes. (NB: This was done in April).

Dr. Tormey informed that he received emails from students who expressed interest in participating on planning committees in the future. Emily Dossett suggested doing a computer-based survey about the new curriculum. Dr. Tormey thanked the students for their very helpful presentation and feedback.

**Molecular & Membrane Biology Course Test-Out Option - Dr. Tormey**

Course Co-Chairs, Drs. Gasson and Wright, have requested approval to introduce a "test-out" option for either the whole MMB course, just the first half or just the second half of the course. A number of students have indicated in their evaluations that they have had this material before and would have liked the option of testing out. The Course Chairs propose to offer the test during or before the first week of instruction. Questions will be modeled on previous midterm and final examination questions. They wanted the MEC’s support in moving forward with this option.

The student representatives favored the idea of offering this option, and felt that it should be offered even if this is the last year that the course may be offered. Currently, students have the option to test out of Biomathematics. The "test out" exam should be given before school starts and should not be open book. Student and faculty members felt that
students should have discretionary time if they test out of this course to use as they choose, and the school should not require an alternate experience.

Dr. Wilkerson moved to allow the Molecular & Membrane Biology course to offer a separate test out option before classes begin that is equivalent to the course level. The circumstances of the exam should be the same as the final exam, and students who test out would not be expected to do any other activity during this time. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.