Minutes: Meeting of January 11, 2006

Present:
Drs. Craig Byus, Wendy Coates, Christian DeVirgilio, Ronald Edelstein, Sally Krasne, Shaleen Metten, Dotun Ogunyemi, Neil Parker, Margaret Stuber (Co-Chair), John Tormey (Co-Chair), and LuAnn Wilkerson, and Cheryl Bartel (alternate to Dr. Kaplowitz).

Students: Jonathan Abelson, Aron Bruhn, Justin Cheongsiatmoy, and Ali Mohammed Khan.

Guests: Drs. Sue Baillie, Cha Chi Fung, Patricia O’Sullivan, Tahlia Spector, and Carl Stevens, and Joyce Fried, Louise Howard, and Gezelle Miller.

Minutes of December Meeting

The minutes were approved as written.

Announcement

Dr. Wilkerson announced that there is a Western Group on Educational Affairs Conference coming up in April in Asilomar. If anyone is interested in attending, they need to submit an abstract for workshops or panel discussions. The conference begins on the last Sunday of April. If anyone is interested, they can contact Dr. Wilkerson for more information.

Concept of Student Portfolios - Their Uses in Undergraduate Medical Education -
Dr. Patricia O’Sullivan, UCSF

Dr. Wilkerson introduced Dr. O’Sullivan who joined the UCSF faculty as Director of Medical Education Research in the Office of the Dean.

Please review the attached slides for details.

Discussion

Dr. O’Sullivan commented that one entry may take anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours to complete and the score for the portfolio can be reliable with six entries and two raters. Dr. O’Sullivan commented that it is very important to have portfolio entries come from material that is naturally embedded in the curriculum.

Dr. Tormey asked about the importance of having faculty buy in before implementing this program. Dr. O’Sullivan responded that it is very important for faculty to understand the purpose of using portfolios at UCLA and that certain amount of faculty development will be necessary. There needs to be orientation and buy in.
Dr. DeVirgilio observed that phenomenal residents are typically very insightful and are able to figure out their areas of strengths and weaknesses, however, the weaker students lack such insight. He asked if portfolios could help such students gain insight.

Justin Cheongiatmoy thought there would be self-selecting bias if students were the ones choosing what entries to include in their portfolios, as they would only choose positive items. Dr. O’Sullivan responded that the School would structure and determine the portfolio topics and could choose to have students put in entries based on their best improvements or on topics they did not understand. She shared that she has not seen a great deal of self-selecting bias.

Dr. Wilkerson commented that almost all of our assessment systems are looking for students’ best work. She likes the idea of seeing the best work someone can do, but she feels that it will vary from learner to learner. Ali Khan stated that it would be important to choose what exactly will be evaluated in these portfolios. He felt that PBL and Doctoring would not be fair to evaluate on a global scale because there is a great deal of subjectivity on how students are graded in these sessions.

Dr. O’Sullivan was thanked for her presentation.

**The case for "Nutrition Bytes": should there be a graduation competency in written communication? - Dr. Carl Stevens**

Dr. Stevens explained that Nutrition Bytes is an online journal dedicated to UCLA student papers on nutrition. It was first published in 1995 by Felice Kurtzman who teaches nutrition to medical students. It "enhances the medical curriculum by giving the students an opportunity to survey and critically analyze nutrition research". Papers are written by students that are up to 2000 words on a nutrition-related topic, ranging from basic science to clinical to epidemiology. See attached

This was a required exercise in Year 1 of the old curriculum. Best papers are selected for online publication, with Medline listing and ISSN number, can list as reference on ERAS.

The MEC is asked to decide if this exercise should be kept in the curriculum, should be changed, or removed completely from the curriculum. Dr. Stevens stated that this exercise provides the most available individualized counseling from faculty on a longitudinal project. There is not an oversupply of such faculty contact. Dr. Tormey added that this group of faculty has the interest and skills of conduct this type of an exercise. This resource/asset is still available and should not be discarded all together.

Dr. Wilkerson commented that this exercise is poorly evaluated by the students and the block chairs do not want to include it in their blocks. She asked that the MEC consider what the goals are and if it should be kept in the curriculum. Dr. Baillie stated that this has been one of the lowest rated curricular items both in the old curriculum as well as in the new curriculum. She thought that the students looked at the exercise as an add-on in both curricula.
Aron Bruhn commented that a lot of the students had problems with the scope. It intimated a lot of students and it was a lot of work. Students did not necessarily have problems writing about nutrition, but they felt that it was a long learning issue when they were doing a lot of that already. He felt that it would be a shame to lose the opportunity to have a published paper in an area that might be of interest to some students. It might be easier to make this optional for interested students. If the committee wants to require students to write something on nutrition, it could be then incorporated into a learning issue. Dr. Metten suggested the possibility of doing some part of this in the first year such as working on the literature search then putting it into a journal format in the second year.

Dr. DeVirgilio suggested having an online journal be a form for students who are doing a research project. Dr. Parker felt that the question the MEC should first consider is whether or not students should be required to do a significant writing project that reflects on being able to evaluate the literature. Dr. Krasne objected to requiring such a writing project. She asked what this would do to make our graduates better doctors by doing it only once. She commented that learning issues are done repeatedly whereas this is a one-time exercise. She felt that the nutrition topic was too limiting. Dr. Parker thought about requiring a thesis like Drew rather than Nutrition Bytes. Jonathan Abelson suggested having a tiered system with PBL, Nutrition Bytes, thesis, etc. -- some being required and some being optional.

Dr. Stevens implemented what is called, "Best Bets", in the second year curriculum. These are highly formatted way of asking a clinical question, going to literature and framing a question in a particular way. This is not a formal writing exercise, but it could serve as an alternative, which would accomplish some of the same goals. These are already being done in Blocks 6 and 7.

Dr. Coates felt that people should be able to write and that effective written communication is an important goal. Dr. DeVirgilio agreed and thought that writing should be part of the medical curriculum. However, he did not feel that students should be required to write a paper on nutrition. He would support the idea of having a research or paper requirement that could take the form of Nutrition Bytes, review of literature on a topic, or clinical or basic science research paper. Dr. Byus stated that one’s ability to write has a big impact on his profession. It is a skill in medicine that is extremely valued. He felt that the topic is irrelevant; learning the skills and having longitudinal feedback are key. If there is a group of faculty who want to and enjoy providing this opportunity, why find another group and set up new system?

Dr. Wilkerson commented that UCLA does not have a graduation competency related to writing; only Drew does. She encouraged the members to review the Practice Based Learning and Improvement section of the Graduation Competencies in preparation for continuing this discussion at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35pm.