TUCCSON EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (TEPC)
MINUTES
August 4, 2010

Present: Paul St. John (Chair); Sean Elliott; Kristi Grall; Carol Howe; Adam Luber; Ted Price; Cindy Rankin; Sydney Rice

Apologized: Diana Darnell; Mindy Fain; Ron Heimark; Randy Horwitz; Michael Kushner; Anna Landau; Wyatt Unger

Resources: Joanna Arnold; Jack Dexter; Nancy Koff; Lee Jones; Gail Koshland; Kevin Moynahan

The minutes of July 21, 2010 were approved.

Announcements:

PASS Step 1 – Joanna Arnold
The COM Administration has directed the Office of Student Development to design and implement a pilot project to help improve student outcomes on the USMLE Step 1 exams. Preparing ArizonaMed Students for Success on Step 1 (PASS Step 1) is a two-year longitudinal course, of which all students must complete at least some aspects. The first year is directed toward helping students develop effective learning strategies, organize concepts and apply learning within different contexts. PASS Step 1 for Year I culminates in the NBME Comprehensive Exam 1, which the Dean has required all students to take.

The second year of the PASS program focuses on developing test-taking skills, review strategies, and effective use of NBME study resources. Students will construct individualized schedules that will organize their study through a six-week intensive Step 1 preparation period. The second year culminates in the required NBME Comprehensive Exam 2. PASS Step 1 workshops are scheduled regularly throughout both years, and while all students are encouraged to attend the workshops, students who have demonstrated high risk for failure will be obliged by the Dean to complete the entire series.

The first implementation begins with Year II and the DMH II block. PASS workshops will be coordinated to block content, although they are not scheduled within time allocated to the blocks. The Year I PASS curriculum will be implemented in the Spring. If the pilot implementation proves successful, PASS Step 1 may become integrated as a regular feature of the ArizonaMed curriculum.

As this program is established under the direction of the Dean’s Office, it is not required that TEPC approve the pilot program, but TEPC does endorse this important effort.

Guidelines for Expectations of the Developmental Curriculum (CBI):
A common theme emerging from the Level 2-Years I and II Report (April 4, 2010) and recent annual block reports, is that “developmental curriculum” guidelines need to be established that set design and delivery expectations for CBI and other instructional activities. A developmental curriculum acknowledges (and challenges appropriately) advances in student sophistication as self-directed learners.

Unifying guidelines would provide benchmarks for faculty as they design instructional activities, as well as provide standards by which those activities may be evaluated. It was suggested that TEPC is the appropriate governing body to establish these guidelines, but that those directly involved in coursework, and those having expertise in the application of pedagogy, should draft the standards. Dr. St.John recommended that a proposal be made for unifying CBI design and delivery across blocks, which reflects developmental curriculum principles. The proposal should be ready for adoption by the TEPC early
enough so that implementation may begin with next year’s planning cycle. For the September 1 TEPC meeting, Dr. St.John asked members to be prepared to establish and charge a CBI Method Review team of Block Directors, OMSE, and Office of Student Development personnel to develop the proposal.

**Town Hall Meeting on the Curriculum**

In Dr. Heimark’s absence, Dr. St.John reported that the members of the planning group for the Town Hall Meeting have been identified and that they will soon be called to meet. All members of TEPC are urged to submit questions and discussion topics they think would be important for the general faculty to discuss.

**Disposition of Old Policies**

Recently the EPC reviewed all policies enacted by the former Curriculum Committee in order to update those that should be brought forward into the new curriculum and to sunset those that no longer have bearing. At the conclusion of that work, a number of old policies were deemed to be of local, rather than program-wide, interest. Four groupings of these were referred to TEPC for disposition:

**Teaching Awards:** The teaching award policies were considered to be important, but out of date with the organization of the new curriculum. A full reworking of the teaching awards will be required to ensure relevance to the integrated character of the curriculum, specialized courses involving small groups of students (Doctor and Patient), among other concerns. Polling issues are also much more complex with the new curriculum and those logistics will need consideration. Drs. Rankin, Elliot and Mr. Luber volunteered to draft a proposal to meet these concerns. Dr. Koshland will forward to them information on recent teaching awards.

**Student Petitions for Exemption to Curricular Policy:**
The former curriculum, based in disciplines, allowed students of advanced standing in a curricular discipline (e.g., PhD) to petition out of the course requirement covering their expertise. The new integrated curriculum removes that possibility almost entirely, but certain opportunities may remain (e.g., Nervous System) where it may be possible. The committee members decided to retain this policy, but modify it to better meet the curricular and administrative structures in place. A revision of these policy statements, drawn from suggestions by the members, will be prepared for the next meeting.

**USMLE Preparation Policies:**
In light of the recent progress by the Dean to establish a formal program to help students prepare for USMLE Step 1, the old policies covering these concerns are considered moot. The members voted to drop the old USMLE policies. Dr. Koff reminded the members that, even though the Dean’s policy is endorsed by the TEPC, there may need to be some policy to enforce student expectations of required interventions, because passing the USMLE is a graduation requirement set by the EPC.

Addendum: One last set of old policies—on enrollment guidelines for visiting students—will need to be reviewed by TEPC. Since visiting students are strictly a concern of the elective curriculum and have bearing on Student Affairs procedures, these policies will be first reviewed by the Clinical Curriculum Subcommittee and Student Affairs, with subsequent recommendations to the TEPC.

The next meeting of TEPC will be held September 1, 2010.

Minutes submitted by
Jack Dexter, PhD
Office of Medical Student Education