

**EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
QUILLEN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
Medical Student Education Committee  
Minutes  
December 18, 2012**

The Medical Student Education Committee of the Quillen College of Medicine  
met on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 at 4:15 p.m.  
in the Academic Affairs Conference Room, Stanton-Gerber Hall.

**Voting Members**

**Present:**

Ken Olive, MD  
Caroline Abercrombie, MD  
Reid Blackwelder, MD  
Rich Feit, MD  
Howard Herrell, MD  
Dave Johnson, PhD  
Ramsey McGowen, PhD  
Paul Monaco, PhD  
Jamie Reagan, M4  
Rebekah Rollston, M1

***Ex officio* / Non-Voting & Others**

**Present:**

Cindy Lybrand, Med  
Cathy Peeples, MPH  
Lisa Myers, BA

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**1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the 11-13-12 meeting were approved as modified in regard to an Outcomes Subcommittee recommendation being in progress not “postponed.”

**2. Topics**

**a. Update: [ED-13] Rehabilitation in the Curriculum**

Dr. Olive reported a positive and enthusiastic response from course/clerkship directors in regard to implementing MSEC’s [12/4](#) directives for specific rehabilitative care teaching components &/or experiences.

**b. Curriculum Content (Gaps) Report: Biostatistics**

The committee reviewed the report summarized as follows:

- From our database, content in required curriculum:

M1

Biostatistics and Epidemiology – intermediate level

M2

Practice of Medicine – in context of evidence-based medicine

M3

Internal Medicine clerkship – basic

Community Medicine clerkship – descriptive statistics

Family Medicine clerkship – evidence-based medicine project

OB/GYN clerkship – evidence-based medicine presentation

M4

Keystone – Journal article review and review of pertinent biostatistics

- Electives  
Research electives in Biochemistry, Family Medicine, Reproductive Biology, Pathology, Pharmacology, Statistics and Research Design & Surgery
- Data in response to 2011 & 2012 AAMC Graduation Questionnaire (GQ) items:
  - How well did your study of – Biostatistics and epidemiology – prepare you for clinical clerkships and electives? [Poor Fair Good Excellent]
  - (Rate) your instruction in the following area – Biostatistics – [Inadequate Appropriate Excessive]
- USMLE Step 1 comparison to national mean, 2009 – 2011

Discussion regarded:

- Students not fully realizing the relevance of biostatistics when they take the course in M1; also, students not always recognizing its coverage in other courses and clerkships when they encounter it
- Critical assessment of medical literature, diagnostic approach and the evidence-based medicine components included in Family Medicine and OB/GYN clerkships that address biostatistics
- Quillen's GQ responses showing consistent or improved percentages in the Fair & Good categories, which were higher than the national average, but related to "All Schools," had double the Poor percentage and lower Excellent
- Consideration, based on the GQ data and the other factors, of whether biostatistics in our curriculum was adequate
- Standard deviation of Step 1 scores in this area remaining only slightly below the mean and not statistically different over the past three years

**ACTION:**

*MSEC determined that our content is minimally adequate with room for improvement, especially in the clinical years. On a motion by Dr. Herrell and seconded by Dr. Monaco, MSEC agreed that principles introduced earlier in the curriculum need additional reinforcement in M3.*

*Further discussion prompted a motion by Dr. Monaco, seconded by Dr. Abercrombie and approved by members to add a new required session in OB/GYN that addresses biostatistics no later than Period 6 Spring 2013.*

*Details of the implementation are to be at the discretion of Dr. Herrell, the clerkship director, but MSEC outlined that the session should:*

- *Be interactive in nature*
- *Make use of relevant OB/GYN literature*
- *Emphasize concepts of relative risk (or odds ratios, hazard risks), meaning of statistical significance and power of studies*

### **c. Update: Standards across Courses**

MSEC discussion regarding standards across courses has been ongoing since it began at the [10/2](#) Retreat in response to M1/M2 Course Directors' recommendations (9-26-12).

November 27, 2012 – Letter to MSEC from basic science course directors, Dr. Schoborg (Immunology), Dr. Duffourc (Pharmacology) & Dr. Hayman (Microbiology), in support of greater standardization, noting their wish to ensure that standardized policies neither reduce academic rigor nor increase grade inflation and expressing their collective opinion in regard to:

1. Use of NBME Subject Exam as course final exam if available
2. Standard policy for exam question rebuttals
3. Standard grading scale of A, B, C & F (No D grade with accompanying policy that allows remediation of course sections or retaking of exams)

December 14, 2012 – Outcomes Subcommittee meeting; report to MSEC today included a recommendation regarding the use of NBME exams:

- If an NBME Subject Exam is available for a course, it will be used
- The subject exam will be weighted approximately 15% or equal to a sectional exam for the course
- Scaled scores reported by NBME will be converted to z scores to adjust for local exam performance

#### **ACTION:**

*Following discussion, on a motion by the Outcomes Subcommittee and seconded by Dr. Blackwelder, MSEC approved the NBME policy as recommended, effective Spring 2013.*

Members' lengthy discussion about exam question rebuttals regarded:

- Current course policies varying widely and causing concern among students
- Necessity of rigorous statistical backup (can't get from exams on D2L); Microbiology and Pharmacology using the combination of percent correct, point biserial and student comments collected during the exam to determine whether credit for exam questions should be modified
- Debate on adjusting exam time period to accommodate student feedback
- Student comments helping to improve questions; also, that having a low percentage of correct answers may mean a question is difficult, not necessarily flawed
- Emphasis on fairness for all students and the examination process and general faculty-student collaboration reinforcing learning of the material
- Benefits for faculty and students of defusing students' struggle for points and the behavior of requesting point and/or grade adjustments based on a defended position after an examination
- Acknowledgement of possible faculty and student resistance to policy changes

ACTION:

*On a motion by Dr. Blackwelder and seconded by Dr. Feit, the following MSEC policy decision was approved by a majority of voting members (with two, Dr. Monaco and Jamie Reagan, opposed specifically in regard to rebuttal no longer being permitted):*

*Effective Spring semester 2013, QCOM policy will prohibit exam question rebuttals for the purpose of changing individual student grades. Course directors will be responsible for having exam questions vetted by more than one faculty member prior to their use. Additionally, course directors are to review response statistics to determine whether individual exam questions should be included in determining the exam grade. Student feedback on any exam question will be allowed; questions regarding exam questions during an exam should be discouraged.*

After discussion and with an addition in regard to the approval of the Student Promotions Committee, MSEC members agreed with Drs. Schoborg, Duffourc & Hayman's recommendation for a standard grading scale for all basic science courses.

ACTION:

*On a motion by Dr. Herrell and seconded by Dr. Monaco, the committee unanimously approved the following.*

*Effective Fall 2013, the D grade will be eliminated for M1 & M2 courses, with grades of A, B, C and F remaining. A grade of F represents a failure requiring one of the following actions based on the recommendation of the course director and approval by the Student Promotions Committee:*

- Retaking the QCOM course the following year.
- Retaking the QCOM course the following summer.

*(In a summer course, the student would review recorded course lectures, take online quizzes to gauge their learning and take the NBME Subject Exam as the sole determinant of the final course grade.)*

*- Retaking an equivalent course the following summer at an accredited U.S. medical school.*

*Dr. Olive will notify M1/M2 course directors and students (Classes of 2015 & 2016) regarding the newly adopted course policies.*

#### **d. Outcomes Subcommittee Report & Additional Recommendation**

Dr. McGowen

- The Outcomes Subcommittee is continuing the process of reviewing established outcome measures in relation to course specific assessment measures and data Ms. Lybrand and Ms. Peeples have been providing.
- Subcommittee plans include:
  - Looking at outcome measures in the interim 'annual reviews' being submitted by Clerkship directors following Period 4
  - Reviewing the baseline percentages set for institutional measures (e.g., subject exam scores) on an annual basis, including considering if some benchmarks for determining our curricular goals should be revised
  - Adding another clinical faculty member
- The Outcomes Subcommittee recommends that the Dean modify the QCOM Mission statement to include "rural and/or underserved"

**3. Recent documents / topics** {Linked or on file in Academic Affairs – contact [myers@etsu.edu](mailto:myers@etsu.edu)}

*Curriculum Content Report: Biostatistics*

*Letter from Drs. Schoborg, Duffourc & Hayman: Faculty recommendation – Standards across Courses*

*[Outcomes Subcommittee] Update & Recommendations*

#### **4. Announcements**

*The next MSEC meeting will be on Tuesday, January 8, 2013.*

*Dates confirmed for LCME's upcoming, focused site visit: June 24 – 26, 2013*

#### **5. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.