

First Year Curriculum Committee (CC1)

Purpose: To plan the first year curriculum and improve integration within the first year and subsequent years

Chairs: Marco Aleman, M.D. and Stephen G. Chaney, PhD

Projects:

1. Develop a Proposal for Revising the First Year Curriculum

In the previous year the CC1 (then the CD1) had set up a First Year Curriculum Task Force to develop recommendations for revising the first year curriculum, and the Task Force had developed specific **Goals for the First Year Curriculum** (attached). Starting in July 2005 the Task Force researched how integrated curricula were structured at other schools and the administrative support that was necessary for those types of curricula to succeed. The Task Force then developed a preliminary proposal for the new curriculum based most closely on the first year curricula at UTMB (Galveston) and UCSF. This preliminary proposal was discussed at the September 10th CC1 meeting and revised based on input from the course directors and student representatives. The proposal was also discussed with the Student Promotions Committee, which resulted in the development of **Guidelines for Remediation and Deceleration** (attached). This input resulted in the development of a revised proposal for **Re-Organization of the First Year Curriculum** (attached), which had the following key points:

- The basic science courses will be combined into four integrated and interdisciplinary blocks with integrated exams.
- Each block will be directed by clinical and basic science Co-Directors.
- There will be a year long Clinical Applications course to integrate between the blocks and provide clinical applications of the basic science information.
- There will be a 15% decrease in contact hours along with a greater emphasis on small group learning.
- There will be enhanced opportunities for individualized and self-directed learning.
- The Co-Directors and teaching faculty will be appointed by the Dean's office in consultation with the department chairs.
- The Co-Directors will monitor teaching performance within courses and the Co-Chairs of the CC1 Committee will monitor integration of material within the curriculum.
- There will be a phased implementation over a three-year period.
- The success of the curriculum will be evaluated annually with the goal of constant quality improvement.

This proposal was passed unanimously by the CC1 at their October 10th meeting, and was subsequently approved by the CMPC on October 14th and the Dean's Advisory Committee on November 2nd.

2. Implementation of the New Curriculum for the 2005-2006 Academic Year

The Task Force met biweekly to propose guidelines for implementation of the new curriculum, which were subsequently reviewed, revised and approved by the CC1 and CMPC. These guidelines include:

- **Guidelines for Implementation of the New Curriculum** (attached). These guidelines focused on selecting the topics to be taught and on innovative teaching strategies for presenting the information.
- **Role of the Basic Science and Clinical Co-Directors** (attached). These guidelines defined the somewhat different roles of the basic science and clinical co-directors in the basic science blocks and the Clinical applications course.
- **Guidelines for Preparing Integrated Exams** (attached). These guidelines defined the desired level of integration and the time table for implementation of fully integrated exam questions.
- **Guidelines for Syllabus Preparation** (attached). These guidelines addressed the issues of uniformity and clear differentiation between essential and supplemental information.
- **Guidelines for Use of Class Time** (attached). These guidelines were focused on changes that would result in more effective and innovative use of lecture time.
- **Guidelines for MS1 Governance Structure** (attached). These guidelines summarized the existing governance structure and added a peer review component for both individual faculty teaching performance and performance of courses as a whole.

In addition to the guidelines described above, the Task Force made the following recommendations that were subsequently approved without the generation of specific guidelines.

Constitution of the CC1 Committee: The Task Force proposed that all faculty who were members of the course development committees be allowed to attend the CC1 meetings, but that only the co-directors of the courses have a vote. This recommendation was subsequently approved by the CMPC.

Time Table for Integration of Content within Blocks: The Task Force made the following recommendations:

First Year:

1) Coordinating topics within and between the 1st year blocks. This includes:

- logical sequencing of topics within a block
- explicitly acknowledging the content linkages between blocks.
- eliminating gaps and redundancies

- using consistent terminology
- recognizing differences of opinion and using them as learning points when appropriate

Subsequent Years:

- 1) Coordination and development of vertical integration between 1st and 2nd year content.
- 2) Clinical teachers and 3rd and 4th year students giving feedback about whether 1st & 2nd year content is appropriate preparation for the clinical years. The learning objectives identified by the Clinical Evolution Task Force might be helpful here.

Student Input: The Task Force proposed that, in addition to the student representatives on the CC1 committee, we solicit student input in the following ways:

- **Town Hall Meetings:** As the new courses are being developed, the course co-directors will set up a Town Hall meeting with the current students to solicit their input.
- **Fireside Chats:** Starting next Fall, there will be monthly fireside chats between the students and the administration.
- **Focus groups:** The Whitehead Student Committee will select groups of 6-10 students who will meet with the course co-directors several times for each course to provide student input.

Other issues taken up only by the CC1 include:

Educational Enhancements:

The committee considered the addition of a Smartboard or an audience response system (ARS) for the new lecture halls in MBRB. They recommended that a SmartBoard be purchased for 2005 and the ARS be purchased in 2006.

Protocol for Taking Exams:

The CC1 proposed a policy to exclude all electronic devices other than the student laptops from exams and to require that all students leave the vicinity of the exam room after finishing the exam. This recommendation was subsequently passed by the CMPC and is now an addendum to the Educational Policies of the School of medicine.

Integration of the New Curriculum:

A portion of each CC1 meeting was set aside for course co-directors to discuss their progress in designing their individual courses so that the committee could suggest ways to better integrate the courses with each other.