A serious flaw in our current curriculum management is that no one has a full understanding of all four years of our curriculum. We all recognize the need to build a more rational scope and sequence of material that systematically takes our students from matriculation to graduation with the result of successfully preparing them all to our specifications. To create the best scope and sequencing of curriculum we need to agree on the final outcomes we seek in our students and we need to understand more completely what we are currently teaching. Our Core Competencies document defines our product. The retreat process proposed below will take us closer to the understanding of the full curriculum that we need prior to proposing significant reforms.

A day-long retreat is proposed to inform key educators about the entire four year curriculum as it now stands and to begin discussions of ways to improve the scope and sequence of the material and skills taught. Summaries of each curricular component would be prepared and circulated prior to the retreat to minimize the time needed for information exchange and maximize discussion opportunities. By the end of the retreat several small groups will have been formed to pick up specific ideas for reform and further develop them as recommendations for our new Executive Associate Dean. Participants would include 1) the CMPC, 2) members of the CC-1, CC-2 and CC-3/4, 3) a few selected chairs representing basic and clinical science, 4) several selected students, 5) Deans Roper and/or Pisano if possible.

Prior to the retreat, each curricular element (block, course, clerkship and 4th year required course) will create a one page summary of their learning objectives and overview of their curricular material and learning environment. An appendix can also be included that lists each class session topic or other details, but the one page summary can not refer to this appendix and must stand on its own as a description. This will total 32 pages (7 1st yr, 14 2nd yr and 11 3rd-4th yr) plus appendices. All retreat participants will be required to have studied these documents ahead of time (lunch will only be given to those who pass the quiz that will be administered at 8am).

At the retreat, the morning would be devoted to reviewing the 32 curricular components, giving one hour to each year. Each course director would have 2 minutes to highlight key elements and then the bulk of the time would go to questions and discussion of each component. The afternoon would be a semi-structured discussion of topics related to vertical integration across years and greater inclusion of clinical material in the basic science years and basic science in the clinical years. By the end of the day we anticipate forming several small groups to carry the discussions forward on several of the areas that emerge from the afternoon. Each small group will include at least one CMPC member.

After the retreat, the small groups will meet 2-3 times over the ensuing 2 months and submit reports of their deliberations for consideration by the CMPC. These reports will highlight areas and processes for further curricular integration and cross teaching of clinical and basic science material. The CMPC can forge these together into a set of recommendations for the new Executive Associate Dean to consider. She/he will also benefit by having the curricular summaries generated by this process.