

School of Medicine Faculty Forum

October 17, 2006

Minutes

Dr. Klobutcher welcomed everyone to the first faculty forum. Dr. Hepworth, Chair of the Oversight Committee, was unable to attend due to illness. Dr. Klobutcher explained that one of the tasks of the Oversight Committee is to hold faculty forums twice yearly with the goal of increasing communication between faculty and the various governance Councils. He explained that brief reports would be provided from the Chairs of the governance Councils, and then the forum would be opened up to questions.

Oversight Committee (OC)

Dr. Klobutcher presented the report from the OC. Members of the OC have been designated to serve as liaisons to the other Councils in order to obtain information on Council activities and to ensure that issues are moving through the appropriate Councils. The OC is charged with initiating department and center reviews. They approved initiation of the Pharmacology, Cell Biology, and Family Medicine Department reviews. Pharmacology is completed, and OC will now monitor how well the conclusions of the review are implemented by the Dean's Council and administration. Finally, the OC is charged with monitoring the Bylaws and suggesting revisions and amendments. A list of proposed Bylaws revisions will be presented for consideration prior to the next faculty forum.

Education Council (EC)

Dr. Koeppen presented the report from the EC. A major accomplishment has been to modify the fourth year academic calendar such that rotations are scheduled every four weeks. This change brings the School in line with what many other medical schools in the northeast do and allows our students to do away electives. One major unresolved issue EC is dealing with is whether a policy on relationships between the pharmaceutical industry and students and residents should be implemented. EC also referred this issue to the Dean's Council for their input on whether this should be expanded beyond learners and include faculty and staff as well.

Dean's Council (DC)

Dr. Koeppen also presented the report from the DC. The DC serves as the integrating committee keeping the various Councils moving in the same direction and not working at cross-purposes. One issue they referred to the Research Council (RC) is the Research Incentive Plan. RC has been working on a revision of the plan for a number of months. Important details still need to be resolved before it comes back to the DC. At the last DC meeting, Dr. Deckers laid out a number of issues he would like the DC to address. These include the following:

- the governance structure of the Health Center going forward (i.e. combined Dean/EVP position);
- engaging the legislature concerning the academic gap, which is under-funding of our academic programs by the State through its General Funds;
- senior faculty who play important roles in our academic programs and how we might continue to engage these people, if willing, after retirement;
- the future of the Public Health Initiative and its relationship to the SOM;
- how best to use new research space, such as the Farmtech building, from a programmatic standpoint;
- transitioning to a matrix organization.

The DC may choose to ask other Councils to take the lead role on some of these issues.

Research Council (RC)

Dr. Lalonde presented the report from the RC. As noted by Dr. Koeppen, the RC has primarily been focusing on revision of the Research Incentive Plan. They have also approved a number of policies, including one concerning Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research, and are beginning to discuss the Research Strategic Plan. The deadline for submission of Strategic Plan proposals has been extended, and RC is discussing how to evaluate these proposals. He also noted that it has been proposed that Dental School faculty be added to the RC. However, School of Medicine Bylaws do not include dental faculty as voting members, so this needs to be addressed. The goal would be to have input from the faculty of both Schools on the Research Incentive Plan and the Research Strategic Plan.

Public Issues Council (PIC)

Dr. Cole presented the report from the PIC. He noted that the PIC has been moving fairly slowly to establish a constructive role for this new Council in the context of the faculty governance structure. The PIC has settled into a method that involves review and surveillance of what issues will come forward and how to make recommendations. Keeping in mind that its mandate includes that it should “champion” particular public issues, the PIC is considering an approach whereby it would seek (1) to mobilize faculty opinion around particular emerging public issues, i.e. by holding faculty forums and hosting outside speakers, etc.; and (2) to use the faculty governance structures to translate these priorities to institutional action on the part of the School of Medicine, i.e. referral to other Councils and the Dean’s Council. Action on the part of the School of Medicine would then involve public stands on issues, lobbying activity, advocacy for particular public policies, and allocation of faculty resources to a given cause. The PIC is open to

suggestions and guidance with regard to how best to move in this direction. Dr. Cole pointed out two examples that are immediately at hand for PIC action: a violence prevention campaign that is being planned in Hartford, and current proposals for “Universal Health Care” that will be considered in the legislative session beginning in January.

Clinical Council (CC)

Dr. Strongwater presented the report from the CC. The CC has been working on a number of important operations issues, including addressing clinical faculty growth and facility needs both on and off campus; accountability of chairs; the new Clinical Incentive Plan; tracking new faculty hires to be sure they are successful in their initial start-up here and as they move forward in their careers. The CC is also looking at finances and has appointed a subcommittee which tracks all financial results. They are also in the process of renegotiating rates with insurance companies. They have been focusing on improving performance and have initiated the BEST Team (Breakthrough Excellence Success through Teamwork). A compensation subcommittee has been appointed to look at rules related to the new incentive plan. They are in the final selection phase for outpatient information systems.

The meeting was then opened up to comments, questions, and concerns.

Dr. Klobutcher asked why the previous Research Incentive Plan was considered a failure and what metrics will be used to determine whether the new plan is successful. Dr. Lalande responded that the goal of the first plan was to move more salary support on to grants to free up dollars that could then be reinvested into other academic programs. That only happened for a short period of time, and it was decided that a new plan should be adopted. Dr. Koeppen added that the previous plan was complex and not easily understood by those participating in it. One of the goals of the new plan is to keep it simple so that faculty can easily determine the impact it will have on them. Major pieces of the plan have been worked out; the financial impact it will have on the institution now needs to be determined. It was noted that another goal is to especially recognize extraordinary performance in the research domain of the plan, and that this might be done through a bonus plan that does not affect base salary.

One individual expressed concern that in order to make ourselves financially viable, we are jeopardizing the academic mission of the institution and asked how this is being addressed. Dr. Strongwater responded that the general notion was that each faculty member would work out a CREAM profile with their chair. He believes that if there is a strain on the educational mission, CREAM profiles have not been set up correctly.

Dr. Koeppen also noted that there are research-in-residence faculty who are 100 percent grant funded but who do teaching, and that from a strict time and effort standpoint, this can present problems. At their last meeting, the DC discussed whether every faculty member should have some portion of their salary on the General Fund to reflect their role in teaching. This discussion is in the early stages and details need to be worked out. He further noted that the academic merit plan was modified in such a way that if a faculty member is rated superior in education, he/she would receive a merit increase. However, if an individual receives a rating of unsatisfactory in education, no increase would be received regardless of the rating earned in the research and clinical areas.

Dr. Adams suggested that any discussion about appropriate relationships between students and residents and pharmaceutical and device manufacturers should also include basic science vendors and their relationships to postgraduate trainees and graduate students. She also noted that a University-wide committee is being constituted to look at conflicts of interest, consulting, and technology and innovation, and suggested that these groups interact at some point.

The amount of advertising being done by community hospitals was noted. A question was raised regarding how the institution planned to address the lack of marketing by UConn. Also questioned was the laying off of some senior individuals involved directly in billing during a time of fiscal crisis. Dr. Strongwater noted that the Health Center recently made a significant investment in marketing, but that we are smaller than other area hospitals and have a smaller budget. Currently, there is an image campaign with the tag line, "Know better care." Another strategy is the physician outreach manager who visits physician offices and promotes the competencies of our faculty. Dr. Lalande suggested using research, such as stem cell research, as a marketing tool, and noted that this has been effective at other institutions. Regarding the concern related to billing, Dr. Strongwater indicated that the institution has tried to very carefully prune where it can while maintaining essential functions.

Dr. Weller asked whether the strategic plan process will be expanded to include other faculty outside the RC. Dr. Lalande responded that the Research Recruitment Committee (RRC), which looks at recruitment from an institutional level, is a large committee with a good cross-section of faculty. It was proposed and agreed that the RRC be involved in the strategic plan process at some stage.

A question regarding the status of Farmtech was raised. Dr. Lalande noted that we are still awaiting resolution and then will move forward on deciding how to use the space. He also noted that money is still available to renovate the L Building.

Dr. Koeppen was asked whether the educational mission includes both medical and graduate education. He responded that it does, and the Dental School as well.

Dr. Carson asked what the OC will do if recommendations resulting from department/center reviews are not implemented. Dr. Klobutcher responded that implementation of all recommendations may not always be feasible or desirable, but it is important that the reviews are given serious consideration, and an action plan developed when appropriate. The OC will be watching this process closely and will ultimately report to the Board of Directors if there is failure to act on these reviews. Dr. Jacob added that the DC was asked by the Dean to play a role in considering information resulting from these reviews and how to act on recommendations that are made. The DC has accepted this responsibility. Also, the chair of the department or center that has been reviewed will prepare a written response to the report. The reports are not public documents, but the DC and OC receive copies of them.

Dr. Shanley stressed the importance of faculty participation if the governance structure is to succeed. He expressed his disappointment in the low participation by faculty in the last election for a faculty representative to the Academic Affairs Subcommittee of the Board of Directors. He and Dr. Klobutcher urged the faculty to send their ideas and concerns to the appropriate Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Donatelli