

Dean's Council (DC)

March 30, 2009

**Minutes**

Present: Dr. Egan, Dr. Fortinsky, Dr. Gould, Dr. Koeppen, Dr. Kuchel, Dr. Nissen, Dr. Pappano, Dr. Simon, Dr. Wolfson

Absent: Dr. Albertsen

Excused: Mr. Gillon, Dr. Lalande, Dr. Laurencin

Guests: Dr. Cusson, Dr. Jacob, Dr. Hepworth, Dr. Rodis

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m.

1. The minutes of the March 16, 2009 meeting were unanimously approved.
2. Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology Review

Before discussing the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology review, Dr. Koeppen noted that Dr. Casey Jacob, who serves as an ex-officio non-voting member of the Dean's Council, reminded him that she is a member of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and asked whether she should recuse herself. The Dean's Council agreed that since Dr. Jacob ran the review and was privy to all of the material provided, her presence would not inhibit discussion.

Dr. Simon then presented his summary of the review report and the department's response. Strengths of the department include its clinical services, particularly in Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, and Gynecologic Oncology. The quality of the undergraduate medical education program, particularly the third year clerkship, and the residency program were also considered strengths, although the educational structure of the department was considered a weakness because of the distribution of the educational leadership to various hospitals throughout the consortium. The review team recommended a retreat to consider redesign of the educational program leadership. The mentoring qualities and professional development by the department chair were also considered strengths. One of the weaknesses is the research domain. The review team found that the research mission is not well articulated, there is no protected time for the faculty for research, and research is not a priority for new faculty hires. The need to recruit academic generalists with protected time for education and scholarly activity was also noted in the report, as well as the need for a fellowship in gynecologic oncology, which has not occurred due to disagreement between School of Medicine faculty and Hartford Hospital faculty on who should be the fellowship director.

Dr. Nissen, who served on the review team, concurred with Dr. Simon's summary. She reiterated that the weakness of the department's research mission was a major concern of the review team. However, it was noted by one DC member that the institution does not support a clinician's research efforts, which makes it very difficult for clinical departments to become strong in that area. Dr. Nissen agreed and added that lack of research also impacts the academic programs, and that two of the department's fellowship programs were cited as a result. She also agreed with Dr. Simon's summary regarding the educational programs. The review team noted the need for direct oversight at the School of Medicine of all educational programs, including core clinical clerkships and residency programs, as well as the need for protected time for the clerkship and residency program directors. The report also addressed the strengths and weaknesses of the departmental leadership.

Dr. Egan, Chairman of the Department, joined the meeting at 4:00 p.m. When asked for his perspective on the review, he indicated that it was a fair assessment of the department's strengths and weaknesses. He was asked about any changes that have occurred since the review that might influence the DC's recommendations to the Dean. He noted that due to the loss of one faculty member in the Division of Gynecologic Oncology, and with another member on medical leave, the division is not as strong as it was when the review occurred. The department did conduct the educational retreat, as recommended by the review team. Approximately six representatives from each of the institutions attended. They discussed the merger and how it would influence some of the review team's recommendations. Dr. Egan thought the recommendations regarding oversight of the educational programs would be greatly facilitated by the merger since UConn and Hartford Hospital would be one faculty body, and oversight could be at either site. When asked whether the research domain would be enhanced by the merger, Dr. Egan responded that it would increase their grant dollars, but the department would still need institutional support for the research mission. He noted that many of the recommendations resulting from the review pertaining to research and education are based on adequate institutional financial support, which he realizes is difficult to attain at this time. One of Dr. Egan's biggest disappointments has been the inability to institute a gynecologic oncology fellowship due to lack of agreement on the program director. He was asked whether merging the two obstetrics residencies at UConn and St. Francis into one program would benefit the department. He believes there would be a number of benefits and a few drawbacks, the biggest being the size of the program and residents rotating to three sites.

Drs. Rodis and Cusson, two more members of the review team, then joined the meeting. Dr. Cusson, Chair of the review team, felt there were areas of strength and potential within the department, but also areas of concern which were not adequately addressed in the department's response. They again noted that their major concerns were related to the research domain because it is such a crucial area for an academic department. They also noted that prior to Dr. Egan assuming the Chair position, various pieces of the department (i.e. most of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility and Gynecologic Oncology) had been removed from the Chair's control. This, coupled with minimal institutional resources, make the department a challenge. The review team recommended creation of a gynecologic oncology fellowship and feel that the obstacles preventing this are not insurmountable. The review team strongly recommended that Dr. Egan be involved in succession planning prior to his planned retirement in 2010, and that a national search be conducted for a leader with the ability to move the department forward.

3. Salary Guarantee for Tenured Faculty

After the March 16 meeting, Dr. Koeppen circulated the draft proposal, "Salary Guarantee for Tenured Faculty," to the Dean's Council for further comment. Revisions were incorporated and the proposal was unanimously approved by the Dean's Council. It will now be sent to Dr. Laurencin with the suggestion that he distribute the policy for comment, including discussion at a faculty forum.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 20, from 3:30-5 p.m. in the Walker Academic Affairs Conference Room, AG-070.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Donatelli