

Academic Affairs Subcommittee
of the Board of Directors

August 16, 2004

Minutes

Attendees: G. Burrow, P. Deckers, J. Goldberg, Dr. Hand (representing Dr. Spangberg), L. Jacobs, B. Koeppen, C. Leonardi, M. MacNeil, G. Maxwell, P. Robinson, P. Setlow, J. Shanley, E. Eisenberg, L. Klobutcher, D. Peterson, S. Reisine, T. Taylor, J. Walter, L. White

Dr. Burrow called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Public Comment

Dr. Thomas Hettinger, Research Associate in the School of Dental Medicine, addressed the Subcommittee regarding the proposed reorganization of the Dental School departments. He expressed his view that the process leading to the development of the proposed reorganization was not open or balanced and did not allow for adequate debate. He asked the Subcommittee to allow an opportunity for open debate to occur.

2. The minutes of the May 10, 2004 meeting were unanimously approved.

3. Business Items

a. School of Dental Medicine Reorganization

Dr. Robinson presented a proposal to reorganize the School of Dental Medicine departments from the current nine departments to three. These would be the Department of Oral Rehabilitation, Biomaterials, and Skeletal Development; the Department of Oral Health and Diagnostic Sciences; and the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics, Pediatric Dentistry, and Advanced General Dentistry. He noted that each of the existing nine departments currently has 3-5 faculty members (one department has only two). While the School has excelled in many ways over the past several years, the lack of critical mass in each department has made it difficult to provide appropriate mentoring of young faculty, to be consistent in academic achievement, and to allow effective utilization of staff. The goal of reorganization is to provide a department structure which allows for better productivity and effectiveness in enhancing the School's continuing success in research, clinical care, and education. He noted that the names of the departments are in flux and that internal designations of centers, divisions, and sections, as well as governance issues, will be decided after approval of

the reorganization. Decisions regarding the teaching and research missions will be made with input from the School of Dental Medicine Council. A search committee comprised of Associate and Assistant Deans and a faculty representative from each department will be appointed to recommend department leadership. Dr. Robinson believes the process which led to this proposal was one of the most open processes the School has ever had, noting that the proposals have been shared with the faculty at several open faculty meetings. He indicated that he is seeking approval today to reorganize the Dental School departments into the three proposed departments and the disciplines they represent. Over the next three months, the final names of the departments and internal designations will be decided.

Dr. Hand presented the views of the Dental Council. While the Council recognizes the charge to Dr. Robinson to consolidate the Dental School departments and realizes the need for reorganization, they are requesting that the presentation to the Board of Directors be delayed until the Spring to allow faculty time to fully discuss the proposal and investigate the ramifications of the plan on research, patient care, and pre- and post-doctoral education. He noted that the first time most of the faculty had seen the model was in June 2004 when the Task Force presented a five-department model. When it was presented again in July 2004, it had been changed to a three-department model. Council feels the faculty have not had enough time to conduct full and open discussions on the latest proposal. He also indicated that although this process has been underway for some time, there have been no open meetings of the faculty to discuss possible alternative structures. Dr. Shanley questioned whether this presentation was premature and asked whether the proposal should have received a vote from Dental Council since the plan affects academic matters and the curriculum, over which Council has purview. Dr. Hand reiterated that Council is not opposed to reorganization, and is potentially not opposed to this plan, but would like an opportunity for full discussion so it can be presented to the Board of Directors with the full consent and recommendation of Council.

A motion was made and seconded to vote in favor of the formation of a three department model for the School of Dental Medicine with the proviso that this be brought back to the Subcommittee at the November 1, 2004 meeting. This allows time for further discussion by the Council and review of the final proposal by the Academic Affairs Subcommittee prior to review by the Board of Trustees. The motion was unanimously approved. A further requirement was that a full departmental internal structure be completed by December 31, 2004. Dr. Robinson strongly stressed that Council must restrict their concerns to academic matters only, i.e. the curriculum and research.

b. School of Dental Medicine Attrition

The Academic Affairs Subcommittee of the Board of Directors unanimously approved the following revised recommendation which was distributed at the meeting: **That the Board of Directors recommend that SDM and BMS faculty, through assistance from Dental Council and during the 2004-05 academic year, devise methods to reduce the SDM attrition rate for first year students while preserving the structure and integrity of the Year 1 academic program.**

Dr. MacNeil presented background information which led to this recommendation. He explained that during the first two years, the dental curriculum has a total of 2160 basic science hours, which is more than any other dental school in the country. Although most students do very well, he noted that the School has a high attrition rate, particularly during the first year. The attrition rate has varied from 8-20 percent over the last five years and is significantly above the national average. It was noted that the attrition rate includes students who repeat the year as well as those who withdraw or take a leave of absence. The high attrition rate was identified as a problem during the School's last accreditation visit.

Dean Robinson, Dr. MacNeil, and other faculty approached the BMS and Human Systems faculty regarding this issue. After extensive discussion, three ad hoc committees were formed to investigate the following factors: (1) had the quality of the entering students decreased; (2) the effect, if any, of the recently revised non-BMS component of the dental science curriculum; (3) the effect, if any, of the BMS examination and the grading policies. The first two factors were not

considered problematic. However, there were questions concerning the validity of the examination and the type of grading approach that was used. This led to the formation of the Committee on Review of Dental Grading, which recommended that a set pass be established in the Human Systems Course. The Human Systems Course Committee has not yet considered this recommendation.

Dr. MacNeil noted that changes as proposed could be implemented at the discretion of a course, but that larger curriculum changes would require input and approval from Dental Council. He stressed that the intent is not to lower the standards of the curriculum; the Curriculum Management Committee wants to retain as broad a medical science curriculum as possible. However, only four schools in the country offer the same type of curriculum, including Harvard and Columbia, and quality students are being very selective when choosing dental schools and are now comparing our attrition rate to these other schools. He believes that we recruit quality individuals into our program and that we have a responsibility to help them succeed and graduate as competent dentists.

Dr. Koeppen noted that the attrition rate is not the same for the Medical School. Although there are two separate curves and different pass/fail scores for medical and dental students during the first two years, he indicated that the lectures during these years correlate to the preclinical work conducted by medical students. Dental students do not receive the same reinforcement and enrichment in their preclinical work.

Dr. MacNeil acknowledged that the recommendation to establish a set pass in the Human Systems course is only a first step in trying to resolve this problem. His hope is that this will result in less stress on students and improvement on the first exam of the school year, which sometimes up to one-third of the class fails. He indicated that they will also have to consider providing more counseling and active remediation throughout the year.

4. Consents

a. School of Medicine/School of Dental Medicine - Appointments, Promotions, Emeritus Appointments

The recommendations for School of Medicine/School of Dental Medicine appointments, promotions, and emeritus appointments were unanimously approved. Dr. Goldberg recommended that in the future, a brief description of the approval process for faculty nominated for appointment, promotion, and tenure be made available to the members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce M. Koeppen, M.D., Ph.D.