

## TUCSON EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE

**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 6, 2017**  
**4:30pm, 3220**

MEETING ATTENDEES			
Voting Members	*	Resource Members	*
Kristopher Abbate		Sonia De Leon	X
Elle Campbell		George Fantry	X
Maria Czuzak	X	Carlos Gonzales	X
Zoe Cohen	X	Raquel Givens	X
Dawn Coletta	X	Kevin Moynahan	X
Patricia Lebensohn	X	Diane Poskus	X
Lindsey Lepoidevin	X	Karen Spear Ellinwood	
Larry Moher	X	Amy Waer	X
Art Sanders	X	Paul Weissburg	
Sydney Rice		Violet Siwik	
Jordana Smith		Travis Garner	X
Kathy Smith			
Jim Warneke	X	Special Guests	
Stephen Wright	X	Marc Tischler	X
Chad Viscusi		T. Gail Pritchard	X
Josh Yell			

\*X = present

### MEETING NOTES

#### 1. Voting Items:

##### a. Minutes from August 16, 2017 TEPC Meeting

Minutes approved without revision

##### b. Grading and Progression Policy

Dr. Waer presented on proposed changes to the Grading and Progression Policy. The purpose of the proposed revisions is to help ensure that our students are mastering the material in the preclinical curriculum and to facilitate student success with the Step 1 exam.

Dr. Waer's presentation focused in large part on the retake policy, which was originally implemented for students who may have failed an exam because they were "having a bad day." It was never intended as a crutch for not having mastered the material. The class of 2019 has seen a record number of Step 1 failures with most of these failures being strongly correlated with Medical Knowledge scores throughout the first two years. Specifically, of the 16 failures, 15 of them were in the bottom 20% of their class as measured by Medical Knowledge scores. For the class of 2019 students who failed Step 1, all except one have Years 1 and 2 block MK scores below 80%. In looking to the class of 2020, 25 students already have an overall MK score of below 80%. The point was made that if we make no changes, we run the risk of seeing an increased number of Step 1 failures next year. Ultimately, a Step 1 failure is a huge barrier to matching and the student getting into her/his residency of choice.

In discussing possible reasons for the increase in Step 1 failures, and overall number of students struggling with their medical knowledge scores, Dr. Waer presented data showing overall MCAT scores for those accepted to the College of Medicine has been decreasing in recent years. Additionally, the number of students having to take the MCAT three or more times before being accepted in to our medical school has increased substantially the past couple of years. Although there is much debate regarding how predictive MCAT scores are of Step 1 failure, they are undeniably a useful data point.

The proposed changes to the Grading and Progression Policy would limit the number of retakes and require students to perform at a certain level on exams in order to be eligible for a retake exam, as opposed to having to remediate the block. The proposal would not change the grade pass rate and the proposed changes would not eliminate retake exams completely.

The proposed policy would have included the following:

1. Students who score less than 70% on only one exam in a block have the option of taking a retake exam.
2. Students who score less than 70% on two or more high-stake written exams in a block with an overall MK score of less than 70% are not eligible for a retake. (G)
3. Students who score less than 65% on two or more high-stakes written exams with an overall MK score of less than 65% are not eligible for remediation and must repeat the course (H)
4. If a retake exam is given, at least 1/3 of the questions must be ones students haven't already seen

There was subsequent discussion that allowing retakes at all is not in the student's best interest and that it is facilitating failure down the road. The thought is we don't want to push students through the curriculum on retakes because it often sets them up for failure on Step 1. Dr. Kevin Moynahan added he has recently reached out to many colleagues at other medical schools and most of them don't offer retakes at all. Dr. George Fantry echoed that retake exams are not normal and most schools do not offer them. The overall perspective is we need to do something to make students more successful and at this point it is unfair to the students to leave things as they are. It was noted that this policy is not intended to be in isolation but is one of several steps that the College of Medicine is planning to take in order to increase Step 1 scores.

Dr. Art Sanders moved to table the conversation and come back to the discussion in a few months when we have more data. He stated there should be a root cause analysis to look at various issues and that if we vote on it now, and implement the changes, we are not doing our students any favors. Dr. Larry Moher agreed, suggesting we are only looking at one piece of the pie. The need to be transparent with students was also voiced and that implementing a new policy like this during the Academic Year seemed unfair. Related to this discussion concerns were raised that the new curriculum has been reduced by 20% and that may further affect Step 1 scores down the line.

In response to that point, it was argued that the new curriculum is evidenced based, that it was agreed upon by all Block Directors, and that the parts of the curriculum that have been pulled out are not covered on Step 1. Additionally, measures are already in place within the new curriculum to aid in Step 1 success, including the addition of more NBME questions within the blocks.

Remediation was also discussed and the need to provide our students with the resources to be successful. We want to continue with holistic admissions and be willing to take the at-risk student who will become a good physician. Remediation can take place over the summer and there are remediation courses that Student Development has identified; we can pay for students to attend.

There also needs to be better Step 1 preparation and Dr. Waer stated she is looking at changing her Advanced Topics block so that the final weeks of the block are more along the lines of a Step 1 prep course.

Dr. Patricia Lebensohn was concerned with the new policy regarding Foundations specifically. Being the first block there are still a lot of adjustments being made and it seems unfair to potentially fail a student after one block. The thought is we should give students the benefit of the doubt in Foundations and protect that block from the new policy.

It was concluded that G of the new policy should be re-worded to be clearer and that H should be eliminated altogether. It will be brought back to the September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting with these changes, along with an outline of what other steps the College is taking to assist with increasing students' overall medical knowledge and Step 1 scores, for further discussion. The Foundations block will be protected from these changes so that students have one block to adjust to the pace of medical school. The policy will include the second option for the retake questions, which states that Block Directors will pull 10% of the questions from the current exam to put into retake exams so that, in three years, a minimum of 30% of the retake exam will be questions the students have not seen previously. If the policy is approved, the plan is to begin implementation with the Neurology and I & I block.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00pm. The next meeting is scheduled for October 4, 2017.