Update: 2014 LCME Decision Regarding Accreditation Status

Communique No. 2A

As we recently communicated, the UA College of Medicine – Tucson (COM – T) underwent a successful Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) visit in January 2014 and earned accreditation through 2022, the full eight-year term. In addition, the COM – T is proud that the LCME determined the College has a number of institutional strengths. These are considered by the LCME to either reflect an aspect of the medical education program that has been shown to be critical for the successful achievement of the program’s mission(s); or a truly distinctive activity or characteristic that would be worthy of emulation (please see memo HERE).

In the spirit of continuous quality improvement, inclusion and transparency, we wish to update faculty, students and staff on the LCME determinations regarding compliance with accreditation standards. The LCME determined there were five items considered in compliance with accreditation standards, but require further monitoring by the LCME; and three areas that were out of compliance. The COM –Tucson’s LCME determinations are remarkable for a medical education program, since most recent publications show the national average number of citations incurred by medical schools during the period of 2004-2009 was 8.4, and 7.0 in 2009-2010.

The following items listed below are areas deemed as, “In Compliance, with a Need for Monitoring” and include the status of the COM – T progress in addressing these tasks.

1. Complete the revision process of changing the clerkship learning objectives into outcome-based terms.
   o Status: Complete.

2. Improve the type and quality of feedback provided to students at the midpoint of each required course or clerkship to allow sufficient time for remediation.
   o Status: In progress. Enhanced processes are in place to ensure students receive quality feedback. The student performance assessment forms have been revised to provide more structure to the student feedback sessions. In addition, the Office of Medical Student Education will conduct sessions about “How to Give Student Feedback” for faculty/residents in departments that offer required clerkships. Course/clerkship evaluation forms have been revised to collect student satisfaction about these changes.

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the improved career counseling/advising program.
   o Status: In progress. In the academic year 2012-2013, the program components for all four years of the career advising curriculum have been implemented. Student satisfaction data will be collected via the following surveys: the AAMC Graduation Questionnaire administered to our current year 4 students; the Societies Program course evaluation administered to our year 2 students; and the Independent Student Analysis that will be administered to our entire student body in the new academic year 2014-2015.

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the newly implemented Professionalism Program in ensuring professionalism in the clinical learning environment.
   o Status: In progress. In November 2013, the professionalism program was constituted to ensure that the learning and work environment at the COM/UAHN is...
conducive to high-quality education and patient care. The Professionalism Program committee members include representatives from the College of Medicine, the UA Health Network and affiliate hospitals who meet regularly to help maintain an appropriate learning and work environment that is reflective of the mission and goals of the institutions. The Professionalism Conduct Comment system is an online form that was introduced college-wide to allow students, residents and faculty to confidentially report both exemplary and inappropriate professional behavior. Evaluation of the program is under way.

5. Develop an institutional plan to ensure adequacy of new and existing clinical sites and the sufficiency of patient population to support the clinical education program in the context of losing Phoenix sites for clinical rotations due the COM – Phoenix campus expansion.

   o Status: In progress. The Student Affairs Office and the Office of Medical Student Education will be conducting a needs assessment to evaluate the adequacy of our current clinical sites and the sufficiency of the patient population needed to support the required patient encounters in the clerkships. A plan then will be generated, as appropriate.

The following three areas were deemed as, “Noncompliance with Standards.” Following, is the status of the COM – Tucson progress in addressing these tasks.

1. Improve student services and climate.
   o Status: In progress. The COM – T has commissioned a new Student Opportunities Center at the Student Affairs Office to serve as a central student portal and heighten student awareness of numerous enrichment programs and student services. Violet Siwik, MD was hired for a new position, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, with responsibilities to include a focus on academic and career advising for students. Dr. Siwik is now serving as Interim Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions and the COM – T has embarked on an inclusive process to realign the office with best practices to better serve the needs of our students.

2. Improve consistency of direct observation of clinical skills (i.e., taking a medical history and performing a physical examination) in the required clerkships.
   o Status: In progress. Evaluation mechanisms are in place to ensure students receive direct observation of their clinical skills in every clerkship. Central monitoring and support of the clerkships will be provided by the Office of Medical Student Education to address any deficiencies.

3. Improve system for tracking our graduates and their successes in terms of the medical education program objectives leading to the four-year MD degree.
   o Status: In progress. The COM – T is exploring opportunities to obtain longitudinal data about recent graduates, including licensure rates, specialty certification rates, practice locations, practice types and other post-graduate outcome information to assess the quality of the medical education program and to assure that the educational program objectives are being met.

The COM – T is very pleased with the overall report and proud that we already have begun working on the three areas. A process of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) has been initiated to assure that the COM – T responds appropriately to the issues noted above and to future accreditation standards. You will be hearing more about this program and its work in the coming months. Our successful re-accreditation and the continued work to improve all aspects of the UA College of Medicine – Tucson are due to and dependent on the hard work of our faculty, residents, students and staff. Thank you!