

Dean's Faculty Advisory Council  
University of Tennessee, College of Medicine

February 1, 2021

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. Lawrence Pfeffer, at 12:03 PM on February 1, 2021, on the Zoom online platform due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Attendance**

The following members were present:

Penny A. Asbell, MD, Mark Bugnitz, MD, Mace Coday, PhD, Julio F. Cordero-Morales, PhD, Terry Cooper, PhD, KU Malik, PhD, DSc, Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD, Katherine Nearing, MD, Lawrence Pfeffer, PhD, Crystal Pourciau, MD, Reese Scroggs, PhD, Burt Sharp, MD, Claudette Shepherd, MD, Laura Sprabery, MD, Jerome Thompson, MD, MBA, Joe Willmitch, MPAS, PA-C, Thad Wilson, PhD

The following guest(s) was (were) present:

Scott Strome, MD, Richard Smith, PhD, Andrew Griffith, MD, PhD, Polly Hofmann, PhD, Zach Pope, M4

### **Approval of minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as written. Minutes had previously been distributed by electronic means.

### **Business**

Dr. Polly Hofmann updated the LCME re-accreditation process, stating that the preparation process is going well, thanks to Dr. Mike Whitt, who is leading the effort. Two major projects are [1] the data collection instruments and [2] the faculty self-study. The latter committee determines where we satisfy, and where we may fall short, on various LCME requirements. Once those two projects are complete, they will be sent to our consultant, whom Dr. Hofmann indicated has provided exceptionally helpful guidance.

Our mock site visit will take place in August, followed by the actual LCME site team visit in October. The site visit could be in person or virtual, and we are planning equally for both

possibilities. Information will be supplied to the faculty generally, so that everyone can be aware of what is going on and be prepared to respond in whatever ways may be needed.

On another note, Pres. Pfeffer inquired about whether we now have DFAC members from other campuses, and how that process is coming along. Dr. Hofmann responded that she will check. It was agreed that DFAC should have at least a couple all-DFAC meetings to discuss issues that are common across campuses, such as tenure and promotion issues, etc.

Dr. Strome then provided several updates. Regarding Covid-19, the numbers are trending downward at the moment, and the overall vaccination effort is ramping up. He expressed pride over the efforts of the CoM, CoN and CoP in the city's inoculation sites, at the Tiger Lane and at the Appling site. Another 12k doses are anticipated this week and 15k the week after.

Regarding clinical practice and residency sites following the impending revamp of relations with Methodist, Dr. Strome commented that things are moving along quite well. The CoM, RoH, and Baptist met with the CEO of the entire Tenet system, which owns St. Francis. An agreement will be completed in the next week or so. In the end, some of our services will remain in Methodist, e.g. transplant and some ENT physicians, potentially some other services. But overall, the clinical practice will essentially be a hub-and-spoke model, working toward developing ROH as the central base. Although initially the separation from Methodist was a bit of a shock to the system, it is evolving into a positive and productive future.

Dr. Claudette Shepherd has just been named the new Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion. She will begin by taking a close look at UTHSC's current situation, to discern what we are doing well, what we are not doing well, what should be changed, and how that change should be accomplished.

Another program has been started regarding gender equity. Long overdue, it will be led by Theresa Harnett, CFO/associate dean of finance. Dr. Rebecca Krukowski will assist, to explore better ways for recognizing and promoting the role of women in the college, including in senior leadership positions.

Dr. Strome announced that 100% of our students have passed this year's STEP-1 boards. A few students (5 or 6) have not yet taken the exam but, thusfar, we can count this as a 100% pass rate. He added, however, that wellness among students needs further attention – particularly among the M1s and M2s, who are more isolated. These students are now taking a course on how to vaccinate people, which will help them become more engaged in the community and with each other. Dr. Strome then introduced Zach Pope, an M4 who is doing an administrative rotation with Dr. Strome and others in administration.

Finally, he suggested that we continue to engage with Dr. Andrew Griffith as he works on the CoM's strategic plan for research. Dr. Strome mentioned the survey that was sent out recently, and encouraged wide response, This plan will, to some extent, determine resource allocation. One suggestion during discussion was to make the research-focused survey a bit less "vanilla," to be perhaps more specifically useful.

A brief discussion then focused on the annual survey in which faculty evaluate the administration. One suggestion was to make them truly anonymous, by eliminating the feature in which each person has a link unique to only that individual faculty member. It was recommended that Dan Hardern provide his expertise in setting this up.

Dr. Andrew Griffith then updated the research strategy efforts. He indicated that, although there may be advantages to direct communication between DFAC and the campus research structure, the primary communication will be between DFAC and the Dean, Dr. Strome. At the present time, the process for strategic planning on research will be largely driven by campus administration, more than faculty-driven.

Dr. Terry Cooper then updated DFAC on the work of the Policy Committee. He noted that, last year when work on the ByLaws was under way, there was need to address basic issues and bring ByLaws revisions to a conclusion as the COM headed into the LCME process. That said, there were additional outstanding issues in the Bylaws that required attention, but were delayed to achieve the needed changes as expeditiously possible given LCME time restrictions. Recently, the Faculty Senate has approved a statement on diversity and inclusion to be included in the next version of the Faculty Handbook. There is, however, no analogous statement in the COM Bylaws. Therefore, a beginning objective of the Policy Committee is to draft a diversity/inclusion statement to be included in the next revision of the Bylaws. He presented an initial draft diversity statement to obtain DFAC input during the process of development rather than requesting approval of more finished versions. It is important to note that the present draft has yet to address diversity with respect to freedom of speech and ideas on campus.

[Draft] We will undertake ongoing assessment of our performance with respect to diversity and inclusivity, we will encourage recruitment that better reflects our regional and national community, and we will promote programs to increase diversity and inclusivity in medical science, including education, research, scientific discovery, clinical care, and public service.

In discussion, it was suggested that it would be useful to define "diversity" and "inclusivity," lest the policy become too vague to be useful.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the committee will be held on March 1, 2021, at 12:00 Noon by Zoom.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD  
Secretary