

# The Evolution of the MD/PhD Section of the AAMC GREAT Group

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# First Came the “Aspen” MD/PhD Annual National Student Meeting

- **1985:** Dr. Peggy Neville, the first Director of the UCHSC MD/PhD Program, re-initiates the “Aspen MD/PhD Annual National Student Meeting”
- **1985-Present:** From the beginning, this is a UCHSC student-organized and nationally student-driven meeting
- **1985-Present:** The key goal was to provide a forum for MD/PhD students to interact scientifically and socially, to listen to a few Nobel/NAS speakers and ~20 selected student colleagues, and to network during “free time”
- **1985-Present:** The career panel and social time is key
- **1985-1994:** As the student meeting grew, ~15 Program Directors and Administrators always attended. New and soon-to-be site-visited Directors also attended



# Next Came the National Association of MD/PhD Programs

- **1994:** Peggy Neville and Arthur Gutierrez-Hartmann, UCHSC, initiated and organized the first NAMPP meetings (Drs. Abraham, Jamieson, Insel, Ulane, Andersen are key)
- **1994-2000:** The annual meeting is linked to the student meeting, and is attended by Directors and Administrators
- **1994-2000:** The annual meeting becomes a “boot camp” to discuss best-practices, Med & Grad curricula, T32/NIH issues, URM recruitment and outcomes data
- **1996-97:** NAMPP formalizes its structure, by-laws, officers, fees, meeting organization and goals
- **1994-2000:** NAMPP membership grows to include almost all ~100 MD/PhD Programs



# Slow Transition from NAMPP to MD/PhD Section of GREAT

- **Late 1990s:** Dr. David Korn attends NAMPP & Student meetings and invites us to join the AAMC GREAT Group
- **2000-2005:** The NAMPP meetings become highly organized, inviting outside speakers and we extensively use the ListServe provided by AAMC
- **2000-2003:** Many NAMPP and GREAT leaders (Andersen, AGH, Insel, Ulane, Bookman, Brass, McGee, Oppenheim) “shepherd” the union
- **2000-2003:** Frequent discussions and meetings with AAMC and GREAT leadership, By-laws hammered out



# MD/PhD Section of GREAT Becomes Established in 2004

- **1996-present:** Many NAMPP members are early GREAT members, attend meetings and some are in leadership positions (McGee, Bookman, Ulane, Yates, AGH)
- **2004:** GREAT votes unanimously to approve the “MD/PhD Section”, significantly enhancing a very productive interaction
- **2005:** MD/PhD Section meetings alternate with GREAT (even) & Keystone student meeting (odd)



# Advantages and Accomplishments of the MD/PhD Section

- **Meeting organization:** All registration, hotel, meeting rooms, menus, programs etc organized by AAMC
- **AMCAS:** Check box on application improves the process for applicants & programs
- **AAMC Data Warehouse:** Applicant pool finally determined in 2006, outcomes are being analyzed
- **Admission Traffic Rules:** Working Subcommittee will work with GSA and Bob Sabalis, AAMC
- **PSTP Residencies:** We will work with GME and NIRMP
- **Voice on physician-scientist training:** The Section provides a strong advocacy within AAMC and vice-versa
- **Wide representation:** ~85 institutions and 162 designees, with Directors & Administrators being active participants



# Why have a Directors Assn & Section? What are the goals?

- **Common goals:** Train future elite physician-scientists; obtain/maintain NIH funding; data
- **Best practices:** Institutional, Programmatic, Administrative, Educational, Career Guidance
- **Specific solutions:** State Licensing, Unique mentoring, psychological support, URM recruitment, protect curricular rigor, fund raising
- **Data-driven:** Size of qualified pool, outcomes
- **Publicize success:** Write reports to establish policy
- **Flexibility:** Assn is free of certain restrictions



# What are specific career issues that postdocs face?

- Will I get a position in a top-tier lab in my area?
- Will I get extramural support? For how long? If not, can my PI support me and for how long?
- Will I get the “hot” project? Will I be able to publish as 1st author? How many (Cell) papers can I get out of this project?
- Now I belong to a lab, not a Program: I’m a lone-ranger
- How will I know when I’m ready to become independent?
- If things don’t work out, do I resign or will I be asked to leave? Can I take my grant with me?
- Should I seek a second postdoc? Should I consider career alternatives? What are the alternatives?
- How will any of these choices impact me and/or my family?



# What are specific “hidden” issues in the postdoc period?

- **Equity and protection:** Explicit contract in offer letter; equity in salary & benefits for US and Non-US trainees; avoid “indentured” fee-for-service culture
- **Scientific/Mentor:** Authorship, conflicts of interest, project ownership, no committee for protection, University ombuds
- **Career guidance:** Variable efforts and levels of organization provided by institutions, programs and mentors
- **Key problem:** Postdoc classically defined as time of taking personal career responsibility, yet current expectations are that institutions take more responsibility
- **Oversight:** NIH is key task-master for grad programs, no such oversight for postdocs; Who is responsible? Why?



# Key Activities of a Postdoctoral Training Office

1. Institutions should establish Postdoctoral Training Offices (PTO) that provide grant info, career guidance, protection and social/scientific networking opportunities
2. A single, key leadership faculty should be responsible for the activities of this office and the office should have \$\$\$
3. All postdocs recruited should receive an explicit offer letter, including the AAMC Postdoctoral/Mentor Compact
4. All new postdocs should be required to register with the PTO and the PTO should track career outcomes
5. An orientation session should be provided to all new postdocs detailing the benefits of the PTO
6. PTO Directors should meet to establish best practices etc



# Should GREAT Develop a Postdoctorate Leaders Section?

1. Is the timing right?
  - Political, local, financial, moral pressures
2. What are the goals? What is the mission statement?
  - Protection, equity, service, nurture the young, generate data
3. What are potential barriers?
  - Political, trainee heterogeneity, not Program-driven, not yet identified in all institutions as a priority, lack of “drivers” to make it happen
4. Is the group large enough to sustain itself & meet regularly?
5. What will you bring to GREAT?
  - Workforce issues, graduate success, best-practices feedback



# If you decide to develop a Postdoctorate Leaders Section

- Identify “leadership drivers”
- Develop a plan and goals
- Develop by-laws
- Establish a timeline
- Be patient and communicate
- Consult frequently with AAMC and GREAT