

## **Group on Student Affairs Committee on Admissions (GSA-COA) Annual Report 2009**

**Current Membership:** Robert A. Witzburg, M.D., Chair; Ronald Garcia, Ph.D. (CODA); Robert Ruiz (Central Region); Filomeno Maldonado (Southern Region); Maureen Garrity, M.D. (GSA National Vice Chair, replacing Mike Kavan, Ph.D. ); Wayne Samuelson, M.D.(Western Region); Mercedes Rivero ( Northeastern Region); Gabriel Fine (OSR); and Lori Provost (NAAHP).

A major focus of the COA has been the enhancement of working relationships between admissions officers and health professions advisors. This effort, building upon a strong foundation of collegiality, has been reflected in the discussions at the national level, as well as in the regions.

The COA met three times during this year, heard reports from the key service areas of the AAMC, and considered a broad range of issues on behalf of its constituencies. The key concerns of the group include the following:

- To focus on comprehensive, holistic review as the basis of sound admissions evaluation of all applicants. We have been engaged in a 2 year project (2008-2009) in collaboration with AAMC staff, NAAHP, and the Holistic Review Advisory Committee.
- Completion of a survey of admissions deans and medical school deans regarding the role played by external influences in the admissions process. This work was presented at the Admissions PDC (June, 2009).
- The COA believes that continued participation in external ranking programs such as USNWR, which inevitably focus attention largely, if not exclusively, on quantitative academic parameters and test scores, is a powerful and inappropriate force working against the implementation of holistic review. We continue to believe that medical schools should, as a group, withdraw from participation in such activities.
- To continue to support and evaluate the AMCAS Criminal Background Check Program and to expand the Effective Practices for Criminal Background Checks document on the GSA secure web site.
- Ongoing discussion regarding the AAMC's call for a substantial increase in the size of medical school entering classes. There is concern that the depth, quality, and stability of the applicant pool need to be considered and assessed in a systematic manner. The group appreciates ongoing engagement with AAMC analytical staff on this issue, including concerns about diversity.
- Ongoing discussion with the NAAHP leadership regarding the incorporation of professionalism in the evaluation of candidates for admissions to medical school.
- Continuing interest in a broad review of the premedical curriculum and requirements for application to medical school, coordinated with the comprehensive MCAT review (MR5)
- To work with AMCAS staff and a constituent advisory committee for the new program supporting distribution of all letters of recommendation in electronic form. After an initial pilot year involving 20 medical schools, the program has been expanded to include all interested schools—currently over 90% of AAMC-affiliated schools.
- Adoption of Traffic Rules for MD-PhD Admissions.
- Initiation of a review and update of the Handbook for Admissions Officers - last updated in 2004.
- Admissions PDC - held in collaboration with Student Records in June 2009.

Robert A. Witzburg, M.D.  
Chair, National GSA-COA 2006-2009