



Group on Student Affairs National Chair's Annual Report 2002-2003

During 2002-2003, the Steering Committee of the Group on Student Affairs (GSA) met three times (November, January, and July). The Steering Committee accomplished many important objectives due to the dedication of its members: the GSA national officers (Richard Wheeler and Peter Katsufraakis); the Chair of the GSA-Minority Affairs Section (Karen Hamilton); the four GSA national committee chairs representing Admissions (Clarice Fooks), Financial Aid (Anita Pokorny), Student Affairs (Dianne Cornelius), and Student Records (Vicki Fields); and the GSA regional chairs (Kathy Nelson and Mason Thompson, Southern region; Mia Savoia and Peter Katsufraakis, Western region; Jean Lantz and Paul Bunger, Central region, and Jack Gladstein and Clara Callahan, Northeast region).

Over the past year, the GSA Steering Committee has worked to define its focus as a professional development organization. We resolved that our professional development goals were: 1) offering skill development in core areas as defined by each of our five working groups (admissions, student records, student financial assistance, student affairs, and minority affairs); 2) providing opportunities for professional growth for our constituents, both as individuals and in keeping with their current position responsibilities and future career goals; and 3) communicating information of interest and utility in a timely manner (e.g., policies, guidelines, model programs and issues of national concern).

Efforts have been made to enhance the programs offered at the Annual Meeting. Constituents have been solicited via the listserv to suggest topics of interest. Annual Meeting plenary sessions have been designed to feature nationally recognized speakers, including deans from various medical schools, to present their expertise and points of view. Opportunities for other GSA-related presentations beyond the plenary and concurrent sessions have been designed through the joint offering of GEA/GSA small group discussions and workshops. New opportunities for interaction at the Annual Meeting have occurred through senior consultation sessions (1:1 private consultations on topics of individual or institutional concern, pairing seasoned GSA members with members desiring guidance on an issue) and topical dinners (with GSA members who would like to meet others from the same discipline, or talk to others with mutual interests).

A change in place for the 2003 Annual Meeting is a revised approach to the Business Meeting, incorporating aspects of a "town meeting." We plan to solicit input from GSA constituents regarding issues and potential projects that the national standing committees and Section should address in admissions, minority affairs, student financial assistance, student affairs, and student records. Also at the Business Meeting, the AAMC-GSA Award for Exemplary Service will be presented for the first time.

Regional chairs have worked closely with other regional officers to host spring regional conferences. New initiatives are taking place at the regional level to offer mentoring programs to new members. Increased efforts are being made to identify new GSA members and assist them in meeting colleagues and establishing a network of contacts within each region. In the regions there is also support for again organizing a national spring meeting where all four regions of the GSA and GSA-MAS come together to discuss a variety of topics related to student affairs. Consideration is being given to holding a national spring meeting in 2006.

Since November of 2002, several important meetings have been (or will be) held that are designed to provide professional development experiences for our constituents:

- A joint Group on Student Affairs-Group on Educational Affairs meeting entitled “Medical Student Education: Achieving Institutional Goals through Teamwork” was held in Charleston SC, in January 2003. Teams from 10 medical schools attended and responded to case studies related to technical standards for admission and graduation, academic progress of students with problems in personal and professional conduct, and academic dishonesty. Points of collaboration among student affairs and medical education staff were explored.
- The annual Professional Development Conference (PDC) for Financial Aid officers was held in January 2003, and will be followed by a conference in January 2004 . An upcoming joint Professional Development Conference for Admissions/Minority Affairs/Student Records officers is scheduled for June 9-13, 2004, in Santa Fe, NM. The joint Student Affairs officers/Careers in Medicine liaisons PDC will be held in mid-2005.

During the course of this year, the national standing committees and the GSA-Minority Affairs Section have been actively pursuing a number of projects. Key activities of these groups include the following:

- The **Committee on Admissions (COA)** has received approval for two documents from the GSA Steering Committee, AAMC Council of Deans, and Executive Council: the *AAMC Recommendations for Medical School Applicants* and the *AAMC Recommendations for Medical School Admission Officers*. The COA is also working on a handbook for medical school admission officers.
- The **Committee on Student Financial Assistance (COSFA)** is developing a “financial competencies” curriculum for medical students. COSFA is also lending its expertise to four national issues: the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the Primary Loan Program, the collection of relevant financial aid and debt data on the AAMC’s Matriculating Student and Graduation Questionnaires, and the revision of the LCME Part 1B Student Financial Aid Questionnaire.
- The **Committee on Student Records (COSR)** is continuing to develop the *Guidelines for Maintaining Active and Permanent Student Records*, a document addressing records retention policies, suggesting the appropriate content of medical student academic records, and defining the contents of a “graduation packet” for graduating medical students.

COSR also conducted a survey regarding the various responsibilities of medical school registrars' offices.

- The **Committee on Student Affairs (COSA)** continues to develop a Web-based document, the GSA CRIER (*Crisis Response and Intervention Education Resource*) to assist in the development of crisis management strategies, policies, and procedures, as well as to offer training in crisis counseling. COSA is completing a survey of student affairs deans regarding the adequacy of medical, disability, and liability insurance programs and medical care options for enrolled medical students. COSA is also working on a handbook for student affairs officers.
- The **GSA/Minority Affairs Section (MAS)** continues to explore the implications for medical schools of the recent Supreme Court decisions about the use of affirmative action by institutions of higher education, and the recently revised AAMC definition of "underrepresented in medicine." GSA-MAS members are working with the Division of Community and Minority Programs on a revised Expanded Minority Admissions Exercise (EMAE). The GSA-MAS is also embarking on a strategic development process.

A year as Chair of the Group on Student Affairs goes very quickly. There is much to be done in this organization. Credit for accomplishments goes to back to the members of the GSA, who are unfailingly quick to share ideas and concerns, and suggest areas of collaboration and cooperation. Credit goes to the GSA and GSA-MAS leaders, chairs, and committee members who work diligently on projects and develop resources that can have practical utility in our every day work with students at our medical schools. Credit also goes to members of the AAMC staff who are unfailingly willing to listen and offer sound, informed advice and guidance, and do much of the behind the scenes work that keeps our organization moving forward. Working together by fostering leadership, and establishing working partnerships with colleagues, between institutions, and with the Association, much can be accomplished.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as your National Chair this year. In fact, it is the professional opportunity of a lifetime. My best to you in your continued vital work in supporting the education of the next generation of physicians.

Carol Elam, Ed.D.
GSA National Chair