

### The OSR Online Community has arrived and wants to be your homepage....

The days of broadcast emailing and spam surveys are over...at least for the OSR we hope! As a giant leap toward improving communication between representatives during the 360 days of the year that we are not face-to-face with each other, the AAMC has unveiled the OSR Online Community, an additional internet home for the OSR hosted by Blackboard, Inc., realizing a vision of OSR leadership for the enhancement of communication within our organization. **What is the intended purpose of the Online Community? To provide a more accessible, integrated, and appealing outlet for sharing ideas.** Many of you are probably familiar with Blackboard through your school, but for those of you who aren't, don't sweat...using it is as simple as surfing the net. From now on, the OSR Online Community, upon login with your AAMC username and password, will serve as the hub for important OSR information and announcements, thus hopefully sparing your already clogged inbox from more email than it needs, and ideally maximizing the efficiency with which information is shared in the OSR.

Far from simply creating another bulletin board with relevant dates and deadlines (which we already have at [www.aamc.org/members/osr](http://www.aamc.org/members/osr)), with the advent of the Blackboard site, OSR reps can participate in discussions boards, the exchange of ideas, online consultation, and document sharing (blogs, chatrooms, profiles with pictures, wikis, etc.). Surveys can be posted through an OSR Administrative Board member and are automatically archived. The introduction of this site will centralize the collection and distribution of information within the OSR.

**In short, the purpose of the Blackboard site will be to provide relevant information to representatives via facilitated communication within our organization;** thus, for it to work, we need widespread participation by representatives from all schools. This is why we're making it a point to formally introduce this tool at the AAMC-OSR Annual Meeting, where the outgoing Ad Board will incorporate it into the transition process for newly elected National Delegates as well as posting any handouts or information related to the sessions after the meeting. From then on, the success of this dynamic and exciting tool is in your hands. **It is up to you to make the OSR Online Community useful and vibrant, as it is merely an empty web address without the wealth of information and suggestions for improvement that only you can contribute.** As we see it, this tool is the future of the OSR, but it is a future at which we will arrive only with your support. But enough pep talk, get going! <http://blackboard.aamc.org/>

### An exciting and dynamic time for the AAMC...

It has been a whirlwind year for the AAMC, thanks in large part to the efforts of President Darrell G. Kirch, MD, to revitalize and transform the AAMC into an organization prepared for the future of healthcare and the expanding role of academic medicine. As you are already aware, one of the most dominant issues in the association over the past year has been the **Strategic Thinking and Positioning (STP) Process**, which you played a significant role in guiding by way of your many insightful comments on the STP

document distributed during the regional meetings. After months of iterative drafting and revision, the AAMC Executive Council has approved the STP document, which will be distributed at the Annual Meeting (also available online at [www.aamc.org/about/learnservelead.pdf](http://www.aamc.org/about/learnservelead.pdf)). In this vein of revitalization, the AAMC has also recently begun a formal **governance review** to examine the existing governance structure for ways in which it can be made more effective and better suited for the redefined organizational mission outlined in the STP document.

In addition to these initiatives, the AAMC continues to investigate other areas of concern within the realm of academic medicine. One area of recent interest is the **increasing cost of medical education and its potential affect on the anticipated physician shortage.** The AAMC continues to dedicate resources to the creation of solutions for this increasing problem, educating lawmakers on the need to expand Stafford loan programs, maintaining up-to-date workforce projections by incorporating new data into models devised by staff researchers and recently, by fostering a project initiated by the OSR Student Affairs team and supported by GSA-COSFA (Group on Student Affairs Committee on Student Financial Assistance), to develop standardized materials designed to help students demystify and navigate the challenging world of loans and financial aid.

Another important issue the AAMC continues to explore, through the work of the **Task Force on Industry Support for Medical Education**, is defining the principals and charting the course for appropriate industry subvention of medical education and other industry gifting practices. The AAMC is attempting to take a balanced approach on this issue, hearing all sides in an attempt to outline effective practices for institutions dealing with a pharmaceutical industry presence in training centers. As you are probably aware, opinions vary greatly, even among students, and will undoubtedly spur further discussion at the upcoming meeting and beyond.

**Additional areas of recent AAMC activity are described below:**

- There is ongoing development of the **Visiting Student Application Service (VSAS)**, a new AAMC application designed to make it easier for medical students to apply for senior electives at U.S. medical schools. This service requires students to submit just one application for all schools, effectively reducing paperwork, miscommunication, and time for students and school staff. The service will be piloted at ten institutions in 2008: [www.aamc.org/programs/vsas/start.htm](http://www.aamc.org/programs/vsas/start.htm)
- **GLBT recommendations** from the GSA and OSR regarding institutional programs and educational activities in the areas of human sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender identity were approved by the AAMC Executive Council in February. A set of "effective practices" to be used as a resource for schools is forthcoming: [www.aamc.org/members/gsa/glb\\_t\\_recommendations.pdf](http://www.aamc.org/members/gsa/glb_t_recommendations.pdf)
- The **Committee for the Evaluation of the USMLE Program (CEUP)** is a collaborative effort between the AAMC, AMA, and AMSA to review the current examination schedule utilized by the USMLE for medical licensure.
- The second edition of the NRMP/AAMC **Charting Outcomes in the Match** report, focusing on characteristics of applicants who matched to their preferred specialty in the 2007 NRMP Match, was released in August: [www.nrmp.org/data/chartingoutcomes2007.pdf](http://www.nrmp.org/data/chartingoutcomes2007.pdf)

**The Southern region** had a very successful meeting this spring in Little Rock (April 12-15). Regional delegates got the meeting started by providing updates on key activities of the five committees: in medical education, the results of the "Teaching Students to Teach" survey; in Legislative Affairs, interviews with legislators Bill Frist, M.D. (R-TN) and Jim McDermott, M.D. (D-WA) regarding their perspectives on the healthcare crisis; in student affairs, development of tools for student preparation for LCME accreditation visits; in communications, preparation of regional and national newsletters; and in community and diversity, development of strategies for attracting pre-college students to a career in medicine. OSR Liaisons in the southern region also provided updates on topics including implementation of criminal background checks for medical school applicants, changes to the upcoming NRMP AAMC Match report, and additions to the Careers in Medicine service.

Updates aside, **much of the discussion and energy at this meeting was focused on the issue of electives availability and scheduling flexibility offered during the third and fourth year.** This discussion was led by representatives from UT-Memphis and MUSC, who presented unique curricula offered at their schools. Discussion at the meeting was also focused on the AAMC Strategic Thinking and Positioning (STP) process and a draft STP document which has since been revised and approved. Other topics covered spanned a wide range of interests and included programs for cultural competency training, financial aid education, transition process and training for upcoming third-years, and provision of online lecture videos.

To close out the meeting, **new regional officers were elected: Jenny Olges – Chair-Elect, Clarice Seifert – Medical Education, Brian Goentzel – Legislative Affairs, Carley O’Shea – Student Affairs, Jared O’Leary – Communications, and Jonathan Wortham – Community and Diversity.**

**The Northeast region** had a very successful and productive business meeting this spring in Boston (April 19-22). Major topics of discussion included the Strategic Thinking and Positioning (STP) document as well as various topics related to medical education. **One major concern raised regarding the STP draft document was the lack of humanism as one of the document’s priorities.** The consensus opinion was that fostering the spirit of humanism should be explicitly stated as one of the AAMC’s main objectives. Another topic which generated lively discussion, was how best to incorporate diversity as a priority in the document, a concern that has since been addressed in the approved document by the incorporation of a distinct objective for the promotion of diversity in medicine.

Much of the remainder of the discussion focused on issues in medical education such as the incorporation of technology in coursework as well as the range of grading systems used by different schools. In this region, many schools have implemented the use of simulation centers for teaching physical diagnosis as well as various medical procedures; students at these schools unanimously feel that these simulation centers are beneficial.

Continuing the technology-themed discussion, there seemed to be much variation in the systems provided to students for logging their patient interactions during their clerkships; some schools have electronic logging systems where attending physicians sign off on the completion of patient interactions; other schools do not use electronic means for this purpose and do not require attending physicians to sign off.

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**The Central region** had a very well attended and productive meeting in Omaha (April 26-29), with many excellent CGSA/CAAHP joint sessions encompassing a direct update from AAMC President Darrell Kirch, MD. Focused discussions included inter-professional education of the healthcare team during medical school, study-abroad programs, and student wellness support. Business meetings were very productive and **many topics were discussed in both large and small groups, the latter of which were used to cover issues such as the utility of small group learning in preclinical years, and the range of health/disability insurance coverage offered by medical schools.**

Attendees discussed the STP document in depth, as well as issues regarding the process used by schools to assign clinical rotation schedules, the method of evaluation of students on clinical rotations, how standards of professionalism are applied to faculty and staff and how they are enforced, the difficulty many medical students have with reporting abuse and or unprofessional behavior, the structure of student governments and the nature of their interaction with administration, student concerns over increasing tuition and institutional responses, and the range of school funding for student reps attending regional and national OSR meetings. Also, **new leadership was elected for the Central region: Roxanne Richards – Chair-Elect, Dean Shumway – Student Affairs, Jenny Guido – Communications, Maura Munoz – Community and Diversity, Jesse Hinckley – Legislative Affairs, and Lisa McElroy – Medical Education.**

One unique thing the Central region did at the spring meeting was conduct surveys, both during and after the meeting; surveys completed during the meeting provided feedback on topics that could not be discussed during the meeting due to lack of time. The in-meeting surveys assessed opinions on career counseling in preclinical years, the effect recording and posting lectures has had on lecture attendance, whether or not PDAs or computers are required and the range of packages available, and the effectiveness of early patient contact in the preclinical years.

A post-meeting survey was also utilized in which attendees were queried regarding their likes and dislikes about the meeting, thoughts on possible improvements to the meeting format, and suggestions for discussion at the national meeting. Thank you to Creighton University School of Medicine and Mayo Medical School for hosting the conference!

**The Western Region** returned this past spring to the beautiful grounds of the Asilomar Conference Center in Monterey, California (April 29-May 2) for a meeting that was both relaxing and productive for those in attendance, featuring a variety of activities and topics presented by varying and diverse speakers. **The Chancellor of the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center M. Roy Wilson, MD, MS, presented the first plenary session entitled “Medical Education and the Public Trust,”** during which he spoke on the changing culture of healthcare in the United States as reflected by the lay person’s increasingly negative perception of medicine, identifying contributing issues such as minority disparities (both in quality of received care and in medical education), the influence of big businesses, the rise of specialty hospitals, and the high cost of medical education.

The second plenary session included a variety of speakers and focused on GLBT issues in both medical education and the delivery of healthcare, presenting results from a recent national survey jointly conducted by the GSA and OSR that revealed inconsistencies between school administrators’ perceptions of their schools’ cultures and students’ own experiences and feelings of discrimination.

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## OSR News continued . . .

### Northeast Region continued . . .

There was also dialogue concerning the criteria for clerkship grading and their respective merits and shortcomings, as some institutions use the RIME competencies (reporter, interpreter, manager, and educator) to evaluate students and other schools use shelf exam performance along with the comments of residents and faculty.

Lastly, a new regional chair – Elizabeth Pierson – and new regional delegates were elected: Robert Eppsteiner – Communications, Sonia Garg – Medical Education, Abigail Proffer – Student Affairs, Janae Phelps – Community and Diversity, and Keya Sau – Legislative Affairs. The Northeast region would like to give recognition to their outgoing chair, Gopal Patel, and all of the outgoing delegates for a well-planned and productive meeting.

### What have the committees been doing, you ask?

**Community and Diversity** delegates have focused their efforts on coordinating OSR volunteer participation at the Minority Student Medical Career Fair hosted by the AAMC Minority Affairs Section at the upcoming meeting. This event will give hundreds of minority and disadvantaged high school and premedical students in attendance the opportunity to interact with not only members of the OSR, but also with many other advisors and valuable sources of information on the process of preparing for and getting in to medical school. This is the first time the OSR has ever been involved with this activity, and we are incredibly excited about the opportunity to

**Legislative Affairs** delegates have continued to provide the OSR with the inside scoop on legislation that impacts us most as medical students and future physicians. Since their insightful interviews with Congressmen Bill Frist (R-TN) and Jim McDermott (D-WA) earlier this spring, the Legislative Affairs team has provided us with a highly informative second edition of *OSR Focus on Legislative Affairs* and have planned what might potentially be the most exciting session at this year's meeting, with presentations by Bruce M. Kelly, Director of Government Relations, Mayo Foundation and David Hawkings (Managing Editor of Congressional Quarter Weekly) entitled 'Election Year: Healthcare Issues and Political Trends. This session will provide a review of the healthcare plans proposed by each of the leading party candidates and discuss other potential healthcare legislation on the horizon as we head into the upcoming presidential election.

The recent activity of **Communications** delegates has been largely directed towards what you have just read...we just hope you enjoyed it or (at the least) found it informative. For now, consider yourself "briefed" for the big meeting...see you in Washington!

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### Western Region continued . . .

The point was emphasized that intolerance and overt hostility are still big issues both for GLBT students as well as GLBT patients, and that schools need to re-examine their curriculum and policies to ensure that students not only feel safe and welcomed but also receive GLBT sensitivity training in an appropriate context.

The final plenary session, "View from the Employer," was presented by Robert Pearl, MD, Executive Director and CEO of The Kaiser Permanente Medical Group, Inc. Dr. Pearl spoke on the benefits of integrated technology systems in medical practice, citing the Kaiser Permanente system as a model and urging students to be a guiding voice for further development.

In addition to breakout sessions on topics such as financial aid, diversity recruitment, and student wellness, the OSR business meetings included student presentations on humanities in medicine, professionalism in medical education, and a model for an elective class exploring medical specialty career options. Lastly, elections were held, and the following students were elected or re-elected to regional delegate positions: Sarah Milliken – Chair, Katie Jiries – Medical Education, Bjorn Peterson – Communications, Joshua Brinkerhoff – Community and Diversity, Kelly Okazaki – Student Affairs, and Gabriel Fine – Legislative Affairs.

**Medical Education** delegates have been following up on new curricular initiatives and trends identified at the regional meetings in the spring, such as supplementary geriatrics education, inter-professional instruction (i.e. sharing classes with nursing or pharmacy students), global health and cultural competency training, and financial aid education. Furthermore, there has been some investigation into the range of methods used by schools to ensure and standardize the appropriate amount and type of patient interaction for students on clinical clerkships.

Last but certainly not least, **Student Affairs** delegates have been quite busy with two ambitious projects. The creation of transition materials designed to assist newly elected officers with the harrowing process of taking over an OSR position has been the focus of the committee's work. Originally conceived as transition binders for new OSR officers, the transition materials newly prepared by the student affairs team for the incoming National Delegates will be packaged as *virtual* materials; all documents will be posted to the OSR Online Community site for easy access by new officers. The second project is the joint creation (along with the GSA's Committee on Student Financial Assistance, a.k.a. COSFA) of a new succinct and easy-to-access standard package of materials offering AAMC financial aid online resources.

For information about the OSR: [www.aamc.org/members/osr](http://www.aamc.org/members/osr)

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