OSR

Effective Practices

Providing Structure to a Complicated World

Contents

Glossary of Terms

AAMC   Association of American Medical Colleges

ERAS   Electronic Residency Application Service

GSA   Group on Student Affairs

HiM   Humanism in Medicine

LCME   Liaison Committee on Medical Education

MCAT   Medical College Admission Test

MSG   Medical School Government

NBME   National Board of Medical Examiners

OSR   Organization of Student Representatives

USMLE   United States Medical Licensing Examination

Preface

This Effective Practices document was created in 2009 and edited in 2014. Its purpose is to provide a brief introduction to the resources and tools available to the Organization of Student Representatives. As an OSR representative, you have a wealth of knowledge and experience at your fingertips. This manual should help you begin to access those materials.

This document is not comprehensive, but is meant to provide examples of how a rep can begin utilizing the power of the OSR. This can be helpful in starting projects, finding information, collaborating with other OSR reps, and getting the most out of one's term as a representative.

Please note that the AAMC often changes its Web site and moves content, so in the event that a link is out of date, use the search bar to find the information for which you are looking.

The Communications Committee wishes you the best of luck in creating, improving, fine-tuning, and maintaining the unique OSR presence at your medical school.

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Cover photo courtesy of Allison Lippert, OSR Representative, University of Virginia School of Medicine

1 | Selecting OSR Representatives

Background
In this chapter, you will find:

- the AAMC's recommendations on the election of OSR representatives
- statistics on how medical schools choose their OSR representatives
- recommendations on how to elect OSR representatives

AAMC Guidelines
OSR representatives may include up to one primary and three alternate institutional representatives from each of the 141 U.S. LCME accredited medical schools. OSR associate representatives are medical students who are enrolled in Canadian medical schools.

The AAMC does not dictate the selection process of OSR representatives at medical schools across the country. However, the organization offers the following recommendations as guidelines:

- The selection process should facilitate representative input from the entire student body or the student government. Individuals involved in the selection process should understand the structure and function of the OSR.
- Three alternate OSR representatives should be selected, preferably from different classes, to assist the primary representative. This assures continuity in representation at the school level and provides alternates to carry out the responsibilities of the OSR Primary Representative, if necessary.
- OSR reps should represent a diverse medical student population, keeping in mind all aspects of human differences such as: socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, geography, disability, and age.

How Medical Schools Select OSR Representatives
AAMC-OSR records indicate that 110 out of the 126 United States medical schools certified OSR representatives in 2007. Their election format was as follows:

Election by the student body at large	53 Schools (48%)
Appointment by student government	26 Schools (24%)
Appointment by the Dean	27 Schools (25%)
Other (often selection by current OSR representatives)	4 Schools (3%)

Recommendations for the Election Process
The Communications Committee understands that each medical school has a unique means of selecting their OSR representatives. However, for those schools that need assistance, the Committee offers a general timeline for the election process.

Elections Announcement – Prepare the method in which the announcement of elections will be made. One method to announce the election is an email to your student body. Another method is to announce the elections before a lecture. Our recommendation is to do both.

Emphasize Requirements for the Position – The announcement, in either form, should emphasize the requirements necessary to run for the position. Your medical institution could ask each candidate to provide a

personal statement to explain their qualifications and why they seek this position. Most medical schools provide one week for candidates to submit their candidacy.

Create a Ballot – After all candidates have declared their interest, ballots need to be distributed. Similar to the original announcement, this can be done either in class or over the Web. For those choosing an electronic method of voting, the Communications Committee recommends a venue such as Survey Monkey to save you the time of computing the votes yourself. For all electronic ballots, emphasize a time period in which voting will be allowed. However, often for a record of the voting procedure, either an email ballot or an in-class ballot is preferred. We recommend that if your school decides on an in-class ballot that you arrive early and have a ballot ready for everyone arriving in class that day. After class ends, collect all ballots as your classmates exit.

Counting Votes – After the voting is completed, especially in cases of email or in-class ballots ensure that the votes are counted by at least two different individuals.

Announcing the OSR Representatives – When the OSR representatives have been determined, the class should receive notification, preferably through email or the school Website.

For a sample email call for candidates, please see Appendix A. This sample document was kindly provided to the Communications Committee by OSR representatives from the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine.

2 | Setting the Duties of an OSR Representative

Background

In this chapter, you will find:

- The resources necessary to establish a thorough fund of knowledge as an OSR representative. This includes information about your home institution and issues addressed by the AAMC, OSR, and academic medicine in general.
- Standard recommendations on how to heighten your usefulness as an OSR representative to your home institution.
- Building successful communication strategies with your constituency.

Establishing a Thorough Fund of Knowledge

Understanding Your Home Institution – Understanding the forces moving and shaping your own institution is important. It may come from your own involvement within your Admissions Office, Student Affairs Office, interest groups/clubs, Medical Student Government, or through active inquiry. The OSR has a comprehensive list of questions located in Appendix B (Questions to Consider Asking Before an OSR Meeting) to help you identify areas of importance being addressed within the AAMC. Seeking answers within your home institution will prepare you for the discussions taking place at the Regional and National meetings.

OSR Resources at Your Disposal – In addition to familiarizing yourself with the AAMC Web site, look to the OSR Web site for tools to keep you updated on current OSR projects as well as the results from numerous questionnaires conducted by fellow students on topics of interest. These include the following:

> **Committee/Liaison Updates**: regularly updated by the OSR National Chair, Committee Chairs, and liaisons to committees and professional development groups. The updates are found by clicking on Update on each committee's homepage.
>> Communications
>> Legislative Affairs
>> Community and Diversity
>> Student Affairs
>> Medical Education

> **Previous Annual Meeting Digest:** a summary of discussion topics, student presentations, and posters from recent annual meetings. These can be found by utilizing the search bar in the AAMC Website. (Ex. '2013 OSR Annual Meeting Digest')

> **Questionnaire Results:** the results of prior student questionnaires.
> This includes feedback on:
> - NBME shelf exam usage
> - Use of multimedia technology
> - Access to counseling services for students
> - Grading system questionnaire
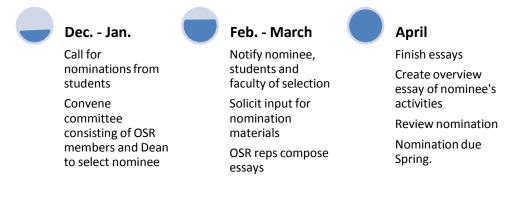> - Inclusion of students on Admissions Committees

Roles of an Active OSR Representative

Attend AAMC Annual Meetings and GSA/OSR Regional Meetings – The OSR portions of the AAMC Annual Meeting are held annually in late Fall. The OSR portion of the regional meetings are held annually in April. Travel and registration fees are the responsibility of each student's home institution. Each institution handles these expenses differently, so discussing expectations in advance with senior OSR representatives and your Deans can avoid confusion. If budget allotments do not cover expenses for all representatives from your school, some students are

able to seek outside/additional funding from their medical student government, club activity fund, graduate student union, or comparable groups. Many OSR representatives also choose to share hotel rooms at conferences, thus minimizing lodging costs. In addition, the GSA (Group on Student Affairs) sometimes offers discounts for OSR representatives to attend regional meetings, so please check with your regional chair for more information.

Communicate pertinent topics discussed at meetings with your student body – The OSR representative is a conduit for current, relevant information for medical students. News and ideas shared at conferences should be delivered to each representative's student body. Information should also flow both ways, such that topics of interest to students at the home institution are voiced by the representative at annual and regional meetings.

Communicate pertinent topics discussed at meetings with your Dean – The OSR representative works closely with his/her Dean and should be prepared to discuss information shared at conferences that is relevant to the institution. Information should also flow both ways, such that topics of interest to the Dean can be explored by the representative at annual and regional meetings.

Annually complete the Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award nomination – The AAMC accepts annual nominations for this award from the OSR primary representative at each institution. The nomination form is extensive and requires an investment of time and energy. Each institution has its own system for how nominees are selected, how nominations are completed, etc. Included below is a sample timeline:

Dec. - Jan.

Call for nominations from students

Convene committee consisting of OSR members and Dean to select nominee

Feb. - March

Notify nominee, students and faculty of selection

Solicit input for nomination materials

OSR reps compose essays

April

Finish essays

Create overview essay of nominee's activities

Review nomination

Nomination due Spring.

Participate in OSR online questionnaires – Well-crafted questionnaires generate useful information for the AAMC, the OSR, and individual schools. When questionnaires are sent via the OSR listserve, it is important to complete them and forward them to your student body if they ask you to do so. Information gathered from these questionnaires are posted on the OSR Web site (as described above). Before you craft your own questionnaire and send it to other representatives via the OSR listserve consider if this information has already been gathered by a previous questionnaire posted on the OSR site.

Building Successful Communication Strategies
Taking a systematic approach to communication builds consistency, enhances connectivity, and provides continuity as new OSR representatives replace graduates.

Between OSR representatives – Representatives at an institution should contact one another frequently. All representatives should be CC'd on emails concerning OSR business. Meetings should be frequent and at regular intervals, even at times of the year when progress is particularly slow or schedules are particularly busy, even brief meetings will keep representatives on task and mindful of OSR responsibilities. Specific tasks should be assigned to each representative, either at the beginning of their term or as need arises, and progress updates should be given when representatives meet. A realistic, annual timeline or calendar can be a useful visual tool.

Between OSR representatives and Deans – It is important to ALWAYS involve the Office of Student Affairs in OSR projects and plans, as its support will make funding, promotion, etc. much easier. A debriefing meeting with your Deans should regularly occur following annual OSR meetings; sending a 'thank-you' note for your Dean's support can demonstrate your appreciation for continued financial support.

Between OSR representatives and the Student Body – Below are some suggested means of communication:

E-mail is by far the most common means of communication, but that does not mean that it is necessarily the most effective.
- When using listserves, personalize the email so that it is being sent to the listserve of the class benefitting most from the body of information. If there is one OSR representative per class at your institution, each representative should be responsible for disseminating relevant info to their individual class.
- Include online links for all information distributed. If you are sending out an update on available scholarships or fellowships publicized over the OSR listserve, include online links to where interested students can gather more information, print applications, etc.
- Always include the most appropriate means of contacting you, the OSR representative. If another representative is a better contact for a given project, include that representative's name and contact information.

Public presentations are also a common means of communication, though they vary across schools in frequency and formality.
- Give a presentation of relevant topics to the medical student government following the AAMC Annual Meeting.
- Give a presentation to the student body (typically first and second year students) each fall, discussing either specific OSR/AAMC topics or framed as a "state of the college" address. This could be a single comprehensive session including your dean, academic officers, financial aid spokesperson, etc., or could be a student-led session as part of a Dean's Hour series.

Online resources can be more robust and are easily updated.
- Establish online space for AAMC resource descriptions and links, OSR updates, and scholarship/fellowship opportunities.
- Resources should be linked to a Web space regularly accessed by students. If the main portal is approved by your administration, setting the portal as a homepage on all school of medicine computers will guarantee student access.
- The Web space can be student or faculty administered, but should be updated regularly by the OSR representative delegated to that role.

Bulletin boards are easily accessed and regularly viewed, though they require representatives to physically update them and design the promotional materials. This medium is limited in its breadth of exposure by human traffic at the designated location.

For a comprehensive look of one medical institution's designated roles and responsibilities, please see Appendix C. This sample document, which also includes a division of responsibility based on year of education, was kindly provided to the Communications Committee by OSR representatives from The University of Toledo College of Medicine.

3 | Enhancing Your Role as an OSR Representative

Background
Building on the duties described in the previous section, you may find the need (or your Dean may require) for the OSR representatives at your institution to advance their role. In this chapter, you will find:

- Methods to enhance your role within your medical institution
- Methods to enhance your role within the OSR organization at-large

Enhancing Your Role Within Your Medical School
Serving on institutional committees – Not only will involvement on institutional committees or work-groups better equip an OSR representative for discussions at annual/regional meetings, but they provide an accessible avenue for the representative to stimulate improvement within their institution.

Formal position within the medical student government – may include a voting or non-voting role on the MSG executive committee or the OSR has official "club" status and reports to the MSG.

Formal position on the institution's Curriculum Committee – serve as a voting student member, active in course design, innovative curriculum improvement.

Formal position on the institution's Evaluation Committee – serve as a voting student member, active in student directed exam and course review.

Formal position within other work-groups – develop an area of expertise that can be shared with other students in the form of annual programs or presentations. Examples include being a liaison to Financial Aid offices, ethics committees, or a student advocacy group.

Serving the Student Body – Putting your expertise to work for other students at your home institution is one of the most personally satisfying aspects of being an OSR representative and it can be the type of project where you appreciate immediate results.

Form a working-group and develop a project – after attending OSR meetings and being exposed to the inner workings/student life at your institution, identify an area where you feel an intervention could lead to improvement. Assemble a team of other interested students and faculty who appreciate the need for this change and are willing to devote time to a project. Develop the project over the course of your medical school career and chart its impact, refining it over time. This type of project can be presented in the Student Program Showcase at OSR meetings or displayed in student posters.

Host an annual information session or event – OSR led information sessions about The Match, USMLE Step 1, and ERAS are topics being successfully presented at many schools. There are resources available on the OSR Web site to help you assemble your own presentation. It may also be valuable to plan an annual presentation to first and second year medical students on an introduction to the OSR and available AAMC resources. A link to one such power point presentation can be found below. Many students encounter these resources throughout their medical school careers, but they may benefit from learning about them in an early, comprehensive session.

Enhancing Your Role Within the OSR at large – Active involvement by representatives within the OSR is what adds to its diversity and continuous development as an organization. Most of the numerous resources have been compiled and composed by representatives just like you.

Participation at Annual Meetings – this includes proposing discussion topics to the Regional Chair, attending scheduled round table lunch discussions with the GSA, participating in the Q&A at plenary sessions

Poster presentations, Student Programming Showcase, Student Professionalism Showcase – share a unique and well-developed student-led program or project from your institution at annual meetings by contacting your regional or national delegate for medical education. For a description on how to create innovative programming, please refer to Chapter Four.

Liaison positions – each January, interested representatives apply for appointments as OSR liaisons to various groups and committees (i.e. GSA, ERAS, and NBME). OSR representation within these groups places specific student concerns on the agenda and allows these groups to sample student opinion through the OSR.

Administrative Board and Regional Leadership Positions – each annual or regional meeting provides OSR representatives with the opportunity to represent the OSR community either regionally or nationally. These positions include *Chair* (3 year position serving as Chair-Elect, Chair, and Immediate Past Chair), *National or Regional Delegates* (leading and representing one of the five core committees, Communications, Community and Diversity, Legislative Affairs, Medical Education, and Student Affairs), and *Regional Chair* (organizes the OSR regional meetings). The National Administrative Board includes the Chair, Chair-Elect, Immediate Past Chair, five National Delegates, and four Regional Chairs. The National Ad Board is responsible for planning the OSR Annual Meeting. You may find additional information here.

4 | Creating Innovative Programming

Background

The unique position of an OSR representative allows you the opportunity for developing *innovative* programs and events at your home institution. In this chapter, you will find:

- Innovative programming defined
- A framework for adapting already successful programs from other institutions and implementing them at your school.

Innovative Programming Defined

Innovative programming accomplishes two objectives: (1) it satisfies an unmet need and (2) it contributes to a strong OSR presence at your school.

Developing innovative programming involves three broad phases, each with multiple steps: recognition, planning, and implementation.

Phase One: Recognition

Identify Needs – Certain necessities are rarely self-evident even to highly creative people. Three methods of discovering unmet needs at your school include:

Asking the Student Body

Retrospection – For example, a MS3 thinking, "If only I had known X about Step 1."

Networking With Students At Other Schools – The OSR representative is in a unique position to take advantage of programs at other schools. Through the lessons learned in the previous chapters, your participation in OSR listservs and at OSR meetings can unmask previously unrecognized needs at your school. Each of the examples of innovative programming in the table below address a specific need at their medical institutions.

Social	*Education*	*Career*	*Community*
• **"Survival Guides" specific to each year of medical school** • **Interclass events (e.g. talent show)**	• "Survival Guides" specific to each year of medical school • Student discussion panels on USMLE prep • "State of the University" meeting	• Student panels on ERAS, Match, CVs • Residency interviewing workshop	• Health fairs • Adopting a hospital in a developing country

Discuss This Need – Once you have identified a topic that needs attention, initiate a conversation with individuals at your school. Who you will need to contact depends on the nature of the problem. For curriculum or education issues, consider starting with your school or department administration. Your class officers or student association senate may best address social issues initially, or you may want to talk to your student body at-large. The purpose of your discussion is three-fold. First, it allows you to determine whether your sentiments are broadly shared. Second, it allows you to discover whether measures to address the unmet needs already exist at your institution. If so, you can shift your focus to strengthening them. Third, it allows you to advocate for your position and elicit support.

Prioritize Those Needs – Ultimately, you may discover that there are multiple needs. Resources, your time and level of interest, are always limited. Rank the needs in order of importance and tackle them in that order.

Phase Two: Planning

Modeling – Innovation does not require you to reinvent the wheel. If you discovered an unmet need by talking to another OSR rep and learning about their school's solution, you are ahead of the game. Communicate with that representative to put you in touch with a contact person who is willing to discuss their programming in greater detail. Search the internet for pre-existing "how to" guides for the type of programming you are considering.

Adaptation – When modeling your programming after that of another school, consider whether programming employed by other schools is feasible at your institution. If so, ask yourself what degree of modification will be required. For example, a health care public policy event organized at a Washington, D.C. area medical school may not be directly transferrable to your institution. You might consider organizing a similar program directed at the state or county level instead.

Human Resources – Keep in mind that as an OSR representative, you do not have to do everything yourself. Your goal is to recognize the unmet need and suggest a solution that has already proven successful at another institution. How much assistance you receive with your project depends in large part on your performance discussing the need and advocating for action during phase one. Ideally, you should inspire someone else (whether it be your administration, student government, or your peers) to take ownership of the idea and do the bulk of the work. However, that not may be so easy. Therefore, the Communications Committee recommends the following approach.

- **Assess how many medical students you can recruit for assistance** – Attempt to match volunteers with tasks that fit with their interests and attitudes. Retain several people to provide advice and guidance without specific task assignments.

- **Carefully Consider Timing** – Avoid particularly busy periods (i.e. basic science exams for first and second year students) when conscription will be more difficult.

- **Determine Whether the Project Emphasizes Concrete vs. Abstract Tasks** – Concrete tasks are more readily divided over a large number of people. However, large groups often increase the complexity of the coordination effort. Abstract tasks favor a smaller team-based approach, which will likely be more efficient and successful. For large endeavors, utilize Google Apps or a project management service such as Basecamp (www.basecamphq.com; basic accounts are free).

Physical Resources – Determine what physical resources your programming will require. Will it be indoors, outdoors, or electronic? How much space will you require? Will food be involved? What equipment, if any, will be needed?

Marketing – Your team's hard work is worth nothing if no one knows about your new programming. The type of marketing you use depends on the nature of your project. For intramural programming, word of mouth, Facebook, e-mail announcements, and posters may be sufficient. Community events require more effort and creativity. Consider contacting local TV/radio/print media, online advertising, and local bloggers. Every community is different so contact your institution's public relations office for advice.

Funding – Create an estimate of costs for your project. Will you need to pay people for their labor or can you depend on volunteers? Will you need to pay for physical resources, supplies, or venue? Have you added your marketing costs? How will you obtain funding? Institutional support is the easiest means of raising money. Your school's administration or student association may have grants available. Also, determine extramural support from

community organizations and medical societies. Will the programming be free to beneficiaries or will you charge a user/admission fee?

Phase Three: Implementation

<u>Monitoring</u> – Establish a timeline for critical tasks and set realistic deadlines. Monitor progress carefully. Contingency planning is crucial; consider what could go wrong at each step in the process and plan alternatives. Again, a service like Basecamp simplifies this.

<u>Solicit Feedback</u> – Innovative programming should be ongoing. Create a survey for participants to provide feedback. Use those suggestions to improve your programming in the future.

Afterword

The Communications Committee hopes that the previous pages of information have provided you with some insights on creating and maintaining an OSR presence at your medical school. However, the Committee has a few final words that we hope each of you will keep in mind.

Not surprisingly, the document reveals that the most important element in creating a powerful OSR presence is selecting and molding active, ambitious, and enthusiastic OSR representatives. Your dedication shows that you are one of those representatives, but we do not want this engagement to end with you. We hope that you and the other representatives at your school keep this activism strong by teaching and mentoring those representatives that come after you. This will ensure that the OSR at your medical school remains strong even after you receive a MD after your name.

The document also displays quite an extensive list of duties and potential responsibilities involved in creating this active presence. This may seem daunting, but please remember the following. First, this is just a small piece of a vast array of information found within OSR databases and between your OSR colleagues. If certain elements do not work or are not possible, please do not get discouraged. Use this document as a foundation to create the type of OSR presence that most uniquely fits your school. Second, the OSR leadership in the form of your Regional Delegates, Regional Chairs, National Delegates, and National Chairs are always at your disposal in an effort to improve your own and your school's OSR experience. Take advantage of these unique resources and individuals.

Finally, we want you to improve on this document. Although the specific members of the Communications Committee will change, the Committee will always serve the OSR community at large. Adding and adapting elements of this document will only make the OSR stronger. We encourage all of you to keep the dialogue going.

Appendix A: Sample Call for Candidates

Provided by the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine

Want to network with medical students from across the country? Interested in Medical Education or Academic Medicine here at Iowa and nation-wide? Looking for great role models who demonstrate humanism in medicine?

If so, BECOME AN AAMC OSR REP FOR IOWA! For details about the OSR (Organization of Student Representatives), see AAMC Organization of Student Representatives.

Locally, the OSR interest group meets to discuss issues affecting students including medical education, diversity, student affairs, and legislative issues. The OSR works closely with the Medical Student Government to improve The University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine experience/education for our student body. Four members of the local interest group are official OSR representative who receive regular communication from the national organization and are involved in national dialogue about issues affecting medical students.

Official representatives attend the AAMC annual meeting in the fall and the regional meeting in the spring and have the opportunity to run for national and regional offices and committee membership. Being an OSR rep is an outstanding opportunity to influence medical education in the U.S., meet students from across the country, and work to better understand and improve the healthcare system.

Elections for future representatives will be held early this fall at the Medical Student Council Meeting. Please prepare a short speech. A resume is encouraged but optional.

Benefits / Responsibilities:
- Be eligible for national or regional student positions in the AAMC
- Represent Iowa while attending and participating in sessions on medical education,
- Nominate physicians from Iowa for the AAMC Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award (Dr. Ed Bell from the UIHC Department of Pediatrics was the 2002 recipient; Dr. Jerold Woodhead from UIHC Pediatrics was a previous nominee)
- Network with medical students and faculty while traveling all over the country,
- Learn about innovations at other schools and bring this information back to the Iowa student body,
- Discuss (and possibly present) Iowa's successful initiatives, and
- Vote in regional and national elections (the representative's responsibility).

Overall Goal: Improve the quality of medical education here at Iowa and across the country by exchanging ideas and best practices with students and faculty from around the country.

THE ELECTED OSR REPRESENTATIVES ARE ENCOURAGED TO RUN FOR REGIONAL OR NATIONAL POSITIONS. THESE POSITIONS ARE VIEWED WELL FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS CONSIDERING A FUTURE IN ACADEMIC MEDICINE.

Some of the leadership positions available include:
- National (5 positions) or Regional Delegates (5 positions), each involved in one of the core committees of Medical Education, Student Affairs, Community & Diversity, Legislative Affairs, and Communications.
- Regional Chair (serves on the Administrative Board, along with the National Delegates).
- National Chair (3 year position as Chair-elect, Chair, and Immediate Past Chair of the National Ad Board).
- Liaison Committees (1 or more year positions serving as student representative for important committees within or associated with the AAMC, such as MCAT, NMBE, USMLE, Admissions, etc).

Appendix B: Questions to Consider Before An OSR Meeting

Questions Pertinent to OSR Programming at the AAMC Annual Meeting
- Does your school have a policy regarding conflicts of interest (related to industry, pharmaceutical companies, private groups, etc.)?
- What kind of instruction does your school sponsor in regards to public health education?
- Do you think your school should increase emphasis on public health?
- Who owns/operates your school's teaching hospital?
- How much do you know about your school's operating budget?
- Does your curriculum emphasize understanding the structure and financing of healthcare delivery in the U.S.?
- What do you hope to achieve as your school's OSR rep?
- What do you hope to achieve at the AAMC-OSR Annual Meeting?

Questions Pertinent to Pre-Clinical Years in Medical School

Exams
- Does your school use National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) questions to prepare you for the boards?
- What is the remediation procedure for students who fail tests?
- What is the grading system for your school?
- What United States Medical Licensing Exams (USMLE) are required for graduation?
- Are students required to take USMLE boards by a certain deadline?
- How do students remediate failed USMLE boards?

AOA
- Does your school have an AOA chapter?
- How does your school determine AOA honors? When do AOA elections take place?

Advising
- Do you have a faculty advising program and when does it begin?
- Do you have a student-to-student advising program?

Health Plan and Disability Insurance
- Does your school have a student health plan?
- How much does it cost?
- What do you know about your school's disability insurance for medical students?

Patient Contact
- Does your school offer opportunities for patient contact in the pre-clinical years?
- How and when does your school utilize standardized patients?
- Do transition programs exist to ease you into the clinics?

Admissions
- Do medical students have input in admissions? If so, what training do they receive?
- Is your school increasing its enrollment? Why or why not?

Curriculum
- How much protected time does your school have to prepare for the USMLE?
- What support resources are available through the school for USMLE studying?
- Does your school utilize lectures, problem-based learning (PBL), or a combination of both?

- How is the curriculum organized (e.g. organ-based, system-based)?
- In the average week, how many hours are devoted to PBL and/or lecture?
- Are you required to attend lectures?
- What kind of student involvement is there on your school's curriculum committee?
- What types of alternate media are available for classes (e.g. video, notes, PowerPoint, transcripts, etc.)?
- Does your school offer dual-degree programs?
- Does your school have a research requirement as a requisite for graduation?

Feedback
- How do professors receive feedback from students on their lecturing performance?
- What is the participation rate for the feedback? What does your school do to increase participation?

Diversity/Community-Outreach
- Does your school have specific programs to attract and retain under-represented in medicine students?
- How does your minority affairs office interact with matriculating students before and after orientation?
- Does your school recognize/emphasize community-service?

OSR
- How many OSR reps do you have at your school?
- How are OSR reps selected?
- What role does the OSR play in your school?

Summer
- Does your school offer summer research and/or other extra-curricular experiences?

Administrative Involvement
- What medical school committees do students serve on as representatives?
- How do OSR reps function in relationship to these committees and/or their representatives?

Questions Pertinent to Clinical Years in Medical School
Professionalism
- How does your school approach professionalism?
- Does your school have an honor code?
- What is the process for reporting violations and are their protections for those who do report?

Financial Aid and Medical Education Debt
- What is the average educational and medical debt for graduating students?
- What is the total cost of living and tuition for a student completely dependent on financial aid for this current year? How much has it increased compared with last year?
- What is the recent trend for tuition increases?
- What is in-state/out-of-state tuition? (How many of each in a class?)

Clinical Scheduling
- Are the third and fourth year students scheduled simultaneously for rotations?
- How many electives/selectives/requirements do students have in their third year? Fourth year?
- How satisfied are students with the clinical scheduling procedure? (scale 1-10, elaborate as necessary)

International/Away Rotations
- What percentage of students participates in away and/or international rotations?
- How are the rotations scheduled?

- Are students at your school aware of the [Visiting Student Application Service (VSAS)](#)? Pleased with VSAS?

Clerkship Remediation
- What percentage of students needs to remediate any required clerkship during medical school? Electives?
- How many failed clerkships before a student must repeat the entire year? Before matriculation revoked?

Career Advising
- Do students at your school know about/use the [Careers in Medicine](#)Web site? Do they know whom to contact to gain your school's access code?

Match Data
- What percentage of students matched to their first choice?
- How does your school support students during the Match and SOAP?

This document was originally created in preparation for the 2008 AAMC Annual Meeting by the regional members of this Communication Committee under the leadership of Jason Lott, the National Delegate for Communications at that time.

Appendix C: OSR Representatives Roles and Responsibilities

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO MEDICAL CENTER

Individual OSR Representative Roles

Act as an <u>Ambassador</u> of The University of Toledo College of Medicine nationally by:
- Knowing basic important information about UTCOM (i.e. investigate OSR Rep Scavenger Hunt topics)
- Attending all OSR conferences--become active participants; take copious notes.
- Actively networking with other OSR representatives at conferences.
- Responding to emails from fellow OSR reps at other institutions, including surveys on an alternating basis (no rep should be responding to more than 1/3 of all requests).
- Logging into and participating in the OSR Online Community at least twice monthly.
- Running for regional and national delegate positions or applying for liaison positions

Act as a <u>conduit</u> for information from the OSR to The University of Toledo College of Medicine by:
- Communicating pertinent information to UTCOM via
  - ➢ Emails to appropriate individuals, class or to the entire student body
  - ➢ Meetings with specific administrators as needed
  - ➢ Open sessions for the UTCOM community (e.g. brown bag lunches)
- Chairing at least one working group.

Act as a <u>Professional</u> with your fellow OSR Representatives at The University of Toledo College of Medicine by:
- Keeping each other updated on pertinent working group activities.
- Helping complete Arnold P. Golf Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award nomination.
- Responding to all emails from fellow UTCOM OSR representatives promptly.
- Completing tasks you have committed yourself to in a timely fashion
- Supporting each other fully

Specific OSR Representative Responsibilities

Responsibility	Representative	Date Completed
Plan "Introduction to the OSR" session for incoming students within 2 weeks of their orientation	2nd Year OSR Rep	☐_____
Update OSR Bulletin Board	2nd Year OSR Rep	☐_____
Solicit student questions and concerns at least one week prior to AAMC annual meeting (via email, lunch-time session or informal conversations)	2nd Year OSR Rep	☐_____
Meet to discuss priorities after annual meeting	All OSR Reps	☐_____

Task	Responsible	Check
Write thank you letter after annual meeting to Drs. Gold and Meeting	2nd Year OSR Rep	☐ _____
Summarize annual meeting for students in an email--send within 2 weeks of returning from meeting	2nd Year OSR Rep	☐ _____
Call for nominations AAMC Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award from UTCOM students	4th Year OSR Rep	☐ _____
Solicit candidates for 1st year OSR Rep	4th Year OSR Rep	☐ _____
Schedule interviews for 1st year OSR Rep with Dr. Metting and Della	4th Year OSR Rep	☐ _____
Prepare OSR Rep interview questions; Read candidate statements of intent	All OSR Reps	☐ _____
Attend 1st Year OSR Rep interviews; Select 1st Year Rep	All OSR Reps	☐ _____
Select AAMC Arnold P. Gold Humanism in Medicine nominee	All OSR Reps	☐ _____
Notify nominee, students and faculty of HiM nominee; solicit their input for the nomination	3rd Year Rep	☐ _____
Compile Overview Essay for HiM nomination as well as an additional essay; review entire nomination	4th Year Rep	☐ _____
Write one HiM nomination essay	2nd and 3rd Year Reps	☐ _____
Write two HiM nomination essays	1st Year Rep	☐ _____
Solicit student questions and concerns at least one week prior to regional OSR/GSA Spring regional meeting (via email, lunch-time session or informal conversations)	1st Year OSR Rep	☐ _____
Meet to discuss priorities after Spring meeting	All OSR Reps	☐ _____
Write thank you letter after Spring meeting to Drs. Gold and Metting	1st Year OSR Rep	☐ _____
Summarize Spring meeting for students in an email--send within 2 weeks of returning from meeting	1st Year OSR Rep	☐ _____

Appendix D: Effective Faculty Relations

After reading Chapter 3 "Beating the Standard: Enhancing your Role as an OSR Representative" of the OSR's Effective Practices document, the next step is to think about how to do these things at your school. We all know that professors, deans, and administrators are the real decision-makers, and we cannot change things without their guidance and blessing. Based on our experience at Tulane, we are providing suggestions to give you a basic strategy to place yourself in a position where your school's decision makers trust you with advice and responsibility.

1. **Taking the first step: Show up in person and explain yourself**

   If you approach a decision-maker and say "I am a third year and I don't like what you are doing," don't be surprised if you are ineffective. You must give the administration a reason to want your advice. Your election/selection as an OSR representative and the recommendations in this guide can help position you to be heard:

   > *"Hello Dr./Dean Doe, I am currently a third year student and I am the school's student representative to the Association of American Medical Colleges Organization of Student Representatives (OSR). I would like to meet with you, at your convenience, to discuss a few issues that are important to the students."*

   Every Dean and Senior Faculty member knows what the AAMC is and most of the time will be more than willing to meet with you. You have identified yourself as an OSR representative, shown that you represent the student body, are appreciative of their time, and would like to have a conversation about something that is important to students. Most decision-makers are open minded and will prove to be the best resource you have as a representative.

2. **What if they are not willing to listen?**

   There are some administrators who will not be open to helping you. This is the most difficult part of being an effective representative. Don't get frustrated, get determined.

   Participation in the OSR is strongly supported by many administrators at AAMC member medical schools. In the hopes that your administration may respond to advice from a peer, we have asked student affairs deans who serve on the AAMC Group on Student Affairs Steering Committee to offer their perspective on OSR involvement:

   "Our medical school considers student participation in the OSR an investment in the future of academic medicine. It affords insight to the structure and operation of the AAMC and opportunities to collaborate with the leadership of professional development groups. Our students have always returned from national AAMC and regional GSA meetings invigorated to initiate new projects and more appreciative of what we already do well." *Steven T. Case, Ph.D., Chair, GSA Committee on Admissions, Professor of Biochemistry & Associate Dean for Medical School Admissions, University of Mississippi Medical Center*

   "Part of the professional role of a physician is becoming involved in organizations that aim to better our profession. The OSR is such an organization. Composed of student leaders, the OSR serves as an important link between faculty, Deans and students. In addition to serving as a forum for ideas, the OSR also provides professional development opportunities for our young leaders. Facilitating student involvement in the OSR will create a student body that is current, involved, and able to make a

difference." *Marc Kahn, M.D, Chair, GSA Committee on Student Affairs, Senior Associate Dean for Admissions & Student Affairs, Tulane University School of Medicine*

"Physicians are expected to be leaders yet often do not have leadership training. The AAMC OSR is an organization that supports development of leaders. At our institution, Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU), the OSR representative also sits on the OHSU SOM curriculum committee. This additional role empowers the student to contribute to the medical education process on both a local and national level. These OSR and curriculum committee roles facilitate student communication and leadership between OHSU faculty and Deans, medical students and national AAMC members." *Molly Osborne, M.D., Ph.D., GSA Previous Past Chair, Associate Dean for Students, Pulmonary & Critical, Oregon Health & Science University*

These testimonials may be most helpful if you send them to your administrator early on in your conversations with your explanation of "Why should OSR be involved?"

Use the resources on the OSR web site. You can find information on many issues on the OSR web site (http://www.aamc.org/members/osr). This information is something you may want to take to the administration as evidence of what other schools are doing. If you can't find it, ask other representatives or email Mary Halicki (mhalicki@aamc.org) or Monique Mauge (mmauge@aamc.org), AAMC OSR Staff.

Administer a survey. Put together a survey for your region, or the OSR at large via the listserve or Helix, asking what other schools have done. This is excellent, unbiased evidence to use for your perspective/stance. Another useful tool is a survey of your classmates. If the survey shows that the vast majority of your peers desire a certain change, the administration will be more likely to facilitate that change.

Sometimes, you will be unsuccessful. However, remember that there will be representatives in the future who are just as committed. If you continue to be unsuccessful, do your best to remain engaged and convince the administration. They will eventually notice your well-supported and repeated efforts to represent and help the students.

3. **I am involved. What is next?**
First of all, congratulations on making OSR a resource for your administrators. The hard part is over. How do you effectively use the trust you have gained?
The "Enhancing Your Role within Your Medical School" section of Chapter 3 is a great start for ideas about how you can become involved with the inner workings of your school. From our experience, there are numerous committees and organizations in most medical schools that operate well below the radar of most students. For example, Tulane's Curriculum Committee is well-known to the students, but its subcommittees are not. Whether it is the Student Affairs or the Basic Science Education committee at Tulane, these "working-group" level committees are where most of the work is done and ironically where most decisions affecting students are made. It is much easier to develop relationships with faculty and change their policies at these smaller committees, than change their recommendations to the executive-level committees after the fact. It is next to impossible when the recommendations are approved.

REMEMBER:
- Get involved with the "working-group" level committees
- Be there when the decisions are made, not when they are being approved.

4. **Student Leaders and Involved Students**
At Tulane, we have three main representative bodies for students: Medical Student Government, Owl Club, and OSR. Medical Student Government and Owl Club represent the students within our school for

executive and academic matters, respectively. If your school has a separation of student representation like this, then it is very important for you to enlist the help of other student leaders and coordinate with them as a united front. First, try to get representation in the governing boards of other student organizations. We achieved this by explaining to the other student leaders who we are and that we don't expect a vote in decision making; we just want an exchange of ideas. Second, you must coordinate with the other leaders so you don't give varying opinions to the administration. If you are unable to enlist their help, appeal directly to students with surveys, petitions, and support letters from student leaders.

REMEMBER:
- How you present yourself is important. Be able to say: I represent the students.
- Coordinate, not argue
- Appeal directly to students

5. **Keep your commitments and do them humbly**

There are many groups at Tulane that are ineffective in their efforts to influence the decision-makers. The number one mistake these groups make is by not being present at every single meeting. Obviously, it is difficult for one student to make every meeting, so coordinate with the other representatives to make sure at least one of you is present at every meeting. The second, and only slightly less important mistake, is not being humble in your advice and demeanor. The representative is an advisor, not a decision maker. Even when given responsibility, you are a temporary fixture in their eyes and will be much more effective if you provide well reasoned and well supported recommendations. The third mistake is not completing tasks given to you, whether it is simply to attend an advisory meeting or running a project assigned by the school. You and your local interest group will be much more effective and trusted if you are seen as reliable. Lastly, learn the power of remaining quiet in meetings. Don't feel obligated to confront an issue you are unprepared to address, especially in a formal meeting. Do your homework, regroup, and be prepared another day.

Don't ruin your local OSR interest group's credibility through an individual's mistakes and inability to communicate effectively and humbly. Always send the best communicator to meet with the decision makers.

REMEMBER:
- You must be there to make a difference.
- Become a fixture at the committee by attending, offering ideas, and being humble.
- When you commit, don't fail. This is an extremely effective way of losing the trust of and influence on the decision makers.
- "It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt." Mark Twain

6. **Bring Evidence**
Physician educators love evidence. We have been much more effective with our deans when we can show them unbiased and quantifiable evidence. Here are some examples:

- OSR materials found on the web site, internal student surveys, and faculty support letters
- AAMC, NBME, and AMA materials
- Academic Medicine and Medical Education journals

Factual statements such as: "The latest Medical Education research shows that X is the most common/effective way to do Y" or "X% of our students support Y, and do not support Z" are much more effective than anecdotal opinions of a few student leaders.

7. **Organize your efforts**

Each representative should have a job and those jobs should culminate in the fourth year when you have the most experience with the school and its decision-makers. We have recently structured our efforts and responsibilities this way and found it very effective for several reasons:

MS1 Responsibilities
- Elected in spring of first year
- This is the time for you to orient your new representatives to their new positions within your school and the wider picture of OSR.

MS2 Responsibilities
- Serve on Basic Science Education Subcommittee (non-voting)
- Serves as liaison with Medical Student Government

    Our medical student government club presidents are all MS2s, making it ideal for their classmates to relate and understand the Medical Student Government's issues.

MS3 Responsibilities
- Serve on Evaluation Committee (voting)
- Faculty Liaison

    The MS3 learns the processes and protocols of our Curriculum Committee system by being there when the details of scheduling and course design are decided at the Basic Science committee and when the Evaluation Committee's recommendations are being made to the full Curriculum Committee. He or she also liaises directly with the faculty on medical education issues, which makes your job MUCH easier in meetings when the faculty makes these decisions.

MS4 Responsibilities
- Serve on Curriculum Committee (voting) and Clinical Education Subcommittee (non-voting)
- Administration Liaison
- Selection of AAMC Humanism in Medicine Award Nominee
- Respond to OSR listserve surveys

    The MS4's experience, connections, and better availability have made them the most effective at the "big" meeting where most decisions are approved.

It is very important for all of the representatives to communicate and coordinate their efforts at all levels from the student meetings, to the working groups, to the approval committees. This way, you and your student leader allies are all on the same page and the decision makers are not confronted with differing opinions along the way.

William A. Teeter, Class of 2012

With contributions from:
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