

GEA MESRE Letter to AAMC Leadership Regarding Affinity Group Evolution

November 11, 2025

Dear Dr. David Skorton and AAMC Colleagues,

We are writing on behalf of the GEA MESRE (Medical Education Scholarship, Research, and Evaluation) community to express our concerns regarding the AAMC affinity group changes announced on October 3, 2025. We respectfully request that our perspectives be carefully considered during the implementation of the new affinity groups and that we receive answers to several questions we have below.

Our understanding is that GEA (and its subgroups, including regional GEA) will cease to exist as of July 1, 2026. A new affinity group, named Curriculum, Instruction, Research and Assessment (CIRA), will emerge. We also understand that GME will be a separate affinity group in this new structure. GEA members with a GME focus are encouraged to join the GME affinity group.

First, we request clarification regarding the rationale for dividing the GEA into several affinity groups. Our MESRE's mission is to serve as "a resource for educators across the medical education continuum by supporting the development, dissemination, and application of high-quality scholarship, research, and evaluation." In the new affinity group structure, it is unclear how MESRE's mission can be sustained. The loss of a comprehensive educational affinity group across the continuum raises questions about MESRE's place and role in serving the broader medical education community. As volunteers, participating in multiple affinity group meetings is not feasible. This change risks returning to siloed approaches and diminishes the organic, interconnected nature of medical education practice and scholarship as well as the rich communities of practice that have served to support advances in education practice and scholarship across the country.

Second, we understand that while GEA MESRE will conclude on June 30, 2026, the RIME (Research in Medical Education) and MERC (Medical Education Research Certificate) programs will continue under AAMC's ownership. These programs were developed and supported within the vibrant GEA and MESRE communities; however, the community itself is being discontinued. We request clarification on the reasoning behind this decision and the intended relationship between the scholarship community (GEA MESRE) and AAMC moving forward. GEA MESRE has provided other valued programs and initiatives, including

the National GEA Grants, MedEdSCHOLAR, Regional Grant Spotlight, MESRE Annotated Bibliography of Journals for Educational Scholarship, and Team UP! For Scholarly Collaboration, all of which will conclude on June 30, 2026. These programs have offered valuable professional development and career advancement opportunities to many members as educators and scholars. Continuing such programs would greatly benefit the MESRE community.

Third, we seek guidance on how regional GEA sections can maintain their sense of professional community within the new structure, and even further, how early career faculty and trainees can develop professional networks and relationships that support their growth. MESRE has supported regional GEA missions and constituents through various programs, such as grants, scholarship awards, skill development workshops, virtual consultations, and mentoring. Under the proposed changes, It is unclear how these organic ecosystems of collaboration for medical education scholarship at both regional and national levels will be sustained. We are deeply concerned that many medical educators and scholars may lose their professional homes and the pathway for developing educational scholars will be lost as a result of these changes.

Fourth, advancing research and scholarship in medical education is not only crucial but foundational to ensuring ongoing innovation and excellence in academic medicine, especially when the educational mission faces significant challenges. The AAMC has established itself as the leading platform for the exchange of medical education research and scholarship in the United States, with MESRE playing a pivotal role in this success. The collective efforts of medical educators, scholars, and researchers have elevated medical education practices worldwide. Undermining MESRE would critically weaken the development of future medical education researchers and scholars, significantly reducing the influence and impact of U.S. medical education research on both national and international stages.

We consider it our responsibility to seek clear answers to these questions and comments on behalf of the community we serve and for future generations of medical educators and scholars. A strong partnership between medical education communities and the AAMC can be fostered through mutual trust, transparent communication, and shared objectives, enabling us to navigate this change process collaboratively and effectively. While our MESRE community is happy to provide feedback and ask questions through the current venues available (the Affinity Group Evolution Feedback Form), we ask to have a MESRE voice as part of the GEA Steering Committee in the discussions regarding the restructuring of governance as they are designed and/or finalized.

We look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

The GEA MESRE Steering Committee

Heeyoung Han, PhD, GEA MESRE National Chair, Professor, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine

Nicole Borges, PhD, GEA MESRE National Past Chair, Professor, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth

Elizabeth Bradley, PhD, Associate Professor of Medical Education, University of Virginia School of Medicine

Doreen Olvet, PhD, NEGEA MESRE Chair-Elect, Associate Professor, Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell

Andrea Berry, MPA, MESRE Professional Development Chair, Executive Director of Continuous Professional Learning, University of Central Florida College of Medicine

Deborah L. Engle, EdD, MS, MESRE Professional Development Chair-Elect, Professor, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

Kelli Qua, PhD, CGEA MESRE Chair, Assistant Professor, Director of Program Evaluation, Medical Education Research, and Continuous Quality Improvement, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

Julie Youm, PhD, GEA MESRE Communications Chair, Associate Dean Education Compliance and Quality, Director Educational Technology, University of California - Irvine

Jeffrey J.H. Cheung, PhD, GEA National Grant Award Chair, CGEA MESRE Past Chair, Assistant Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine

Valerie J. Lang, MD, MHPE; NEGEA MESRE Chair, Professor, Associate Chair for Medical Education Research and Scholarship, University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry

Jean M. Bailey, PhD, Professor/Associate Dean of Faculty Development, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, MERC Steering Committee Chair

Tasha R. Wyatt, PhD, Professor/Vice Chair for Research, Department of Health Professions Education, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, RIME Committee Co-Chair (2024-2025)

Laura Weingartner, PhD, MS, Associate Professor and Director of Research for Health Professions Education, University of Louisville School of Medicine, SGEA MESRE Chair

Michael S. Ryan, MD, MEHP, Professor of Pediatrics, Associate Dean for Assessment, Evaluation, and Scholarship. University of Virginia School of Medicine. RIME Committee Chair (2025-2026)

MESRE Past Chairs, and Section Members

Cayla R. Teal, PhD, MA, Associate Dean for Assessment, Evaluation and Scholarship, Director of Honors & Medical Student Research, Kansas City Campus, Education Professor

S. Beth Bierer, PhD. Professor of Medicine, Director, Assessment and Evaluation, Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve School of Medicine, Graduate Faculty, Adult Learning and Development, College of Education and Human Services, Cleveland State University

Janice Hanson, PhD. Professor; Director of Education Scholarship Development. Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis

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David P. Way, MEd, Senior Education Research Scientist-Retired, The Ohio State University College of Medicine, Department of Emergency Medicine, Columbus, Ohio.

Patricia O'Sullivan, Emeritus Professor, University of California San Francisco School of Medicine, former RIME and MESRE chair

Caren M Stalburg, MD MA, Clinical Professor, Departments of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Learning Health Sciences. Founding Director, Health Infrastructures and Learning Systems Master of Science Online Degree program, Director Medical Education Scholars Program, University of Michigan Medical School, former CGEA chair.

H. Carrie Chen, MD, PhD, Associate Dean for Medical Education Research and Scholarship, Professor of Health Systems Science, Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine, Pasadena, California.

Bahar Saberzadeh Ardestani, MD, MHPE, resident physician, Department of Internal Medicine, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

Tai Lockspeiser, MD, MHPE, Associate Dean of Assessment, Evaluation and Outcomes, Jones Family Endowed Chair of Medical Education, University of Colorado School of Medicine.

Anna T. Cianciolo, PhD, Professor, Medical Education, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, Past CGEA MESRE Chair

Jonathan Ilgen, MD, PhD, Professor and Vice Chair for Faculty Development & Education, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

Yoon Soo Park, PhD, Department Head and Ilene B. Harris Professor, Department of Medical Education, University of Illinois College of Medicine; past RIME Chair

Elissa Hall, EdD, MA, Chair, AAMC – GEA, Assistant Professor, Scientific Director, Advanced Digital Education, Co-Director, Harper Family Foundation Artificial Intelligence Education on Medicine Program, Mayo Clinic

AAMC Leadership Response to MESRE Letter

December 10, 2025

Dear MESRE Steering Committee members:

Thank you for taking the time to write and share the perspectives of the GEA's MESRE community. I have shared this communication with my chief of staff, Jennifer Schlener, who remains closely engaged with the team building out the operational elements for our 11 new affinity groups.

As I've stated previously, the feedback we continue to receive remains incredibly valuable as the team works to build the operational approach to this evolved affinity group structure. And while I don't have answers to each of your questions and concerns, please know that they have been conveyed to the team advancing this work.

Our Leadership Team identified the 11 new affinity groups to meet the AAMC's imperative to both lead and serve the academic medicine community and support our own strategic prioritization decision-making, similar to difficult resource allocation decisions the leaders of our member institutions are making. Our goal is for the new structure, while different, to

continue to afford the opportunities that are sought by our community and more. We see great opportunity in creating structures and processes that will facilitate far more movement among groups, for engagement, and even membership. And for those who seek a true connection with a number of like-minded colleagues, there will be that opportunity as well.

It was intentional that we created the Med Ed Leadership and Administration group to unite faculty leaders and staff professionals who manage and support the operational and strategic functions of the medical education mission, along with the Graduate Medical Education group to bring together faculty and staff professionals responsible for the administration and oversight of graduate medical education programs. The latter is critical to AAMC's desired engagement with the broader program director community.

Over the years, for the GEA and Group on Student Affairs, activity in groups based on geographic regions has provided access, scholarship opportunities, and mentorship, especially to individuals earlier in their careers. We have not yet made a decision about the future of regional-level opportunities. We continue to listen carefully and continue to seek constituent input as we work toward finalizing a decision. The AAMC remains committed to being the organization that provides research and scholarship opportunities and professional development across the continuum of medical education and academic medicine.

The AAMC was chartered 149 years ago to "advance medical education," and that remains a north star, in all our work across the association. Under Dr. Alison Whelan's extraordinary leadership, we have advanced our work in medical education in many strategic, relevant, and timely ways, including in how we engage constituents via our affinity groups, and work that Alison's Academic Affairs team leads. Our commitment to medical education is unwavering, and that will not change. We remain committed to advancing medical education, convening educators, professional development for educators, and the scholarship of education. What forms these take must continue to evolve and we look to you and others to continue to work with Alison and her team in forging the future of medical education.

We are all committed to effectively launching these new groups in July 2026, and I thank you for your patience and, in advance, your willingness to meaningfully engage in conversations as we bring constituents together to begin building these new group governance structures, processes, and communities. We have not reached that point yet, but we will in early-2026.

Again, thank you for taking the time to write and share your questions and concerns.

All best,
David