

Medical Student Involvement in Medical Education, 2014

An electronic 8-question survey was made available to medical students via the AAMC's Organization for Student Representatives list-serv. The survey consisted of yes/no questions pertaining to schools' offerings, as well as perceived interest in programs if they do not exist, and free-response questions for respondents to provide details on their programs. The results of this survey are presented below.

Response Rate

47 medical schools responded to the survey out of 141 medical schools registered with the AAMC, yielding a 33% response rate. This represents 29 public institutions, 17 private institutions, and 1 unknown institution with 10 schools from the northeast region, 15 from the central region, 18 from the southern region, 3 from the western region, and 1 from an unknown region.

Does your medical school offer any type of medical education track or certificate?

- Only 9 institutions (19%) offer a medical education track or certificate.
- Of those institutions where this option did not exist, the majority of students (24/35, 69%) believed there would be interest in such a program.

Of institutions offering a medical education track or certificate, responses to the following prompt are listed below: "Please explain your medical school's offering(s) and describe the components of the track by year. Other questions to possibly answer include, are tracks required or optional, is this more research-focused or teaching-focused?"

- Alpert Medical School of Brown University: "We have what is called a 'Medical Education Scholarly Concentration.' This consists of a scholarly project the summer after your 1st year, weekly lunchtime lectures on topics in med ed your second year, and completion of a portfolio of your work in med ed and participation in various teaching/TA events in M3 and M4. This is a single 'track,' but the research/project undertaken and the focus of the students work is left up to the student."
- Boonshoft School of Medicine: "We have a global health track. One classroom elective MS1 year, one classroom elective MS2 year, required travel abroad between MS1/MS2 year, required elective abroad (4 weeks) during MS4 year."
- Medical College of Wisconsin: "We have a program called 'Pathways,' which allows monthly sessions in various areas (ie medical educator track) and weekly blocked time to complete research projects. This is mandatory during the M1 and M2 year, and elective during the M3 year."
- Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania: "There is a 1-week optional course offered in year 4 (actually started by former OSR reps!)"
- Stanford University: "There is a Medical Education Scholarly Concentration (a required 'thesis' for each medical student - other categories include clinical research, molecular basis of medicine, health policy, etc.). I'm unsure of the coursework of this concentration, but know that there is some curriculum along with the project-based requirement."
- University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine: "Our school has a required research

component of our curriculum with five tracks students can choose from, one of which is Medical Education. These tracks are required and mostly focused on research, though some MedEd track requirements are fulfilled by courses about curriculum design and TAing. MS1 - mostly networking, finding a mentor in medical education; MS2 - completing a specific project and developing a poster of your results; MS3 - nothing; MS4 - continuing old project or starting new project with goal to disseminate data at meetings and at the end of the year research symposium.”

- University of Louisville: “Teaching focused. Distinction track and also offered as a 4th yr elective”
- University of Rochester: “Students prepare a lecture with the help of a faculty member and deliver it to MS1s or MS2s during their third year. The student receives feedback on the lecture and then delivers it again fourth year. There may be a classroom component to the track during the second year, but I am not sure what it entails.”
- University of South Florida: “Our school has 'scholarly tracks' for research, public health, business, humanities, medical education etc. They usually meet 2-4 times/month. Here is the curriculum: <http://health.usf.edu/medicine/mdprogram/scp/eSC.htm>”
- University of Texas at Houston: “Known as a scholarly concentration. See this link: <https://med.uth.edu/oep/documents/2014/07/medical-education.pdf>”

Does your medical school have a medical education special interest group?

- Only 6 institutions (13%) have a medical education special interest group.
- Of those institutions without a medical education special interest group, 23 of the 38 remaining institutions (61%) state interest exists.

Of institutions with a medical education special interest group, responses to the following prompt are listed below: “Please share how your institution's medical education group functions (i.e. what the group does, events held, faculty advisor, etc.)”

- Dartmouth Geisel School of Medicine: “We have a group called the Medical Education Scholars. You apply to be a part of the group and it is a competitive process. I think they select about 12 from the 2nd year class for this. There is a faculty mentor for the group and the student leader of the group arranges meetings throughout the year to discuss topics related to medical education. Students are expected to undertake a medical education project during their experience (e.g., developing a lecture and delivering it with the oversight of a faculty mentor).”
- Georgetown University: “A faculty member helps promote research projects in medical education.”
- Johns Hopkins School of Medicine: “The Student Curriculum Review Team is an independent student review process of the curriculum. They review each block, facilitate discussions with the student body, and meet with course directors as well as curriculum directors to improve the learning experience from the student perspective.”
- Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania: “Participates in Med Ed journal clubs with faculty, helps organize transition to clerkship activities for students (helping practice presentations, etc). I think they also invite speakers for events, not sure.”
- University of Central Florida: “Students Interested in Academic Medicine (SIAM) holds

monthly to bi-monthly meetings covering topics in academic medicine and research. They participate to variable degrees with our school's mandatory research module by networking with undergrads and other graduate schools to assist with research. They also organize talks by faculty on academic topics.”

Have you and/or your classmates struggled with connecting with faculty on medical education projects?

- Twenty-three institutions (49%) state their students do not struggle connecting with faculty to participate in medical education research.

Those institutions that responded students struggle to connect with faculty were asked to respond to the following prompt: “Please expand on you/your classmates' struggles.” Anonymous responses are listed below.

- “Those within scholarly concentration have good mentorship. Challenge occurs with those without concentrations finding the appropriate ability to find medical education mentors.”
- “I think most students do not realize they could have a role in medical education projects. There is a much less clear pathway than to clinical research, for interest.”
- “-Lack of awareness that research can be conducted in medical education (and that students can be involved). -Most students removed from faculty conducting medical education research. -To my knowledge, most medical education faculty do not consider involving medical students (i.e. not part of the culture within the department). -Lack of training in research methodology, especially methodology specific to medical education research vs. biomedical research.”
- “They tend to be the developers and leaders behind closed doors and enroll us without giving us full credit.”
- “The faculty is attempting to establish a medical education tract, but the tract needs more organization which will probably occur moving forward.”

Those institutions that indicated students do not struggle to connect with faculty were asked to respond to the following prompt: “Please share how you/your classmates were able to connect with faculty and get involved with projects.” Responses are listed below.

- Alpert Medical School of Brown University: “There is a big push here for student involvement in medical education. Any student can be involved and improve some aspect of the curriculum whether or not they are participating in the Scholarly Concentration. Mostly the impetus for involvement comes from the students, but any/all of the faculty members are very receptive.”
- Boonshoft School of Medicine: “We have a robust group and primary manager for medical education research, including journal clubs and presentations related to MedEd research.”
- Cleveland Clinic Learner College of Medicine: “They had to take the initiative and reach out to faculty. Once they found a responsive faculty member, they tended to be very supportive.”
- Creighton University SOM: “Email, research forum”
- Johns Hopkins: “Deans have office hours and they are generally pretty accessible.”

“Contact the Office of Curriculum directly. We are very fortunate to have an environment of student support for various independent interests, whether it's to start a group or design an individual endeavor.”

- Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania: “There are a few people who are obvious Med Ed faculty at the school/hospital. So contacting them is the way to start the process and has worked well for students in the past.”
- Rutgers NJMS: “Our school has a medical education elective taken in the fourth year. The elective is rigorous and well-received and gives students formal instruction on clinical and didactic teaching and presentations. Additionally, the office of education, and nearly all faculty are receptive to students. Most departments or divisions will have a 'go-to' faculty member for these requests.”
- Texas Tech University Health Science Center Paul L Foster School of Medicine: “Through scholarly research projects with MedEd faculty; our professors are 80/20 teaching so they are readily available and there is great interaction between the students and faculty.”
- Tulane University School of Medicine: “I contacted the Director of Medical Education and asked what projects she was working on. She gave me several ideas and a few articles to read. All I had to do was ask.”
- UC Irvine: “We have curriculum and education representatives for each class. As such, each year can communicate their needs or inquiries to the representatives who can communicate it with faculty in the curriculum/education meetings.”
- UCLA David Geffen SOM: “The medical student council has medical education representatives (with voting power) that sit on a committee with faculty and staff; they also share their work with the MSC regularly and collaborate with OSR. In general, students are involved in most curricular and educational decisions where possible. The MEC reps are not the only students who are recruited to help with these decisions.”
- University of Central Florida: “Through the scholarly concentration construct.” “We have an integrated research program called FIRE (Focused Inquiry and Research Experience), that allows us to work on projects with faculty. Students choose what type of research they would like to pursue, and work with faculty who are experts in that particular field. Our faculty is also very receptive to student feedback and ideas for changes to the medical curriculum.” “Students are able to access the list of faculty and community mentors for our mandatory research project. Student affairs and our research department will also point students in the direction of likely mentors for their projects.”
- University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine: “Most involvement comes through our track program. We have two track leaders who help students connect with our faculty in their areas of interest in Medical Education projects. We also have an introduction to medical education elective in first year that helps students get exposure to the different MedEd leaders at our institution.”
- University of Colorado: “Faculty is very receptive to students and if you are proactive, it is not difficult to get faculty buy in.”
- University of Michigan: “We are undergoing a curricular transformation. There is a robust student representation structure that permeates all committees in this effort, so students have had myriad opportunities to engage in real medical education questions.”
- University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health: “The medical school student council has a curriculum committee that is well attended by many elected M1 and

M2 members of student council. Administration also hosts informal luncheons to discuss pertinent med ed matters with the entire student body. Administration actively seeks out student input, often including voting privileges, for committees regarding med ed. There are no formal avenues to medical education projects but should an individual express interest opportunities are made readily available.”

- Upstate Medical University: “There if you want to pursue it.”
- USC School of Medicine-Greenville: “I am a part of a new medical school (we are in our third year), so we are still figuring out the best way to do things. Our faculty and administration are very open and inviting about making our curriculum better and actively recruit students to aid in this process. There are multiple ongoing research projects in which faculty and students collaborate on ways to improve medical education. Two members of the class ahead of me worked with faculty to create Self Learning Modules on the topic of embryology to help my class with the subject. Likewise, three members of my class are combining their notes from first and second year classes into concept maps that are accessible on an app for the class below us.”
- Washington University in St. Louis: “Interested students proactively spoke with faculty to find a good fit for research projects.”

Conclusions

There is a cross-institutional desire for greater medical student understanding and involvement in medical education theory and research. While programs do exist for residents and practicing physicians, such as Masters of Health Professions Education, an opportunity exists to begin the process of training the next generation of medical educators while in UME.