

The Committee on Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Curriculum & Student Affairs

2000-2001 Annual Report

Committee Members: Andrea Ball, Carolyn Bell, Byron Crouse, Kennedy Gilchrist, Susan Hyland, Curt Johnson, Nathan Kanous, Karin Kirchhoff, Nadine Nehls, Jerry Noack, Scott Spear (Chair), Judy Thompson

Major Activities and Accomplishments for 2000-01

The Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee was asked to develop recommendations to facilitate interdisciplinary activities in the planned HealthStar complex. The committee spent several months hearing from campus consultants and discussing the issues before formulating the report. The committee report outlines the broad implications and specific examples of what is needed to bring about a truly interdisciplinary environment among the health sciences' schools and programs at UW-Madison. To facilitate implementation of these recommendations, interdisciplinary learning should be a specific goal that is promulgated by the Health Sciences Council for all health sciences' students on this campus.

The highlights of the committee's recommendations regarding interdisciplinary education in the Health Sciences Learning Center include:

- The Health Sciences Council should present a broad commitment to an interdisciplinary facility and should consistently describe the HSLC as an interdisciplinary facility
- The Health Sciences Council should develop a mechanism to monitor the fact that interdisciplinary practices and activities are indeed occurring in the HSLC
- Define who will be "at the table" as the building comes on-line and the processes that will be used to assess the efficacy of these activities
- Develop a Health Sciences Education Day to bring faculty and students together—modeled on the UW Medical School Education Retreat (Medical Education Day)
- Broaden the concept of "learning communities" in the HSLC to bring graduate nursing, physician assistant (and possibly Pharm.D.) students into the mix

The committee suggests ways to implement interdisciplinary health sciences' educational objectives in general:

- Interdisciplinary teaching should be the Standard of Practice in the health sciences' schools and should become a part of the faculty culture of the institution
- Interdisciplinary teaching must be "incentivized"—monetarily, promotion/tenure and via other significant credit
- There should be a strong emphasis on collaborative work (teaching and research) in the tenure advancement process
- Common time should be agreed upon for interdisciplinary curricular activity and built into curricular structures
- Consider higher-level administration or curriculum committee chairs' representation on this committee to create a larger impact on the systems that determine the content of health sciences' curricula
- Health sciences' deans must charge curriculum committees to make this a priority—each program should have interdisciplinary requirements to be met

- A proposed Health Sciences division with an interdisciplinary curriculum committee and/or interdisciplinary requirements for each school and program is advisable

The committee members heard from several people this past year to get a sense of existing health sciences interdisciplinary activities on campus:

- Jason Morgenson, Med2—organizer of a student-led course in Medical Spanish for the accomplished Spanish speaker—there has been nursing and medical student involvement
- Kathy Skibinski—the course coordinator for a Pharm. D. course on Medication Use Safety—a course that is seen as providing an opportunity for interdisciplinary teaching
- Natalie Norcross—Interim Co-Director, Health Sciences Libraries, IAIMS Investigator—presented information about IAIMS (Integrated Advanced Information Management Systems), a statewide project funded by the National Library of Medicine. It is intended to develop a sustainable regional health-information technology architecture that supports the teaching, research and service missions of the UW-Madison Health Sciences.

There was a brief committee discussion about the federal Caregiver Law—there are a variety of circumstances for the various health sciences' schools, which results in differing applications of the law. Nancy Lynch is a resource on this issue. TB mask fit testing has been an item on the committee's agenda, but the individual placement institutions and agencies are currently addressing this concern.

Additional items of discussion by the committee included student participation and input into the committee's work. Committee members felt that student participation in the work of the committee would be valuable—the committee asks the Health Sciences Council to discuss the potential appointment of students to serve on the committee.

Committee Goals for 2001-02

The following student service issues of concern are on the agenda for the committee to discuss this coming year:

- Potential new implications of the federal Caregiver Law
- The health care and professional needs of students on clerkships in distant locales
- Professional behavior standards—including mental health challenges
- Disability accommodations for health sciences' students
- Legal concerns raised by the above items

The primary agenda items for this committee in the future will continue to involve the support of interdisciplinary learning in the health sciences. However, many committee members feel that they are often the lone voices in their departments and schools and that there are many impediments that serve to frustrate the goal of interdisciplinary learning in the health sciences on this campus. The sense of the committee is that our work would be greatly aided by a clear commitment from the Health Sciences Council to the goals outlined in this summary report and in the committee report on supporting interdisciplinary learning in the HSLC. Restructuring and/or reconstituting this committee may be necessary to most effectively achieve these ends. We can continue to meet to advance a short-term agenda, but we hope that serious consideration by the Health Sciences Council will be given to markedly improving the climate for and commitment to interdisciplinary learning in the health sciences at UW-Madison.