

# Fellowship Education Advisory Committee 2009-10 Academic Session Report

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## Overview

The Fellowship Working Group Report “Raising the Bar” (September 2009) recommended the establishment of the Fellowship Education Advisory Committee (FEAC), to advise the Vice Dean PGME on the oversight of fellowship programs, as well as to develop and maintain policies and procedures related to clinical fellows.

## Membership

The inaugural membership of the FEAC consisted of 17 members: three standing members from the Departments of Medicine, Paediatrics and Surgery; four rotating members from four other departments (two large and two small, based on fellowship enrolment); two rotating members representing affiliated hospitals/HUEC; one extraordinary member to represent family medicine interests; and three currently registered clinical fellows. Four staff from the PGME Office participated as members and provided administrative support.<sup>1</sup>

The term of the rotating departmental members is two years and is renewable once for a second two-year term. Clinical fellows serve on an annual basis, but may be renewable twice. The Vice Dean PGME, Dr. Sarita Verma, appointed Dr. Latter to serve as the FEAC Chair and in addition acted as Co-Chair for the first two meetings, during the transition from the Fellowship Working Group to the FEAC.

## Meetings

Four meetings of the FEAC took place during 2009-10 (on October 29, 2009; December 17, 2009; March 1, 2010; and May 31, 2010). Agenda items included tasks arising from the Fellowship Working Group Report of September 2009, such as a survey of University of Toronto clinical fellows, a template statement of objectives for clinical fellowships, and the improvement of orientation support for new clinical fellows. The FEAC also addressed topics of moment to fellows as they arose during the academic session, such as H1N1 pandemic planning, the new Royal College Diploma Programs initiative, and the taxation status of clinical fellows.

## Highlights

### ▪ **2010 Survey of University of Toronto Clinical Fellows**

The first survey of fellows was administered under the direction of the Fellowship Working Group in 2008. The decision was made that a biennial survey of clinical fellows would be the FEAC’s responsibility. The second web-based survey was administered in March 2010. Survey results were of immediate value to FEAC initiatives involving fellowship goals and objectives, and orientation support for new trainees. The survey results were presented to HUEC on September 15, 2010. A presentation to the Clinical Chairs Committee will take place on December 8, 2010. There will also be a presentation to the CPSO in autumn 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix (page 4) for list of current FEAC membership.

- ***Template Statement of Objectives for Clinical Fellowships***  
 The Fellowship Working Group recommended standardizing fellowship goals and objectives by developing templates for departmental use. In consultation with the CPSO and departmental administrative staff, the FEAC developed a template document with a defined structure of CanMEDS Roles for fellowships in the medical specialties and the Four Principles of Family Medicine for family medicine fellows. The template should clearly link the fulfillment of these objectives to the issuance of a fellowship certificate upon the completion of training. The CPSO has referred the template to its Registration Committee for final input. Once finalized, the templates will be downloadable from the PGME website.
- ***Orientation Support for New Clinical Fellows***  
 As recommended by the Fellowship Working Group and reported in the findings of the 2010 survey of clinical fellows, improved orientation for fellows was needed. Comprehensive orientation information, including supplementary web links, has been prepared for posting as a dedicated section of the PGME website. The web design process is underway and the orientation website should go live by December 2010. Dr. Henri-Bhargava, a clinical fellow member of the FEAC, is developing an on-line bulletin board for clinical fellows which the PGME website will host.
- ***Enhanced Specialist Competence: New Royal College Diploma Programs***  
 The Royal College's Committee of Specialties endorsed a proposal in 2009 to create new categories of Royal College discipline recognition, including Areas of Focused Competence (diploma) for clinical fellows. The FEAC participated in the Royal College's consultation process, writing to Dr. Ken Harris (Director, Office of Education). The FEAC's letter raised concerns about the proposal's applicability to international trainees, flexibility of program content, cost factors, evaluation methodology and national standards. After Council review in May-June 2010, the Royal College deferred a final decision on the AFC (diploma) proposal pending further dialogue with stakeholders. It is anticipated that the AFC (diploma) proposal will go back to the Royal College's Education Committee later this year.
- ***Appealing the Pre-Entry Assessment Program (PEAP)***  
 The current PEAP guidelines contain no provision for responding to a PEAP fellow seeking to appeal the final assessment. The committee concluded that the PEAP could be open to appeal only on procedural grounds. In the interest of establishing standards for appealing the PEAP that would be applicable to residents as well as fellows, the issue was referred to PGMEAC for discussion of the appropriate guideline for PEAP registrants accepted for residency training.
- ***Taxation Status of Clinical Fellows***  
 The FEAC reviewed the Scholarship Exemption and Education Tax Credit entry in the 2010 Federal Budget and concluded that the information on this personal income tax measure was sufficiently restrictive that departments should urge clinical fellows to obtain reliable professional taxation advice before considering the Scholarship Exemption a viable option.

## **Future Directions**

For the 2010-11 academic session, the FEAC will continue its implementation of recommendations in the Fellowship Working Group Report, including the standardization of University of Toronto fellowship certificates and the establishment of guidelines for the appointment of clinical fellows.

Additional tasks for the FEAC may include:

- Finalizing text for the PGME Office website about minimum eligibility criteria for clinical fellowships, with links to departmental websites and to information about international credentialing. This text would include a common definition of a clinical fellow as well as a statement on minimum standards for program entry.
- Improving communications with the CPSO through measures such as increased electronic information sharing between the University, applicants and the CPSO during the application process for licensure.
- Promoting standard practices for cross-departmental fellowships by, for example, creating and making available to departments a standard template that will facilitate CPSO approval of requests for cross-departmental fellowships.
- Issuing a non-binding position statement on the remuneration of fellows.
- Establishing standards for the issuance of certificates, including criteria for determining “successful completion” of fellowship training.

## **Acknowledgements**

I believe this first annual report provides a comprehensive overview of the progress we have made on many clinical fellowship issues.

As Chair of the Fellowship Education Advisory Committee, I would like to express my personal appreciation to all committee members for their time and thoughtful input on the wide variety of topics presented to us. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Sarita Verma for initiating the Fellowship Working Group in 2008 and encouraging our involvement in a relatively unexplored area of our academic enterprise at the University of Toronto.

Sincerely,

David Latter, MD, CM, FRCSC, FACS  
Chair, Fellowship Education Advisory Committee

## **APPENDIX**

### **FELLOWSHIP EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2009-10**

#### ***Chair***

Dr. David Latter

#### ***Standing Members***

*Medicine* Dr. Glen Bandiera  
*Paediatrics* Dr. Rayfel Schneider  
*Surgery* Dr. David Latter

#### ***Rotating Members***

*Anaesthesia* Dr. Doreen Yee  
*Laboratory Medicine & Pathobiology* Dr. Golnar Rasty  
*Medical Imaging* Dr. Manohar Shroff  
*Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery* Dr. Ralph Gilbert

#### ***Extraordinary Member***

*Family Medicine* Dr. Roy Wyman

#### ***Affiliated Hospitals – HUEC***

*The Hospital for Sick Children* Dr. Susan Tallett  
*Centre for Addiction and Mental Health* Dr. Benoit Mulsant

#### ***Clinical Fellows***

Dr. Elena Dubcenco Dr. Nima Etminan  
Dr. Alexandre Henri-Bhargava

#### ***PGME Office***

Caroline Abrahams Loreta Muharuma  
Jessica Filion John Kerr