School of Medicine Faculty Assembly

Minutes

August 5, 2021

Attendance: Z. Ali; A. Creel; J.Hart; S. Kamboj; L. Reilly; N. Nair; S. Sarkar, E. Wisner; R. Gomez; K. Happel; S. Holman; M. Houser; P. Prasad; R. Zambrano; A. Farge; K. Gajewski; C. LeBlanc; A. Martin; M. Reinoso; H. Scott; L. Stuke; L. Tanner; M. Maness; E. Matthews; J. Gardner; J. Gidday; A. Augustus-Wallace; J. Cameron; J. Crabtree; C. Taylor; S. Primeaux; J. Simkin; L. Simon; D. Worthylake

Proxy: C. Taylor (S. Alahari)

Absent: D. Felipe; J. Hunt

Called to order: (motion M. Maness, second E. Matthews) 4:01PM

1. Approval of the June meeting minutes (motion J. Crabtree; second E. Wisner)
2. Reports:
   1. **Executive Committee**
      1. Report deferred due to no meeting in July
   2. **SOM Administrative Council (courtesy Judy Crabtree)**
      1. **Dr. DiCarlo’s updates included:**
3. Leadership searches
   1. Assistant Dean Student Affairs - 50% effort role
      1. Had 12 internal candidates apply
      2. Narrowed to 4 internal candidates, interviews in the next 2 weeks
   2. Family Med Dept Head
      1. Have narrowed down to finalist candidates, but progress has slowed down by busy schedules w/getting out new COVID guidelines
   3. LCMC Cancer Center Director – **Dr. John Stewart** started July 1
      1. Working remotely for first 2 months, will be on campus beginning Sept 1
      2. Actively meeting with stakeholders
4. Interim hospital construction – move in scheduled for next year
   1. Running internet, etc, framed, sheetrocking
   2. Can’t get in to view progress until air conditioning is installed and running
   3. Projected to finish construction in spring, move in in roughly a year from now
5. Promotions and tenure process is in progress – packets are due to Dean’s Office Sept 2
   1. Large group of ~50 faculty going up for promotion
6. Lots of COVID activity
   1. Reinstituted travel restrictions, work from home, 50%, platooning in offices
      1. No travel approvals as of Aug 1 on university funds
      2. If paid out of pocket for previously approved travel, traveler will be reimbursed but no new travel will be allowed.
      3. Trips planned for Nov – who knows
   2. Expanding testing capacity
   3. Reopening more days for vaccination
   4. Trying to be proactive instead of reactive
      1. **Dr. Weiss’s updates**
7. COVID clinic – people still don’t know how to access information – go to website.
   1. Vaccination – walk in clinic still available. See website for times.
   2. Campus health – a purple box for self-reporting form is the entry form for getting tested.
   3. Need this info before they’re getting tested.
   4. Encourage people to fill this out before coming in to get tested.
   5. Call volume has increased
8. Website has information about what to do if you have an employee who is COVID positive and quarantined. Also COVID cleaning protocols for positive employee having been on campus within 24 hours. Supervisors email John Ball about what rooms need deep clean.
9. Contact tracing – no official tracers, but we also want to take care of employees so we’re asking positive people to identify those they were in contact with. Must also conform to HIPAA. Supervisors play a role to communicate exposure risk to their department.
10. Website has info about if you are COVID positive and what to do with respect to your vaccination status/exposure/quarantine and your role at the university. There are different criteria for some patient-care roles.
11. Even VAX person who has been exposed should quarantine for 5 days and return after negative test.
12. Trying not to see known positive, symptomatic folks at HCN clinics – diverting these individuals to UMC or hospital clinics.
    * 1. **Dr. English’s update on curriculum:**
13. L2s off to a good start, both lecture halls being used.
14. L1s started on Monday. Things are going well. Told them Monday that anatomy labs would be suspended for first block – students are displeased and have concerns. She/Cathy/Andrew emailed the students saying this is the decision. SON is having in person labs and this is the rub. Virtual labs just like last year. There will be some prosection available when students get back in the labs so they can see the back and upper extremity that will be covered virtually in the first block.
15. L1 TBLs are able to be distanced so planning to have TBL next Tues/Wed/Thurs be in person and let others zoom in if needed – may go all virtual in the future if needed but that will be a decision for later.
16. Skills labs are in progress, but a student just tested positive so we’ll see the future of this.
17. Hospitals now requiring vaccination for anyone going into the hospital
    * 1. **Chancellor Hollier’s updates**
18. Sent email announcement from President Tate that proof of vaccination required at LSUBR or monthly COVID testing to be on campus. Still discussing that here. We will likely follow suit – weekly or bi-weekly testing. He will send this out later this week.
19. Dr. Nelson - Is biweekly enough? What makes scientific sense? Lucio – weekly is the minimum.
    * 1. **Dr. McLean’s updates on medical student applications**
         1. Transitioning to next admission season. Many applications received
         2. Will be meeting later today with Xavier about early acceptance program. Dr. Hollier has facilitated scholarships for exceptional students with> 3.7 GPA and >60% MCAT
      2. **Dr. Backes update on Basic Science Labs and Guidelines for intramural support**
20. Construction
    1. MEB first phase is approved and moved to Capital Outlay
       1. Renovation of labs on floors 5-7 planned along with upgrades to student labs on 4th floor.
       2. Will take 5-6 years
       3. 1st phase will take 1.5 years for design, etc.
       4. Dr. Nelson – total project cost is $45M SOM is paying $10M, Dr. Hollier paying rest
       5. The quadrant approach may not be the way it will happen.
    2. CSRB renovation of animal care
       1. Progressing well
       2. Should be done April 2022
    3. Utilities upgrades for MEB and CSRB
       1. Raising switch gear to 2nd floors from 1st
       2. Finished in CSRB
       3. Starting to switch over in MEB, and as this project proceeds, occupants of MEB should expect multiple scheduled outages in the MEB, 1 quadrant at a time, roughly 8 hrs in duration.
    4. Power plant next to Roman Garage
       1. Provides backup power for all buildings for up to 2 weeks
       2. Being tested right now
       3. Having trouble getting some of the wiring necessary to connect to buildings
    5. MEB 1st floor lobby
       1. Projected to be finished in the next two months
       2. Next will be putting in flood gates on elevators
       3. Some COVID-related delays
    6. MEB auditoriums
       1. Upgraded AV
       2. Removed podium in the back, replaced with chairs so now can accommodate 249 people in each of the auditoriums
    7. Drainage project (Hollier)
       1. Engineers have identified that the main drain for our campus that runs down Gravier is about half the size it needs to be – a plan to upgrade is being assembled
    8. Bridge over Tulane
       1. Facilities and planning has pulled the project, since costs have skyrocketed beyond the budget
       2. Contractor has voided the contract
       3. Will have to rebid …again
       4. DiCarlo - Could there be a different route to the new parking garage? Shorter bridge, cheaper project? Hollier – Facilities Planning and Control has a new director from private sector who may have a better idea about how to speed things up and make it happen.
       5. Coordinating Security – Nelson still trying to get schedules and presence on the street coordinated between LCRC, UMC, VA, LSUHSC security forces - still pushing for that. Do have a patrol car flashing blue light in off hours.
21. **Dr. Tsien gave update on summer research students**
22. 90 med students did basic science research this summer – big increase from past
    1. Half of these students are interested in continuing their research in the honors program
    2. Projects presented in end of October virtually and an awards ceremony will be held virtually – Tsien will send out notices
23. Faculty mentors (especially clinical faculty) have expressed an interest in learning more about research resources so Dr. Tsien’s office will restart the Research Café series and include CME credits to be available for our clinical faculty. These are open to any faculty, residents, fellows and postdocs. Topics include how to apply for funding, responsible conduct in research, IRB/IACUC, regulatory, diversity and inclusion, how to write a manuscript, grants, etc. Will be held both in person and zoom, held monthly. Dr. England volunteered to help with the manuscript writing session
24. Nelson – clinical trials office needs more support to help faculty with contract negotiations, regulatory, etc. Dr. Hollier has approved two new positions to bolster that office and make the process more user- friendly for investigators. UMC side charges outlandish costs for procedures so we’re trying to get them to publish and stick to a cost sheet that makes sense to make it more approachable for investigators/researchers. We’ve made great progress getting students into research.
25. Nelson – has a company that will review grants for $1500 apiece, so this might be a source of support. This would be especially helpful for people for have English as a second language, or are new to grant writing. They don’t critique the science, but more the grantsmanship.
    * 1. **Dean Nelson update on School of Medicine**
26. Budget
    1. Last year Nelson cut the state general funds from all clinical depts. Has been able to restore that this year to about half the level it was before.
    2. Basic science departments have had 5% cuts now to make it more equitable, understanding that basic science departments have less opportunity for generating revenue.
    3. Conducting departmental reviews – MIP is done, Nelson is reviewing the report, there will be some follow up. Trying to see how to be helpful. Next department up for review is Physiology.
    4. Clinical department will also be reviewed but the Dean needs volunteers to assist with that
    5. Search to replace the irreplaceable Dr. Moerschbaecher
       1. A search firm will be retained – two have been interviewed
       2. Decided to separate out the Dean of Graduate Studies.
       3. Dr. Porche is interim VC
       4. Dr. Amedee is interim Dean for Graduate Studies
       5. Once the search firm is selected, they will reconstitute the committee, and revise PD if necessary, hopefully within the next week or two.
       6. Dean Nelson has been working with UMC to redo our contract with them to firm up reimbursement for the services we provide. UMC is more concerned about not paying for salaries of people working in other facilities besides UMC. Trying to correlate who is working there and what charges will be. Thinks there will be more dollars to the departments than before. Meeting with each Department chair to go over the budget
       7. **Dr. Watts’s update on Children’s Hospital of New Orleans**
27. There has been a big investment in the building, now looking to see investment in faculty
28. This phase of COVID is impacting more children. Current census is highest Watts has seen in his 6 years here. Diverted patients for about 6 hours because of no beds last week.
    1. **Faculty Senate** 
       1. Did not meet in June; will defer report
29. Old Business:
    1. Historically excluded Faculty and DEI Taskforce
       1. Resume meetings soon
    2. CM-69 Dress Code for LSUHSC
       1. Jenn Cameron wanted to discuss the Dress Code based on urging from other faculty in her department, and that it is misogynistic and directed to some of the female faculty specifically.
       2. Senate was counselled on this concern
30. Call for New Business:
    1. Election of new Officers:
       1. President Elect for Basic Sciences – S. Alahari
       2. Secretary – E. Wisner
       3. Faculty Senate Representatives – (new) K. Gajewski; J. Cameron
31. Adjourn (motion Happel, second Sarkar) 5:05PM