



**The Way Forward
Implementation Plan for the College of Medicine
Update to University Council
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Context

It has been over a years since we formally updated Council on progress in restructuring the college of medicine. The last twelve months have been a period of significant change and progress within the college. While significant challenges remain, the college is moving forward and is far better equipped to address the issues identified in *The Way Forward*. It is impossible to encapsulate everything in a brief report to Council so, of necessity, this report will focus on key highlights. Furthermore, the college of medicine restructuring has been identified as one of the eight priorities of the university going forward thus necessitating an update to Council.

In the intervening period since its presentation at Council, *The Way Forward* has also received strong endorsements from the Saskatchewan Medical Association at its Regional Assembly in Saskatoon in November 2013 and was described as transformational by Undergraduate Medical Education accreditors.

1. Leadership and Governance

Dean Preston Smith was appointed June 1, 2014. The importance of permanent leadership in the dean's office cannot be overstated. The arrival of Dr. Smith has added an additional sense of momentum to the push for change within the college. A key aspect of *The Way Forward* was a complete restructuring of the college governance system. Dr. Smith has been very active in his first six months:

- Appointment of new college chief operating officer (COO)
- Appointment of four new assistant deans
- Recruitment of permanent vice-deans of research and medical education underway
- Recruitment of three permanent unified department heads underway
- Appointment of full-time accreditation specialist and full-time strategic projects manager

The cumulative effect of these appointments will be a significant increase in capacity within the college both in terms of academic leadership and strategic and operational capacity. The structures are in place for significant initiatives, such as preparing for the accreditation visits, the development of a comprehensive business and strategic plan for distributed medical education, and a total overhaul of our compensation and engagement structures for physicians across the province, to be advanced. Both of these issues were key components of *The Way Forward*.

Sustainable solutions to many of the issues facing the college will only be achieved if the right people and resources are in place and are aligned. The last six months have been devoted to building capacity and structures that will facilitate sustainable solutions. In the area of leadership and governance, 2015



will be the year when many of these solutions are developed. The results of these strategic investments will be significant.

2. Accreditation (Undergraduate Medical Education)

Of all the issues facing the college, UGME accreditation is the most pressing with the college being placed on probation for the second time in just over a decade. The capacity increases mentioned above have enabled the college to systematically address the vast majority of accreditation standards with which we were deemed non-compliant. The creation of the assistant dean (quality) position, in particular, will significantly enhance our progress on many of these standards. Dr. Athena McConnell was appointed to this position, effective November 1, 2014, for a five-year term.

As a result of this appointment and the appointment of the accreditation specialist the college now has a permanent and significantly enhanced team dedicated solely to preparing for undergraduate accreditation. Working under the vice-dean education, associate dean (UGME) and with direct oversight from the dean, this team will ensure that the college is ready for the next visit from the accreditors in May 2015. More importantly, this team is in place almost three years ahead of our next full accreditation visit in late 2017.

3. Faculty Complement

One of the key objectives of *The Way Forward* was to re-align the faculty complement of the college and to introduce the notion of a province-wide faculty adopting a “one-faculty” model and eliminating the so-called “town/gown” split. Key initiatives to address these issues are either underway or to commence in early 2015.

- **Provincial Academic Clinical Funding Plan**
The college has been a key participant in the on-going development and introduction of this plan. In November 2014, the plan was launched province-wide and it is expected that the first physicians hired under this plan will be in place in early 2015.
- **Faculty Re-engagement Project**
A key component of the “one-faculty” model is a total re-design of the way the college engages with the vast majority of physicians in the province. The current system is overly bureaucratic, cumbersome and slow and often acts as a disincentive to continued participation and engagement. If the college is to succeed it needs the majority of physicians in the province to be involved in medical education and research. In January 2015, the college will launch a major consultation initiative that will lead to the development of a new model of engagement that will ensure sufficient physician resources are available to support the academic mission of the college. This project would not be possible without the administrative enhancements noted above.



4. Student Performance

One of the key issues raised in both *A New Vision for the College of Medicine* (2012) and *The Way Forward* was the performance of undergraduate students on national exams. Student performance in the national MCC exams improved in 2013 with further improvement in 2014. In August 2014, a new undergraduate medical curriculum was introduced following approval by this Council. The introduction of the new curriculum has gone well and students will be much better equipped to perform in national exams in the future.

5. Research Performance

As stated above, an international search is underway for a vice-dean research. We expect the position to be filled by July 1, 2015. The successful candidate will be responsible for increasing research intensiveness in the college. 2014 was also a good year for research in the College. Several SHRF establishment grants were awarded to researchers in the CoM totaling over \$400,000, several CIHR grants were renewed and CoM Faculty were successful in receiving new CIHR funding. In addition, significant funding was also received from Brain Canada, Cystic Fibrosis Canada, The Sylvia Fedoruk Centre, The Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

6. Vice-Provost College of Medicine

Effective January 1, 2015, Martin Phillipson will be taking a well-deserved 12 month administrative leave. He will continue to provide advice and guidance on the college of medicine restructuring. The position of Vice-Provost was always intended to be temporary and it is an indication of the progress made within the college in the last 12 months, and the strength of the new leadership team, that a leave can be contemplated.