

**FELLOWSHIP EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of Meeting – September 27, 2023**  
**8:00 AM to 9:30 AM – Via Zoom**

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**Present:**

Caroline Abrahams, Dr. Adelle Atkinson, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awamer, Sarah Bakhit, Samantha Chin, Dr. Rhandi Christensen, Savannah Clancey, Dr. Jennifer Croke, Dr. Meredith Giuliani, Dr. John Granton, Janine Hubbard, Melissa Hynes Kennedy Dr. Cheryl Jaigobin, Elizabeth Kim, Sarah Lowry (guest), Veronica Marrone, Maureen Morris, Laura Leigh Murgaski, Kendra Naidoo (guest), Dr. Richard Pittini, Dr. Venkat Raghavan, Dr. Giovanna Sirianni, Violetta Sochka

**1. Welcome and Introduction to New Members**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Dr. John Granton, who reintroduced himself to the committee as the new Chair of FEAC and thanked Dr. Cheryl Jaigobin for her leadership as Chair. Dr. Granton also welcomed Dr. Venkat Raghavan and Dr. Vaibhav Kamble to the committee

**2. Minutes**

The minutes from the previous meeting on May 10, 2023, were distributed in advance and accepted without any changes.

**3. Considerations for the PEAP Process Improvement**

The July cohort of approximately 320 IMG Clinical Fellows has completed their PEAP. There were no major issues to report. The recommendation that programs utilize the full 12 weeks of the PEAP with a fulsome midpoint evaluation was reinforced.

Veronica Marrone drew the committee's attention to inconsistencies regarding the PEAP, such as a lack of documentation. Not all learners have a midpoint assessment completed, creating a lack of feedback and awareness of progress for the learner. Efforts are being made to align the PEAP with COFM's guidelines to have 4 and 8-week midpoint assessments before the completion of the Final Assessment near the 12-week mark. This will allow those who complete the PEAP at 8 weeks to still have a midpoint assessment at the 4-week mark.

The submission process for assessments to PGME is currently by email. A review is being undertaken to inquire if PEAP assessments can be completed through POWER to help improve targeted communications. Supports are being considered.

In the interim, the plan is to speak with programs that have a high volume of PEAP evaluations to ensure messaging is consistent and emphasize the importance of a transparent and consistent assessment and feedback. We will also indicate that midpoint assessments at the 4 and 8-week marker points are being utilized for the full 12-week PEAP. The team is also evaluating ways to make the forms user-friendly (i.e., form-fillable, insert signatures, etc.).

Dr. Granton reiterated the importance of this work to not only streamline processes but also to have a means of identifying a fellow who may appear to be in difficulty early on in their PEAP period and avoid the pitfalls of a delay in evaluation.

Dr. Richard Pittini inquired about a guideline for a fellow in difficulty during the PEAP, as the stakes are very high during this period. It is also important for programs to have steps in place should a negative evaluation be given to support such a decision. Dr. Pittini also inquired about the merits of putting effort into a process where the majority of fellows are successful. Dr. Melissa Kennedy Hynes stated that fellows identified as having difficulty the majority of the time did not do too well during the PEAP but were passed. This is a practice that would like to be addressed.

#### **4. Introduction of Working Groups & Survey of Interest**

Dr. Granton described three (3) work streams currently underway:

- Fellowship Strategic Retreat
- Best Practices in Admissions and Selection (BPAS)
- Process Enhancement

If you would like to join one of these three works streams, please reach out to Veronica Marrone.

Strategic Retreat will be held Thursday, November 23, 2023; an agenda and venue to be announced.

BPAS will include discussion with Dr. Linda Probyn and Dr. Damien Noone.

Process Enhancement will look at the fellows' arrival in Toronto to their exit to improve the experience (i.e., onboarding, orientation, certification etc.). The first item for discussion will be contracts and addressing the heterogeneity that exists and implementing a strategy that ensures that the contracts are standardized, reflect current recommendations about salary, and follow best practices.

#### **5. SBAR Review Process & Next Steps**

This refers to the base salary that is currently anchored at the PGY1 level. Recognizing that the cost of living and other costs to joining the program have changed since first adopted, this group has agreed to raise the minimum to a PGY3 in accordance with the PARO agreement. We encourage that fellows be paid commensurate for the work they are doing should they exceed the PGY3 level.

This has been presented at the Vice Chairs meeting and it will then go before the Clinical Chairs Committee for final presentation.

A slide deck and SBAR document are available to socialize this with programs. Evaluation of programs will be completed to let them know if they meet the standard.

It must also be noted that 0.5 FTE will no longer be accepted unless signed off by the Vice Chair Education and an adequate explanation provided.

The aim is for this to be implemented for contracts beginning on January 1, 2025. A communication strategy is being developed and will go out after the Clinical Chairs Committee meeting in November.

## **6. Contract Standardization for Clinical Fellows**

Dr. Granton introduced Kendra Naidoo and Sarah Lowry to the Committee in their roles to help create a standardized template for contracts to be used for fellows to leverage best practices to create an educational relationship. Another aim for the standardization of contracts is to develop some IT behind the process to allow the user to autofill certain sections to prevent errors. It would also allow PGME to track compliance with PGME standards with respect to FTE and salaries.

Kendra elaborated that the legal relationships being built with these contracts are complicated. Therefore, the language of these contracts is important to establish the correct relationship from a legal perspective. It is important to standardize the contracts where possible to reduce any areas of complications.

Sarah also confirmed that clarity needs to be brought to the areas of the contract that are “must-haves” and areas that will vary based on the fellowship. It is also important to provide clarity around the areas that must be in the contract and why.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Awamer added that it is important to provide education for program directors to help them understand the severity of the situation and why certain practices are in place.

Dr. Pittini inquired if leaves of absences (e.g. parental leave) are being looked at to provide guidance. Dr. Granton confirmed they will be among other items and will be addressed by the working group.

## **7. Supporting Strategic Retreat**

The Committee was previously polled as to what they would like to have addressed at the Strategic Retreat. Common themes were supporting the fellow, BPAS, SBAR, and contracts. Dr. Granton would like to propose an exercise for Fellowship Directors to envision what a successful fellowship would look like and what is needed for us to get there. Dr. Granton is interested in developing metrics to be able to identify how do we get to where we envision going and how do we know when we are moving in the right direction.

## **8. Other Business & Thanks**

The Dimitrios Oreopoulos International Learner Transition Fund terms of reference were discussed. Dr. Granton would like the Committee’s input as to how to best utilize this fund to the fellows’ experience. Ideas presented are:

- Waiving a fee universal to all fellows (i.e., reduce upfront fees)
- Create a fund fellows can apply to for academic conference fee coverage
- Developing programs to support fellows (i.e., mentorship, etc.)

Next steps: create terms of reference for fund, such as how do fellows apply (i.e., is a supervisor attestation needed, etc.).

Thanks to Veronica for organizing the New Fellows Orientation event that will be this afternoon (Thursday, September 27, 2023).