



Foundations Phase Committee Minutes

Date	December 18, 2023
Time	4:00 – 5:30PM PT
Attendees	<i>Academic Chair: Matt Cunningham; Executive Chair: Edith Wang</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> QUORUM REACHED:	<i>Voting Members:</i>
	<i>Guests:</i>
Regrets	<i>Voting members:</i>

Agenda

	ITEM	LEAD	TIME	ATTACHMENT	ACTION
1	Announcements E-vote Passed: Approve September Meeting Minutes	Emmanuel Wright	5 Min	N/A	Announcement
2	Introduce New Committee Member: Themes Faculty Position	Edith Wang	5 Min	N/A	Announcement
3	Head Neck and Gut Lessons Learned	Bruce Silverstein/ Zach Gallaher	60 Min	Attachments A, B, & C	Decision



1. Announcements: E-Vote Status for September Meeting Minutes Approval		
Discussion: The E-vote to approve the September meeting minutes passed.		
<input type="checkbox"/> DECISION REQUIRED?	<input type="checkbox"/> VOTES FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> [0] VOTES AGAINST
Decision: The Foundations Phase Committee approved the September meeting minutes via e-Vote.		

2. Introduction of New Committee Member: Themes Faculty Position		
<p>Discussion: The Curriculum Committee moved to ratify a new Foundations Phase Committee Member, Dr. Sarah Murphy in their 12/04/2023 meeting. The new committee member volunteered to serve the Foundation Phase Committee and was appointed by the Foundation Phase Committee Co-Chairs to fill the Threads and Themes vacancy within the Foundations Phase Committee. The new member serves as Faculty in the region. Working within Themes and Threads at University of Alaska Anchorage</p>		
DECISION REQUIRED?	<input type="checkbox"/> VOTES FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> VOTES AGAINST
Decision: The Foundations Phase Committee announced to the Committee the appointment and ratification of their new Committee Member.		

3. Head Neck and Gut Lessons Learned		
<p>Discussion: The Committee discussed the Lessons Learned and planned improvements for the Head Neck and Gut course.</p> <p>Head Neck and Gut (HNG) Overview:</p> <p><i>Course Overview and Philosophy:</i> The Block Directors (Drs. Silverstein and Gallaher) described the HNG course, newly introduced in 2023. The gastrointestinal (GI) section, previously paired with endocrine, was moved to be paired with head and neck (H&N) anatomy. The course aimed to provide relevant knowledge for general practitioners, family medicine, and internal medicine physicians, with an emphasis on H&N anatomy and GI problems.</p> <p><i>Challenges and Feedback:</i> The course faced several challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students found the volume of information in a short timeframe overwhelming, particularly for head and neck anatomy. In particular, some of the lab days went beyond the standard 4-hour days and were too long for students to remain focused. • Overlaps in the course schedule between H&N and GI led to low attendance in some sessions in Seattle, as students needed to prepare for a pin test while they were having GI class sessions. • Low attendance in GI small group sessions in Seattle led to low morale among GI faculty/fellows, who are expending significant resources to participate. • HNG is the last course of the year; students were reportedly burned out and struggling to keep up. • The course struggled to integrate head, neck, and gut anatomy cohesively. 		



•
Faculty Concerns: Faculty noted poor attendance and a lack of student engagement. They also highlighted the lack of synergy between different course components.

Proposed Solutions:

The proposed fixes by the block directors focus on two major goals:

- 1) Providing more time in the block for H&N anatomy
- 2) Optimizing the exam schedule to minimize the overlap between H&N and GI material

1. Providing more time in the block for H&N anatomy:

- Gain time from Mind, Brain, & Behavior (MBB) Block:
 - Certain H&N topics (skull base, meninges, orbit) are already being reviewed again in MBB and others (tympanic cavity) mesh well with current MBB material. However, MBB has lost course hours as well, and cannot accommodate this new/expanded content without more teaching hours.
 - If the MBB Final Exam is able to be moved to the Monday following the end of the block, MBB would gain 2 teaching days (2 x 4 hours). This is because they would be able to utilize both the last Thursday of the block (currently study day) and the last Friday of the block (currently exam day).
 - MBB proposes to use 4 hours to teach the anatomical topics coming in from HNG, and 4 hours to bring back small groups for some Psychiatry topics.
 - The Monday following MBB is part of Integration Week 3 and would impact delivery of that content (see below).
- Gain time from moving Themes session on Justice in Liver Transplantation
 - This session currently takes two hours and is scheduled for the last Tuesday of the block.
 - The proposal is to move this session to a Friday morning outside of normal class hours. This would free up 2 additional teaching hours. The “long day” would be shifted from anatomy lab to a day with Themes material, which would require less student preparation.

2. Optimizing the exam schedule to minimize the overlap between H&N and GI material:

- Proposal is to have two pin tests during the block; one focusing on H&N material and one focusing on GI material. The first pin test would be given on the same day as an MCQ exam also on H&N material (it was acknowledged that this arrangement goes against current “Rules of the Road” guidelines).

Net effects of proposed changes:

- Additional teaching hours in HNG block allows for decompression of H&N material.
- No more long days in anatomy lab.
- Splitting of pin tests and shifting of teaching schedule means less overlap between GI teaching and anatomical assessment (although it has not been completely eliminated). This will reduce the stakes of each pin test and hopefully increase student engagement with the first part of the GI portion of the course.



Additional Seattle-specific proposal:

- It was mentioned that the Seattle anatomy lab being open during GI small groups provided a distraction that may have contributed to the reduced small group attendance during the overlap with GI anatomy. A proposal was made to close the Seattle anatomy lab during GI small groups prior to the second pin test.

Discussion Points:

- One of the Themes faculty expressed concerns about moving the Liver Transplantation session to the morning, feeling like it would de-emphasize the material and lead to reduced attendance at the session.
- A couple of faculty outside of Seattle endorsed that their students were generally exhausted by the time they got to HNG.

MBB Response to Proposal:

- Both MBB Block Directors (Drs. Wang and Weaver) were present at the meeting and expressed support for the HNG proposal.
- Discussion Point: When MBB condensed for 2023, lots of important content (e.g., vision) was removed. What is the best way for the Foundations Committee to decide what is the best use of the additional hours being requested beyond what HNG strictly needs to offload content? Some may disagree that restoring Psychiatry small groups is the most urgent need for the block.
 - MBB Response: 1) The suggestion to bring back Psychiatry small groups was in response to comments from Student Block Partners about the emotional weight of the Psychiatry content; 2) It makes sense that there could be a separate discussion in the context of MBB about how to best use the additional teaching time.

Integration Response to Proposal:

- Both Integration Directors (Drs. McDonough and Uffenbeck) were present for the meeting.
- Integration is planning on utilizing 16 teaching hours (4 hours x 4 days) with an explicit goal of providing a 3-day weekend prior to the start of Lifecycle/R&D.
- Integration weeks have used NBME customized (CAS) exams to help students consolidate their learning and gain experience with board-style questions. A common concern from students is that the usefulness of CAS exams for learning is limited due to the lack of feedback. NBME has released a new version of CAS that provides feedback to students; however, some of that feedback is available only several days after students take the exam. Logistically, this means that Monday AM is the optimal time for students to take the exam to ensure there can be a group exam review on Thursday.
- If students are studying all weekend for the MBB Final Exam, and then taking the exam Monday AM, this will have a significant impact on the student's ability to engage with a CAS exam were they to take it Monday PM.
- The Integration team recommends that they be allowed to keep their schedule as planned rather than having to accommodate the MBB Final Exam.



Discussion Point: What would it mean to set a precedent that blocks can move their exams and encroach on the next curricular activity? Surely this would lead other blocks to propose this as well. As a student, the integration weeks are an important time to recharge, and these changes would make that less likely to happen.

Discussion Point: All Foundations blocks are pressed for time and have had to make difficult decisions about what material to include and exclude in order to fit in the time they are given and present material at a rate that is digestible by students. Are the expectations of the A&E faculty reasonable regarding the volume of material they are trying to teach, and is reducing that volume potentially a better solution than trying to recover time from other parts of the curriculum?

- HNG Response: A&E group is open to feedback from physicians about what content is essential. Our goal is to train doctors, not anatomists. If we are teaching content that is not clinically relevant, we can remove it. We feel the anatomy is important because it explains the medicine and helps students retain the basic science. If we are not given the extra time in MBB, we will likely remove those sessions anyway, leaving MBB as the only time students will briefly see the material.

Discussion Point: How does A&E decide what material is clinically relevant?

- HNG Response: 1) We reference USMLE First Aid as a comprehensive list of the material that is covered on USMLE exams; 2) We interface with the clinicians in the blocks/FCM to constantly revise material based on its clinical relevance. Sometimes, opinions differ, but we do the best we can to be responsive.
-

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DECISION REQUIRED?	<input type="checkbox"/> VOTES FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> VOTES AGAINST
--	------------------------------------	--

Decision: The Foundations Phase Committee tabled discussion due to available time to address concerns and added this action item to the meeting scheduled on 01/20/2024.