

Dear Resident Education Committee members,

Greetings !! Now that spring is finally here and the winter blahs are over, time to shake off the snow and get back to work! Trust this finds you folks in the best of spirits.

Since I never got around to writing the minutes of the meeting in San Antonio an apology is in order. The meeting set my mind reeling and I came away from it with a sinking feeling of not having accomplished anything and no clear set of goals. However, so much has happened since then, I figured this was an opportune time to update the committee.

1. Web site news: Later that week after the committee meeting, we had a very productive meeting in San Antonio with David Martin, CEO of SCCM and members of the SCCM staff. Various aspects of site development were discussed and Mary, Michele, Ken and I came away quite pleased with the outcome. I have been working with the SCCM staff since that meeting in February on transfer issues. The Society is now developing a mirror image of the web site in html format and has hired folks to develop the database and report generation capabilities. These should be completed in the next 3 to 4 weeks and at that time the site will be handed over to the SCCM for management (Phew, I will be off the hook). The site will remain at picucourse.org and be seamlessly linked to the SCCM site. The Society has also decided to bear all operational costs associated with the site from this point onward. The exam will remain free to all programs and real-time report generation capabilities will be built in to the system. (Administrators will be able to get to the admin area and review resident performance individually and relative to their national peer group). All of this is very good news indeed and the Society has really stepped up to the plate in supporting us on this. We will update you through the PICU list serve when the site “moves” over to SCCM.
2. APA guidelines: We were requested to review and provide input on the APA/APS document on goals and objectives for the PICU rotation. Kathleen Donnelly, Mary, Ken and I worked on it and sent them a fairly extensively reviewed and revised document that they will be using (undoubtedly with further revisions). Apparently, this will be available for perusal on a computer somewhere at the Peds Academic Societies meeting 5/3-5/6 in Seattle. If any of you are attending this meeting, please look for it and provide your input.
3. Work Hours: I think this is where the meeting got “bogged down”. Amy Hardin had sent a survey and done a significant amount of background work to prepare for this meeting. Her findings suggest that there is no neat “one size fits all” solution to the work hour restrictions. Unfortunately, each program will need to tailor their solutions to their specific needs. Amy will continue to monitor this contentious problem and see how things are going after implementation in July.
To my recollection, we had thought of trying to find some way to advocate forcefully for the Pediatric residency PICU rotation requirement to be increased to a minimum of 2 months since the work hour restrictions were severely limiting the amount of time residents spent in the PICU.
Fortunately for us, we now have stellar representation on the RRC. Mary Lieh-Lai was recently appointed to the RRC and she has begun advocating for a minimum 2 month PICU requirement and has not met much resistance in this regard. It might be better to bring about change from within the organization rather than us trying to apply external pressure. I think we are on the right track and Mary is making progress.

4. Committee Leadership: Ken Tegtmeyer and Mary Lieh-Lai are now the committee chairs with my acting in a transitional role this year. Committee issues can be addressed to any one of us. We thank Margaret Winkler for her hard work as committee co-chair for the past 3 years.

5. ACTION ITEMS: To authors of the online presentations: We do need updates on many of the presentations. Please send these in as soon as you are able to complete them. If you need a reminder of the requirements for the updates, please let me know ASAP. Thank you for sending in the signed authorizations/release forms to the SCCM.

Some of you have sent in updates or new presentations that have not made their way on to the site. Please bear with me on this – the SCCM had asked us to hold off on making any changes to the site while they create a mirror image site on their server in html. Once this is done, we will ask them to work on the new and updated material. I know it seems to involve more work, but that is the way the timing worked out. We should be back on track by this summer.

WE URGENTLY need to do TWO things with regard to the online examination. The first is to get your INPUT on any real bad apples in the current set of questions so that we can modify/delete these questions. We refrained from doing so any earlier so that we would have the same set of questions throughout the first year. The updated exam will be available in June. WE ALSO NEED QUESTIONS FOR EXAM #2 AND 3. These will be the tests taken by residents coming through the PICU for the second time and have already taken the first exam. PLEASE WRITE AND SEND IN AT LEAST 4 QUESTIONS ON ANY “CORE” TOPIC !! For committee members who have not authored a presentation, this is an opportunity for you to contribute to the site! Please send in questions to me and I will put them all together for the group to review.

Mary is in the process of putting together a set of instructions culled from the NBME on how to write good questions and we will send this along. We are also considering “assigning” content areas/topics to individuals/groups so that every member of this committee WILL contribute some questions! If you wish to be dropped from this committee’s mailing list before the assignments are made up, please let me know as well.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY: If anyone is interested in looking at almost 10 months of data from the online exam and use the responses on the demographic or test questions to evaluate performance, please let me know and I can arrange for you to have access to this data. A year’s worth of data should be available by this June and number crunching can be done in time to submit an abstract to the SCCM and/or a paper to a peer-reviewed journal this fall. Scott Hagen from Madison, WI has expressed interest in working on this and maybe a small group of 5 or 6 “young investigators” can work together on developing a couple of research projects.

Also, please provide feedback on how the curriculum and online exam are working for you/your group. Otherwise, I will need to put together a survey!

6. NEXT MEETING: No meeting planned for Boston. Next meeting at SCCM in Orlando!