MINUTES OF THE WSU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE FACULTY SENATE

October 18, 2017

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Dr. Finley at 3:32 pm

2. **Approval of the Minutes of May 18, 2017:**

   The minutes from the previous faculty senate meeting on May 18, 2017 were distributed and approved.

3. **Presentation by Keith Whitfield, PhD, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (introduction by Dr. Sobel):**

   a. Conversation with Provost Keith Whitfield about teaching in the SOM. Dr. Whitfield’s visit today marks the first opportunity for SOM faculty to meet and discuss policy with the provost of Wayne State University since his appointment in June 2016. He came with the expressed goal of engaging the faculty on the medical campus in a conversation about education and teaching. Dr. Whitfield had been heavily engaged in medical education during his previous tenure at Duke University, where he helped negotiate a joint venture between their School of Medicine and the National University of Singapore to create the Duke-NUS Medical School all the way through the accreditation process.

   When queried by Dr. Whitfield for our opinions about the status of the educational enterprise on our campus, several faculty who teach in the preclinical curriculum expressed their dissatisfaction with the sharp decline in student attendance at lectures ever since online streaming was made available. Dr. Whitfield was already familiar with our lecture streaming policy and aware of its grudging acceptance by the faculty. His comments on the matter revealed that his primary concern is that our medical students are getting the necessary content by the best means possible. He noted the huge effort being made at the Duke-NUS Medical School to produce high-quality televised lectures, and encouraged the SOM faculty to strive for excellence in online resources that are offered as an alternative to attending class. As provost, Dr. Whitfield is particularly focused on student outcomes and strives to develop quantitative methods for its measurement. He asked the faculty if we are confident that achieving the cutoff for the successful completion of a course/activity (Pass in the medical school, B in the graduate school) means students have garnered the skills necessary for moving forward in their careers. In other words, is the difference between a low and high pass in medical school, or an A or a B in graduate school, insignificant or wide enough to warrant a recalibration of the grading system? At one point, the discussion turned to an exchange of opinions about how much value the preclinical curriculum adds to the knowledge base of our medical students, as some believe it has little bearing on their passing Part I of the medical licensure examination. Dr. Whitfield took this as an opportunity to reiterate how important it is to have the means to assess soft data; e.g. to define value added in education, one must be able to quantify it. The last point raised with Dr. Whitfield was with respect to faculty hiring in the SOM, pointing out that those with active research programs cannot be expected to meet the educational demands that have escalated to be compliant with the small-scale teaching methods mandated by the LCME accreditation agency. After reporting there had been 5 new hires in the SOM this past year, Dr. Whitfield confirmed that the School is past the financial crisis incurred 3 years ago and has entered a
new period of growth. He chose not to commit to any numbers planned for future tenure lines in the SOM, opting rather to advise that, from this point forward, growth within a given unit of the University will be tied to the number faculty deemed necessary to fulfill the duties and obligations of that unit. The last point Dr. Whitfield made before leaving was to make clear that the Office of Teaching and Learning on main campus is as much a resource for the SOM as it is for all other colleges at the university, and is amply qualified to assist us with all of our curricular needs.

4. Report from the Dean:
   a. LCME visit. Dr. Sobel made no effort to hide his joy about the successful outcome from the site visit by the LCME last spring. Though not yet in possession of the final report, he informed us that the agency had published that the next review cycle for our School would be in five years, which is the maximum period of time bestowed to medical school in the current educational climate.

   b. Clinical partner: Dr. Sobel summarized the poor state of financial affairs that have developed since the early-mid 2000’s between the SOM, the Detroit Medical Center, and several physician practice plans. Operating as a for profit entity, the DMC has transitioned from a university academic hospital to a community hospital that provides zero financial support to the School. Moreover, we have recently found ourselves in a competition with the University of Michigan for the faculty in the Department of Pediatrics at Children’s Hospital. U of M took advantage of the fact that the administrators of the physicians’ practice plan (University Pediatricians, UP) were seeking autonomy from WSU and the SOM, and saw this as their opportunity to acquire credentials caring for a poor community. In addition to UP and the DMC, the SOM receives no financial support from the private practice plans that operate within the Department of Emergency Medicine and the Department of Radiology. Cumulatively, the situation created a huge burden for the University Physicians Group (UPG) whose membership includes the remaining clinical departments in the SOM. Over the past year, our administration has been involved in the renegotiation of bad real estate contracts that have crippled UPG’s ability to serve its members and contribute the fiscal well-being of the SOM. Dr. Sobel could not have made clearer how important it is to identify a new clinical partner who shares our goals and will invest in the academic and research excellence of the School of Medicine.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sharon H. Ackerman, Ph.D., Secretary, Executive Committee of the SOM Faculty Senate.