



CHM Learning Academy: Medical Education Through Shared Discovery

December 2015

Welcome!



I want to thank everyone who has taken time to learn more about the CHM Academy and the learning society approach that is a key component of the Shared Discovery Curriculum. These last two months have been exciting and truly an adventure in shared discovery, as I have talked with many faculty and staff members about the vision for the CHM Learning Academy in this new curriculum.

Seeing as the 2015 is quickly coming to a close, I wanted to take an opportunity to update everyone on where we are and where we are going. On the plus side, we are still on track for a learning society model that clearly resembles what you have seen on paper. On the minus side, everything is taking longer than expected. But we are moving ahead for implementation in time for the class matriculating in Fall 2016. The work of the Learning Society will begin in earnest this coming summer with broad-based faculty development in preparation for the incoming class. It is my hope that faculty in the Academy become their own learning society around the issues of medical student education. This adventure will have a variety of opportunities for personal and professional development as we push the boundaries of learning societies in medical education. The implication is that there are also many opportunities for educational scholarship as we push the boundaries of learning societies in the context of medical education.

Some of you receiving this newsletter have already made your commitment to the CHM Learning Academy. Others of you are in the process of balancing the feasibility of this role with other commitments and opportunities. I hope you find the information useful. If you follow the links to additional resources, I expect you will soon realize how truly innovative the approach we are taking will be. I hope it helps you better visualize the part you will play in this amazing process. Of course, it will raise questions and as always I will do my best to provide answers in subsequent newsletters as more information becomes available. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me ([Brian Mavis](#)).

What is a Learning Society?

Learning communities are intentional groups of faculty and students engaged in learning from one another. Though relatively recent in undergraduate medical education, they have been part of higher education for over 30 years. Sixty-six (52%) U.S. medical schools have established learning communities and another 29 are considering them, according to survey results published in 2014 in *Academic Medicine* ([Smith et al., 2014](#)). Learning communities promote active, student-centered learning, and provide a natural model for integrated interdisciplinary education. Proponents report better student outcomes in terms of academic, social and personal metrics. The rationale is that through intentional small groups, long-term relationships between faculty and students are possible; these relationships can be used to:

- Facilitate learning,
- Establish mentoring and coaching,
- Enhance role-modeling, and
- Maintain educational continuity for medical students and faculty.

A recent survey of faculty members involved in learning societies at five medical schools reported that faculty members found their role as a learning community mentor provided a strong source of job satisfaction. This study was published in *Medical Teacher* earlier this year ([Wagner et al, 2015](#)).

The national organization of medical schools that have adopted learning societies is called the Learning Communities Institute (LCI). Their [webpage](#) provides resources as well as presentations from their annual

meetings. MSU-CHM is in the process of becoming a member of the LCI.

In planning for adopting the learning society model to CHM and the Shared Discovery Curriculum, a document summarizing the structure of learning societies at other medical schools was developed. This document can be accessed through this [link](#).

Overview of the Shared Discovery Curriculum

The [Shared Discovery Curriculum](#) website has information tracking the development of the new curriculum. One of the documents available at the website is called the [Shared Discovery Curriculum Folio](#), which provides a comprehensive overview of the Shared Discovery Curriculum and an overall map of the curriculum across four years of medical school. This website also has [links to recordings](#) of all of the prior town hall meetings related to the new curriculum. The website is currently under redesign and the new and improved website will be available early in the new year.

Chief Complaints and Concerns: The Core of the New Curriculum

The new curriculum is organized around the patient experience, focusing on the chief complaints and concerns that might be the motivation for a patient to access the health care system. This represents a move away from the more familiar discipline-based and organ-system models of many medical schools including our own legacy curriculum. The new curriculum is integrative across disciplines and the content is organized around documents describing patients' chief complaints and concerns (C3 documents). By [clicking here](#), you can download a brief powerpoint presentation that explains how to access the C3 documents. This is a good opportunity to see how the curriculum content is organized. Each document contains content that will be distributed across the curriculum over time: Early Clinical Experience (ECE), Middle Clinical Experience (MCE) and Late Clinical Experience (LCE).

One Person's Experience

In the summer of 2013, CHM piloted tested some elements of what would become the Shared Discovery Curriculum. We as a faculty learned much about the intentional and unintentional outcomes, both positive and negative. But in the end, the experience went on to shape our thinking about the Shared Discovery Curriculum. Dianne Wagner was one of the faculty involved in the design of the pilot test and participated as a small group leader in the pilot test. Her reflections about the experience, titled [Trust Worthy](#), were published about a year ago in the JAMA feature called A Piece of My Mind. If you read her reflection, you can see how the CHM Academy came to be a key piece of our new curriculum.

What's Coming

In the next few weeks, we hope to be able to announce:

- Preliminary faculty development topics for learning society faculty
- Updates to the Shared Discovery Curriculum Website
- Specific variants of student schedules for organizing learning society faculty.

Happy New Year.