

Medical Student Selection Committee (MSSC) – Annual Report 2006-2007

Chairman: Eduardo Gonzalez, M.D.

August 14, 2007

The work of the Medical Student Selection Committee (MSSC) has come to a close for the 2006-2007 year. I am grateful for the honor to serve the College of Medicine as chair of the committee. I am proud of the effort of the MSSC members. The faculty and students in this group are dedicated to the work of selecting the best group of students for the USFCOM. Time will be the judge of this effort, but I am impressed with the passion and sacrifice of time that is willingly given for our future.

I would appreciate your acknowledging the work of the committee members by communicating with the chairs of the departments they represent. I am not confident that the magnitude of their efforts is recognized by the greater COM community. I estimate during the 2006-2007 interview season that the average committee member spent approximately 260 hours in committee work. These hours included the review of applications prior to the meetings, attending the 25 evening meetings, and interviewing the Early Decision, 7-year Honors Program, Medical Science MS candidates as well as the regular applicants. In all for this year, the MSSC reviewed 377 regular applicants, 34 7-Year Honors Programs students and 12 Medical Science MS students.

The Admissions Office had a record year for applicants for the fourth year in a row with 2,724, which is a 23% increase from last year, and a 49.5% increase over two years. This increase in applicants has not only occurred nationally, but also in Florida where we had a 16.2% increase in Florida applicants who met our requirements. Academically, the class comes in with an average TGPA and SPGA of 3.7, respectively; and an average MCAT of 30. The matriculating class of 2011 again shows great diversity: 11.7% are “under-represented”, another 31% are non-white and 23% have obtained a Master’s Degree or PhD. For this year the class is 53% male and 47% female. The majority of the students are from those undergraduate programs that typically dominate: UF (35) and USF (27), but 32 are from other undergrad programs from across the country. As expected, the payoff from the Honors Program continues to increase dividends with 13 (11 last year) members of the starting class coming via this process; 10 were from USF, while the remaining 3 came from UCF. We also have 10 non-Florida residents in the Class of 2011, two more than last year’s record high of 8. The number of non-Florida applicants increased 50% from 2006.

Other successes for this past year include the development and incorporation of a new interview form. This form and method of interviewing has improved the quality and quantity of information that the MSSC has received from its interviewers. It is also felt that this method has allowed more objectivity between interviews. The MSSC is continually reviewing and improving upon these forms and interview methods. For this past year, the MSSC has also made a concerted effort in trying to maintain a diverse class. The 2006 MSSC Retreat provided recommendations which could increase our recruitment of highly sought out applicants, and some of these have been implemented.

To end the 2006-2007 year, the MSSC held its third annual retreat August 2, 2007. Important issues that were discussed included a review of our current process and programs, a review of how successful we were in the last year, and finally a discussion of what we would like the medical school class to look like and how we can improve our ability to attract the highly sought after applicant. A number of strategies were suggested by the members and are currently being organized and evaluated as to the best way to implement them.

Attracting the best students to USFCOM will require our best efforts in providing information about the growth and strengths of USF, particularly the clinical opportunities in a dynamic metropolitan area and the success of USF research development. There are a number of ways this can be done, but one of the best venues for informing applicants is during the interview process. The Admissions Office is currently working on enhancing what applicants experience on their interview day. It is hoped that these changes will provide a much better picture of what the USFCOM has to offer and make them excited about the possibility of attending the COM. There is however one other area that we need continued assistance and that is in the area of interviewing. Each year we have sought high-level faculty and administration assistance with encouraging additional faculty and their chairs to participate in the interview process. We are continually asking, or even begging, faculty to help with this essential task. The responsibility is assumed by a small number of faculty, which increases the individual burden. The MSSC would appreciate any assistance in recruiting enthusiastic faculty willing to participate in this area.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the incredible job of Robert Larkin and his staff. Mr. Larkin, who was our director of admissions for many years, has recently gone on to work at the University of Central Florida's (UCF) new medical school. He was an organized, energetic, and passionate USF representative. His position as director of admissions is one in which he represented the USFCOM to the general community, and he provided a positive view of the University to applicants and their families. I know personally of several students who have come by and thanked him personally for how he helped them through their application process regardless if they were accepted. His caring nature and concern for the students and the MSSC will be missed. For the future, this position has been taken on by our new head of Admissions, Dr. Gretchen Koehler. Dr. Koehler has enthusiastically taken on the double duty of admission director and head of admissions, and has brought a great enthusiasm to the admissions process and MSSC. With the support of the COM the future of admissions for the USFCOM looks very promising.