

# General Medical Faculty Meeting - Minutes

Thursday, March 9, 2023 5:00  
p.m.

Main Auditorium of the Hutchinson Building 1430 Tulane Avenue  
And via ZOOM

I. Welcoming and Opening Remarks – *Jacob Bitoun, Ph.D., Chair of the General Medical Faculty*

Meeting was declared open by Dr. Jacob Bitoun, Ph.D.

II. Approval of minutes from General Faculty Meeting: November 1, 2022 – *Monika Dietrich, M.D., Secretary-Treasurer of the General Medical Faculty*

<https://medicine.tulane.edu/home/administration/faculty-affairs/general-medical-faculty/meetingminutes>

Minutes were approved.

III. Address – *Robin Forman, Ph.D., Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost of Tulane University*

- Dr. Forman thanks the GMF for asking him to join them.
- Let's start with clinical care. Thank you so much for the extraordinary work to get through COVID. One of the significant things was a reminder of one of the benefits of having academic sciences to keep everyone safe. There was an enormous amount of work so far to get to this point. Now that is done, and now the real work starts. The LCMC deal will create opportunities, and we are focusing on how we best take advantage of those, as well as the facilities, and extending the reach of our physicians.
- On the research side, Ththee federal funding in the SOM has doubled over the last seven years. That is incredible. When I came here Lee and Patrick said goal was to be in top 50 NIH funding. Now it seems like we can get there. Part of it is aggressive recruitment, but also existing faculty that have raised their game. Number of applications has gone up about 20% in last 6 years, amount of money has gone up by 80%. We have gotten awards that years earlier people told me we wouldn't be qualified for.
- We have run out of space uptown and downtown. To address this are projects like the renovation of Hutchison, the Charity project, and the LCMC deal. There is no intention of slowing down at the SOM.
- In addition our goal is to make working downtown a really wonderful thing, a really welcoming comfortable place to be. This is not just about quality of life, but doing good science requires casual places where people are running into each other, where people you

may not know meet each other to begin research and start something meaningful. The plans for charity have the floors paired, and every pair of floors have a lounge, which makes a huge difference in getting to know your neighbors.

- There is no such thing as a thriving Tulane without a thriving SOM. The accomplishments have been extraordinary to date
- The finances of the university are strained for the moment – reasons: one is the transition and hiring new physicians, lost a lot of students from China during COVID – hundreds of students -
- There have been some temporary expenses that have been hard to deal with, but we are committed to continue investing. We are open for business. If you have a star you want to make an effort to recruit to Tulane, these people are hard to move, we should be having a steady routine of trying to recruit folks of that stature. If we get more people than we expect we can address that. We are committed to hiring until we fill the space. Only school on campus were we plan to continue aggressively hire faculty, and continue to grow medicine, anything we need to do to help this school be a success. We have a path that will enable the school to achieve new heights.
- The world of scientific publication is changing in all sorts of ways. We have deals with Wiley, Elsevier, to get free immediate open access. We are in negotiation to make that even more the case. We also have the SOAP program (supporting open access publications) where we can support making a publication open access. I believe open access matters.
- Finally – let me say that one of the more exciting developments is the nursing program. WE are absolutely committed to providing high-quality healthcare, and one of the biggest challenges has been the turnover of nurses, and we need more nurses. The goal is to give nurses the best education they will find in the region. We are starting in the undergraduate program with an accelerated BSN (2 year program). In steady state we expect about 200 students at a time. There will be cohort of full time undergraduates living and working downtown. The Dean of Nursing we will be hiring will be fantastic. About 75-80% of the nursing curriculum is core curriculum, but there is 20-25% of the curriculum which you can tailor to the local needs, we are hiring a dean who will be sensitive to the local needs. Will have special expertise in the challenges facing the patients here in New Orleans. We hope many of them will want to work for us. The program should also generate revenue to allow the SOM to continue its aggressive investment.
- ACGME recently expressed they are pleased with what they are seeing, complimentary about work we have done to improve our residency programs, I am really proud of the work that has been done. I see Benetta, she is one of the many leaders who have done extraordinary work in making this a better place for residents, but also for students and staff and faculty. When you improve the environment it helps everyone. Thanks to everyone who has done that work.

## QUESTIONS

1. Curious about the progress in Charity. Answer: the answer is not as positive as I would like. Charity is underway, it has gotten more complicated given inflation in the last year. Step 1 is all of the health and safety things. The project should take 3 years to complete – if we progress the way we are going now, goal is 2026. Almost the entirety of charity has tenants identified. I'm not promising at this point, but it's supposed to take 3 years. It is one of the reasons why agreed to quickly to renovate Hutchison, so we have space to hire new faculty, this is the interim solution.
2. What about the permanent generator for this building? Answer: I actually don't know – will find out
3. Concern about Rec Center opening times. Answer: the reason why is because of use metrics – keep in mind that we have a different population here than uptown – people can't always get uptown – it was a bit of mess when we started – we are still learning how to best serve this community
4. Concern about loss of Zumba classes, only available for faculty but not for students. Now there is a cost which there wasn't before. Answer: This is not unimportant – I promise you I will take these comments back.
5. What would be beneficial would be schematics for people downtown to understand what the renovations would look like – the trees, bushes, etc, what is happening downtown. Answer: there should be a place where there will be schematics, pictures where people can see what we are planning and what the future looks like. There will be inconveniences, it is helpful to be able to remind folks why we are doing what we are doing.
6. Question in the chat – comment on the progress at EJ – Answer: No I can't, your dean will be the one to comment. This is changing week by week, I am not up to date on the latest plans. I will say we have an implementation team meet biweekly Saturday mornings – this transition is important – and we are trying to make sure we have all the teams in place to get as much of this right in the first pass as we can.

Congratulations on the great line-up of the Book Festival. He is missing his opportunity to chill with Bill Gates to be with you. Incredible energy uptown. Number of folks coming has grown by about 50%. Great for Tulane and great for New Orleans. It is only going to get better.

We emerged from COVID as a better university than we entered. On behalf of everyone at the university, thank you for going above and beyond.

Thank you. Dr. Bitoun thanks him for the update. Introduced Dean Hamm for our next update.

#### IV. Dean's Report – *L. Lee Hamm, M.D., Senior Vice President and Dean*

So Dr. Forman gave a lot of good news, a lot of it related to the medical school and the downtown campus. I'm going to keep my remarks really short. Want to mention three things

1. EJ – The plans are progressing, but ever so slowly. Jan and Feb were devoted to looking at a lot of data, LCMC getting comfortable with that data, interacting with clinical chairs and chiefs, lots of meetings and discussions which are still ongoing. A lot of beginning tentative plans. They are still shooting toward the first part of 2024 to move most of hospital populations. Increasingly likely that the ER will stay open for quite some time. We still think there will still be some clinics here. That is about as much detail as is clarified.
2. How to deal with stress and uncertainty – Tremendous stress in research operations. A lot of stress in society in general these days. It's everything, the 24/7 news cycle, a lot of polarization, a lot of toxic conversations, how you deal with that stress and uncertainty is very important. How we take care of ourselves and those around us. So I made a list – some tips
  - a. It's not about resiliency – but there some things that help
  - b. Exercise is one of those things – I do think wellness is going to be extremely important for us. Taking care of our mental and emotional state, however you achieve that. Looking out for ourselves and those around us. We have responsibilities not only to our colleagues but also our residents, students, etc. It's going to be an important thing. An emphasis we are going to have to have on wellness in general. A lot of that has to do with mental wellness.
  - c. Midst of budget season – provost Forman already mentioned that university budgets are tight, it is a stressful time, but we do intend to keep investing in growth and improvement, it's not going to be easy meetings for some of your chairs. It is not because we intend to make cuts in needed areas. We are going through the budgets.

Any questions?

Comment – talking about the ER staying, hoping there are discussions about consultations and stress of covering multiple hospitals for trainees, etc

Thank you. Dr Bitoun says thank you, next on our agenda is update from Dr. Delafontaine.

#### V. Research and Scholarly Activities - *Patrice Delafontaine, M.D., Executive Dean*

Will keep my comments very short. We are doing extraordinarily well, due to all of you, all of the faculty. In February each year the NIH grants come out – we jumped significantly again from 66 in ranking up to 61. If you look at our rank normalized for faculty number, we are up to 37<sup>th</sup> in ranking. The data that is out there publicly is not adjusted for faculty numbers. 61 is a lot closer to top 50 even than 3 or 4 years ago. Reflects the work that all of you and your teams have been doing over the last year.

Congratulations to all of you. Dr. Bitoun thanked Dr. Delafontaine for his comments, and introduced Dr. Krousel-Wood.

#### VI. Administrative Updates:

- a. Office of Faculty Affairs – *Marie A. Krousel-Wood, M.D., Senior Associate Dean for*

## *Faculty Affairs*

Remind everyone – please do the COACHE survey, very important survey done nationwide, captures a lot of information on what is and isn't working and gives us a chance to compare ourselves to peer institutions. Administrators don't get the link, but all faculty get the link.

Interesting seminars coming up – CV workshop. End of March.

Does it tie back to any of the accreditations, etc? A: University takes responses very seriously – not linked directly for accreditations, but can be used when we go to accreditation to show we do capture faculty data.

Back to Dr. Bitoun. Dr. Bitoun introduced Dr. Chakraborti.

- b. Office of Academic Affairs – *Chayan Chakraborti, M.D., Associate Dean for Education and Academic Affairs*

Good evening – going pretty well, most second year students stepping into Step 1 study mode. Step 1 is pass/fail now. Next week is match week.

- c. Office of Admissions & Student Affairs – *Elma LeDoux, M.D., Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs*

Next Friday is Match day – senior students will find out where they are completing their residencies. Interview season has ended for admissions. Have finished the interview process.

- d. Office of Graduate Medical Education – *Paul Gladden, M.D., Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education*

A lot of good things happened in GME. No longer under probation. Two programs are under warning.

- e. Office of Multicultural Affairs – *Bennetta C. Horne, Ph.D., Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

Going right along, every more intentional on our efforts. Would like to encourage faculty to get along and participate with us. Always looking for faculty to participate in the process, always looking for people who wish to mentor under-represented students. WE have gotten proficient at the recruitment, would like to focus on retention and

support, so we need you. Intention is to provide a training for faculty, if you would like to be involved there is a place and space and we need you.

- f. BMS Ph.D. Program – *Heather Machado, Ph.D., Assistant Dean for the Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program*

Dr. Derek M – give everyone else an update on what we are doing. We graduated 21 students, who have defended. We are in the middle of recruitment season which is not so easy, we have to actively recruit students, we have made offers to 35, 10 so far have agreed to come. Our goal is about 20-25. We have had about 80 interviews. If you interviewed for us, thank you. In the future, please be involved in interviewing. We have prospective students we have made offers to who are coming in next week. They have until the 15<sup>th</sup> of April to actually make their decisions.

Dr. Bitoun invited Dr. Nakeisha Pierre to speak.

## VII. New Business and Discussion

- a. GMF Election Nominations – *Nakeisha Pierre, M.D., GMF Vice Chair and Chair of the Nominating Committee*

Appealing to you – I need your help – we are entering into this amazing period of transformation and growth, and each of us has an opportunity to make an amazing contribution – we are in need of committed faculty members who are invested in our future, and in growth and hope. This is a wonderful and gentle reminder to all of you that are interested in promotion – service to institution is valued and necessary. Do not be afraid to self-nominate. No one will be placed on a ballot until they have accepted the nomination. You will receive an e-mail after this meeting briefly describing the commitment. Please take a moment to think about the talent in your department. Thank you

Dr. Krousel-Wood wants to reiterate the importance of institutional service in promotion. It is important for the school but also for you.

## VIII. Adjournment

With no grievances seen Dr. Bitoun adjourned the meeting