

SOM General Medical Faculty Meeting

Tulane University School of Medicine Auditorium, 1430 Tulane

Thursday, October 10th, 2013

The Meeting started at 5:00 PM

Agenda

Dr. Debasis Mondal welcomed the GMF and introduced the newly elected GMF committee members.

Dean Hamm introduced the guest speaker, President Scott Cowen.

➤ President Cowen's topic of dissection was "**The Future of Higher Education in America**"

1. **A hostile environment towards higher education:** encountered by many entities such as government, state government, and media is building up and is likely to continue over the next few years.
2. **Affordability:** changes across the socioeconomic sectors will negatively influence and reduce opportunities for the middle class towards a first class college education. This may prompt institutions to re-visit and reduce the cost of education and tuition to meet this challenge.
3. **Accessibility:** this is closely associated with the aforementioned problems of affordability. First class education will be less accessible to low socioeconomic and middle class families. This may be attributed, despite efforts from the federal government, to higher costs associated with student loans, and consequently future debts.
4. **Health Insurance Costs:** Increasing health insurance costs adds to this challenge.
5. **Value:** Measured by job availability and increased income of graduates, it appears that several educational disciplines have been devalued. This will prompt institutions to restructure their educational programs to plan which one(s) needs to be vital for recruitment of future students.
6. **Budget changes:** Because of economic pressures and additional new needs, it is expected that expenses would be greater than the revenues leading to budget deficits in institutions of higher education. This trend is likely to be permanent. The problem may be attributed to and confounded by the projected decrease in revenue from medical practice and research funding agencies.
Resolving this issue may require our increased engagement in attracting philanthropy and by restructuring our educational programs. The latter, for instance, may involve the use of technology to offer courses online to increase learning productivity and reduce credit hours through classroom teaching.
7. **Student recruitment:** Tulane University, empowered by reputation, nationally and internationally and esteemed faculty members, continue to attract undergraduate, graduate students and medical students. The recovery after Katrina has been remarkable and exceeded expectations.
8. **Epilogue:** At the end the President Cowen encouraged the faculty to participate in any transformative changes that would bring the university and school of medicine to a much better position in the future.

Questions/Answers

Q: What is the future of graduate education?

A: Research and graduate research training should be supported by extramural funding. However, higher institutions are challenged with significant reduction of research funds from federal and private foundations. If this trend continues, Tulane University has no resources to fill the funding gap in graduate education.

Q: What is the status of junior faculty and the tenure system?

A: The existing system at Tulane University is not structured right. Although there is no change envisioned in the foreseeable future, there is a clear need to re-visit the current tenure system. Tulane should search and adopt what would be suitable system to apply to its own community.

Q: Could faculty be part of the solution?

A: The president encouraged Faculty to provide the administration with innovative ideas on how to improve the existing system. All Deans are in agreement to making transformative changes in the foreseeable future.

Q: What is the status of Tulane Hospital?

A: There no agreement on the future of East and West Jefferson hospitals and this may also reflect the disagreement amongst members of the Jefferson Parish Council. It may months before a deal is stuck.

Q: Can Philanthropic avenues be used to support research at Tulane?

A: Fund raising of hundreds of millions of dollars through philanthropy has been growing for the last four years. Another avenue to enhance financial revenue to support research through corporate partnerships and tech-transfer commercialization of our intellectual properties. As part of the strategic planning, the president has encouraged the faculty to explore and furnish new ideas to help boosting this cause.

Q: What is the future of Tulane's Medical Practice in the city?

A: There is a critical need to increase our visibility in the city

The meeting ended at 6:05 PM.

Sincerely Yours,

Asim B. Abdel-Mageed, DVM, MS, Ph.D.
Professor of Urology & Pharmacology
Zimmermann Endowed Professor of Cancer Research, Tulane Cancer Center
Director of Molecular Oncology Research, Department of Urology
Email: amageed@tulane.edu