COMPASS - Contemplating Medicine, Patients, Self and Society

**Purpose:** The idea for this new longitudinal course developed out of work done by the MU-SOM Next Level of Excellence group that has been a collaborative effort among curriculum board, faculty, deans, students and patients over the past 3 years. Three important gap areas were identified in medical student education - culturally effective care, population health, and professional formation. This new innovative longitudinal curriculum addresses professional formation, as well as several of the other gap competencies.

The purpose of COMPASS is to foster the development of patient-centered physicians in relation to patients, self, and society.  What’s unique about this experience is that each small group will be composed of students from each of the 4 classes and 2 faculty “Guides” (at least 1 of whom will be a physician). The group will meet throughout the year and through all 4 years of a student’s education.

COMPASS has been approved by the curriculum board to begin in academic year (AY) 2013-14. For the incoming M1 class, COMPASS is a graduation requirement and participation is required.  For the M2s and M3s, although COMPASS is not a graduation requirement, it is a required experience where you will receive non graded feedback. For this year only (AY 13-14), the M4s will be encouraged to attend but participation won’t be required. Starting in AY 2014-15, participation will be required for all students in all 4 classes.

**Educational objectives:** Students will achieve 3 professional formation education goals by the end of this course:

a. The ability to recognize personal and professional stresses and develop and use effective coping strategies to deal with them.

b. The ability to recognize and thoughtfully discuss when faced with breaches of professionalism or unsafe practices.

c. Understanding that assuming the identity of doctor is both a process of personal development and a social enterprise. It requires both becoming and contributing.

**Group member expectations:** All students will actively participate during the small group sessions. The educational goals will be accomplished through group activities, discussions, and personal reflections drawing on experiences and current level of training. Absence requests will be considered for rare and compelling circumstances subject to approval by the COMPASS course director and the Associate Dean of Student Programs and Professional Development. As always, personal health issues or sensitive information may be discussed first with the Associate Dean of Student Programs and Professional Development prior to completing and submitting the absence request form. Any student who wishes to request and excused absence for a planned event will be required to submit an absence request form to COMPASS Coordinator ([nicholsonc@health.missouri.edu](mailto:nicholsonc@health.missouri.edu)) in OME no later than 2 weeks before each COMPASS session.

**Timeline**: For AY 2013-14, the COMPASS groups will meet on Monday afternoon from 3:00-5:00 p.m. on

           Monday, November 4, 2013

Monday, February 3, 2014

Monday, March 31, 2014

Starting in AY 2014-15, there will be 5 COMPASS group meetings each year.

**Activities:** The small group sessions will involve discussion about a variety of topics not covered elsewhere in the curriculum. The 3 themes covered this first year include stressors and coping strategies, professional/personal choices and boundaries, and the cultural self. Small group sessions will center around open discussions between students of different classes, sharing as a group, and learning new techniques that can be implemented to help in the development of becoming a physician.

**Assessments:** COMPASS Guides will provide a written formative assessment at the end of each academic year. Starting in AY 2014-15, M4 students will participate in a capstone assessment that includes a reviewed written reflection paper component and a graded exam component based on the material covered during the COMPASS sessions. The graded exam will assess a student’s ability to provide an innovative solution to a complex problem. COMPASS is a graduation requirement for the matriculating class of 2013-14. A final course grade (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) will be determined at the end of the M4 year starting with that class to meet this graduation requirement.

**Time Commitment:** We anticipate that most of the work will be done within the small group sessions. There may be a few readings or videos to review prior to or after the sessions. Students will be released from other course responsibilities to participate in COMPASS.

**Why is COMPASS important?** In the words of medical students who helped develop this curriculum:

“The COMPASS curriculum will provide students an open forum for discussion of often overlooked aspects of the medical profession.  It will provide an opportunity to seek answers in a safe setting.  Furthermore, this program will create close interpersonal and professional relationships.”

“By sitting down with members of all four classes and at least one faculty member, we will discuss… professionalism in medicine, stressors you’ll be faced with throughout all walks of medical school and practice, and juggling your personal and professional life. There is no easy answer or perfect life plan that will help it all fall in place. But COMPASS will give you a heads up to understand when these challenges are coming and the tools to more efficiently manage them now and in the future.“

**COMPASS task force members**

Kevin Kane (chair)

Sarah Swofford (co-chair)

Rachel Brown

Carla Dyer

Joe Donaldson

Betsy Garrett

Steve Halenda

Brian Hilliard (Class of 2013)

Kimberly Hoffman

Natalie Hughes (Class of 2015)

Joanna Kimball (Class of 2015)

Tom Mawhinney

Carrie Nicholson

Jessica Nittler

Taylor Pancoast (Class 2015)

Arthur Rawlings

Andrew Valleroy (Class of 2013)

Amie VanMorlan

Peter Wilden

Updated June 25, 2013