



## School of Medicine Receives Full Accreditation by MSCHE

*John Schiavone, M.B.A. & Sabrina Kovler, M.H.A.*

The School of Medicine is very proud of its latest accreditation accomplishment: securing Full Accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). In addition to providing an affirmation from this regional accreditor which formally permits the receipt of federal funding for grants and student financial aid (referred to as Title IV funds) from the federal Department of Education (USDE), Middle States accreditation is a prerequisite to the next accreditation process by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). The Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine is now an independent degree granting institution.

A great deal of effort was expended from the summer of 2021 through to the Middle States virtual site visit August 29-31, 2022. Orchestrated by a Steering Committee led by Dean Jeffrey Boscamp and Associate Dean Chris Duffy, five Working Groups of more than 80 individuals developed a draft Self Study Report outline and prose. Prior to the commencement of their work, Dean Bonita Stanton, Chief Operating Officer John Schiavone, and the Office of Medical Education's Senior Director of Education & Operations Improvement, Sabrina Kovler, submitted a comprehensive Self Study Design Template which was approved without edit. The final 130-page Self Study Report was accompanied by hundreds of pages of documentation in an Evidence Inventory; these documents were also suggested, vetted, and provided by the Working Groups. (continued on page 2)

## Surgery Clerkship - Peer Review Process

*Joshua Josephs, MD*

Along with Dr. Kriegel, Dr. Glikzman, and Dr. Doumas, I recently had the opportunity to chair the surgery clerkship peer review process. This process, on an ongoing basis, reviews each clerkship in turn as part of the activities of the Phase 2 Curriculum committee. On a large scale the surgery clerkship review is performing well and action items from the peer review have been noted to be issues in other clerkships as well that have been reviewed since.

Positives from the course as it is already constructed include:

- Consistency of experiences across sites
- Consistency of grading across sites and years
- The ability of students to complete the required clinical experiences
- Student feedback highlighting the need for little to no change in the core curriculum

Evolution of the course through continuous iteration that have already taken place include:

- Correcting mapping problems between CLO and EPO mapping
- Re-writing course learning objectives that can not be completed by students at the clerkship level (including writing orders, addressing inadequate knowledge of PICO and HSS related materials)
- Identifying a need to co-teach surgical techniques with the OB/GYN faculty

The areas identified for improvement in the action items were both directly related to the surgery clerkship and issues that are of concern in other clerkships as well. (continued on page 2)

## Medical Education Research - The use of Anki (spacing and testing effect)

*Andrew Magdich, M4*

Upon starting medical school, I found myself quickly overwhelmed by the volume of material I was tasked with learning. In search of resources to help ease this burden I found myself unsure of the best option. However, one resource was a constant amongst my classmates, Anki. With little background knowledge about Anki, like how or why it worked or whether there was any evidence to support its use, I quickly incorporated it into my routine.

Anki, is an opensource and free to use software program that enables users to create digital flashcards. However, the function of Anki extends beyond the ability to simply create digital flashcards. The application enables users to utilize their flashcards in such a way that takes advantage of two key concepts: the testing effect and the spacing effect. In summary, Anki spaces out the amount of time a user studies a given flashcard via an expanding time interval to improve retention.

After utilizing Anki for four years and having an overall positive experience, my curiosity behind why Anki worked and whether there was any evidence to support its use remained. The medical education research elective afforded me the opportunity to explore these questions.

With the support of Dr. Metzger and Professor Koltz I conducted a narrative literature review focused on spaced repetition and Anki in medical education. The result of this literature review provided data supporting the use of Anki, primarily in the form of improved standardized test scores such as USMLE Step 1. Despite this evidence, the existing literature specifically focusing on Anki was limited. Importantly, more impressive was the ample literature supporting underlying principles behind Anki (i.e., the spacing and testing effect). I discovered that these key concepts had been thoroughly studied in cognitive psychology. The data behind these concepts consistently demonstrated improved retention among students.

Another important discovery focused on the distinction between knowledge acquisition and retention. While students may be able to easily acquire knowledge through a singular study session, this often does not guarantee long term retention. By employing the spacing effect and reviewing information over several study sessions students have consistently demonstrated long-term retention.

In a field where students must be able to recall a variety of material at any given time, retention is often critical to success. As a result, I was able to conclude that when used correctly Anki and other spaced repetition methods have the potential to significantly improve knowledge retention.

While Anki is an outside resource used by students, given the support behind the principles of Anki, it would be interesting to

## Medical Education Research (continued)

see the spacing effect incorporated more formally into medical education curriculum.

Beyond exploring these specific research questions, the medical education research elective also taught me about important research principles such as:

- How to write strong learning objectives
- How to properly conduct a literature review
- The different types of literature review
- How to select appropriate research methods

Ultimately, I will be able to utilize these principles in the future, not only for medical education research but for clinical research as well.

## Surgery Clerkship (continued)

Some of the action items are directly related to the growth of the clerkships over time.

Action items and Suggestions:

1. To improve resident engagement in teaching
  - Enhanced use of the RATTLED program to further guide resident training and improve buy-in of the residents with the goal of improving resident satisfaction scores. The ability to monitor this will over time evolve beyond simple attendance at these sessions but further evaluation of resident efficacy in teaching.
2. To improve resident skill and engagement in the informed consent discussions
  - Improving informed consent stated a goal of reaching more than level 3 performance on the CET in this area and efforts are already ongoing with the help of Dr. Pilkington and Dr Binkley to improve ethics instruction in this area.
3. To reduce observed and experienced mistreatment
  - We express a desire for a goal of zero mistreatment that is either seen or experienced and this is to be accomplished through further debriefing sessions with core clerkship faculty.

The clerkship peer review team and the Phase 2 curriculum sub committee felt that these topics would improve student learning and experience in the clerkship both directly and hopefully modify the hidden curriculum. Serving as the chair of the committee provided me insight both with the workings of the surgery clerkship and for eventually conducting the review of the HSS content area.

## SOM Receives Full Accreditation by MSCHE (continued)

Middle States reviewed our application and, on November 17, 2022, confirmed our full accreditation. Their succinct announcement can be found online at <https://www.msche.org/institution/9230/> with the words, "To grant accreditation." Since our site visit was virtual, an in-person verification visit is required by USDE guidelines and will likely be conducted in the late winter. The retroactive date of accreditation is March 5, 2020, and the next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2030-2031.