

# THE FORUM

## NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the AAMC: GEA's  
Basic Science Education Special Interest Group

Vol. 1, No. 1

Summer, 1991

### Message from the National Director

The Basic Science Education Forum (BSEF) had its humble beginnings in the simple idea that teaching the sciences fundamental to the practice of medicine should be equally important as the pursuit of our individual research. Indeed, that we as basic taking action have a positive impact on the course of a rapidly evolving medical curriculum. By teaching graduate students we replicate ourselves and ensure the continuance of the discovery of new knowledge. But by teaching medical students, we have the opportunity to influence the very foundation of our health care system.

I believe it is the magnitude of our double teaching charge which drives our collective desire to pool knowledge, resources and ideas to more effectively influence the course of medical education. The tasks we have attempted are formidable. Although our BSEF Directory of Colleagues now lists 312 participants, we are still a minority. Our goal is to ensure that we are a

creative and productive minority.

This newsletter (John Curry, Editor) was designed to be one instrument of that creativity. In this first issue of what will become a semi-annual (Summer/Winter) publication, I wish to introduce the sections which you may expect to see. Beginning with this issue, regular features will include *News and Views from the Regions*, to keep us apprised of what our four regional BSEF chapters are doing; *Current BSEF Projects*, with calls for volunteers; and *Announcements* of both Regional and National interest relating to the teaching of basic sciences.

An important feature I wish to see develop is the use of this medium to exchange ideas, techniques, and projects-in-progress related to the teaching of basic sciences. To begin, we will pattern this section of *Innovations in Basic Science Teaching* after Academic Medicine's column: *Ideas for Medical Education*. (Call for nominations for an Associate Editor of this column listed in *Announcements*.) We have named this newsletter *The Forum*, to encourage member dialogue. Thus, your responses to the ideas printed here or elsewhere are solicited for the *Correspondence* column we envision.

Each winter issue will also contain a precis of the Fall Annual Meeting of the BSEF, for those of you who were unable to attend.

Other ideas for rotating sections are invited *Guest Editorials* and a *Regional Directors' Column* to highlight basic science projects or concerns unique to one of our four regions. And lastly, I envision submissions with commentary

by our readers to the *Basic Science Teaching...in the News* column. These might be abstracts, quotes, etc. extracted from other sources to be shared with us all.

*The Forum* is your publication. Please consider the benefits of sharing your ideas, opinions, projects and volunteer time with us through this medium.

## NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE REGIONS

### **NORTHEAST REGION BSEF - ALIX I. ROBINSON, Ph.D., DIRECTOR**

The annual meeting of the Northeast GEA will be in Baltimore, MD, from Monday, March 30 through Wednesday, April 1, 1992. Co-chairs of the Spring meeting are Larrie Greenburg, M.D. and Simeon Margolis, Ph.D. The theme for the spring meeting is one that should appeal to all regional members of the BSEF, "*Integrating Basic Science and Clinical Education: Breaking Down the Barriers*".

An opening plenary session will address the question, "Why is it important to integrate basic and clinical science education?" Respondents will include a basic scientist, a clinician, and a medical student. This will be followed by a break out into groups containing basic scientists, clinicians, students, and people from medical education and deans' offices, who will plan a mini-curriculum in a specific area. On the second day, speakers and groups will address the questions of how to do the integration, who should teach, and how to evaluate. On the third day there will be a report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and others funding research in medical education. There will also be an Innovations in Medical Education section for everyone to present their latest information on research in medical education.

A good turnout of Basic Science Education Forum members for the Northeast GEA spring meeting will ensure a successful meeting of our

Northeast SIG chapter. Please call (315/464-5870) or write to me (Department of Microbiology/Immunology, SUNY Health Science Center, Syracuse, NY 13210) if you plan to attend and would like to participate in our SIG activities.

### **SOUTHERN REGION BSEF - RICHARD M. HYDE, Ph.D., DIRECTOR**

In April, 1991, the Basic Science Education Forum of the Southern Region held a workshop on the impact of the new NBME Step 1 exam on teaching in the first 2 years of medical school. The discussion was lively and centered around the following topics: Our role as educators, what member schools are doing to prepare students for this exam, and to assist students who do not pass. About half the schools in attendance already had a requirement that the students pass the NBME Part I exam and they were a valuable resource for the workshop participants who had no such position on exam passage. The ensuing discussion revealed the following points.

1. Schools that require passage usually give their students 2-3 weeks "off" just before the exam to prepare. Most do not have formal review programs, but have a few faculty lectures, office hours, etc. during that time.
2. At most schools in the Southern Region, stu-

dents that fail in June are required to repeat the exam in September. They may be put on leave until the scores are in, or they may not, this varies. If they fail in September (a very small number) they sit out the third year and prepare for the June exam.

3. The schools in which passing Part I is optional, reported that they are in the process of re-evaluating this position, and have not developed contingency policies as yet.

**CENTRAL REGION BSEF -  
ROGER W. KOMENT, Ph.D.,  
DIRECTOR**

This past April at the Central Region GEA Spring Meeting, the Basic Science Education SIG hosted the Clinical Science Education SIG in the first inter-SIG session. The topic was *Defusing the M.D./Ph.D. Adversarial Relationship*. Our goal was to explore from both perspectives the causes of real and perceived animosities within the academic environment, and to develop methods for resolution which may be readily implemented by the individual faculty member. The audience, comprised of approximately equal numbers of M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s (some Ed.D.'s), interacted, often vigorously, with the panel of two Ph.D.'s and two M.D.'s engaging in mock argumentation. Several ideas were generated for any individual to overcome these barriers to academic professionalism.

The problem was reduced to two words: **Communication** and **Integration**. Separation of roles, responsibilities, and specific disciplines, fostered by the 2 + 2 division of the traditional medical curriculum significantly reduces the opportunity for M.D.-Ph.D. interaction and mutual understanding. The following recommendations for action resulted.

\*Invite an M.D. (or Ph.D.) to lunch to discuss your discipline as it relates to his/her specialty.

\*Create/modify a seminar program or journal club to highlight topics with specific appeal to both graduate and medical students.

\*Enhance/implement efforts at your school to integrate the four year student learning experience.

\*Summer stipends support medical students in research laboratories. Even brief opportunities give medical students a greater appreciation for the origin of medical knowledge, and thus a better understanding of those who seek it.

\*Enhance/implement basic science electives within your school.

\*Consider how your discipline might impact the residency training program.

**WESTERN REGION BSEF -  
WILLIAM R. GALEY, Ph.D.,  
DIRECTOR**

The issues surrounding Basic Science education in medical schools are becoming more important as the calls for greater integration of the basic science and clinical medicine and more "relevance" in basic science education increase. We, basic scientists, must not wait to enter the discussions of these issues for if we do, the decisions may be made before we are able to have our say. We believe the BSEF provides the opportunity and platform for all basic science disciplines to develop consensus on these and other important medical education issues and prepare ourselves for the discussions which are sure to follow. Consequently, the Western Region of the Basic Science Education Forum is planning a membership drive for the fall.

The Robert Wood Johnson initiative to foster change in medical education has initiated a renewed interest in educational reform at many medical schools across the U.S.A. The experience at the University of New Mexico and, I'm sure, many other schools across the country indicate that we basic scientists need to begin to discuss among ourselves what scientific elements are essential for a good medical

education. Furthermore, it seems clear that we need to better understand how and the extent to which our basic sciences are applied in clinical practice. If integration of basic science and clinical education is the goal, a lot of effort is needed to accomplish the task

## CURRENT BSEF PROJECTS

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At the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Basic Science Education Forum held on October 23, 1990 in San Francisco, four issues were defined that we are addressing in various ways. Each of our Regional Directors has volunteered to coordinate efforts for one topic. If you have interests and opinions and/or wish to work with others toward the resolution of one or more of the following, please contact the designated individual. Our long-term goal is to create workable solutions to these problems.

#### TOPIC 1

*Integration of the Curriculum: Defining the Role of Basic Scientists in the Clinical Educational Setting and Clinicians in the Basic Science Educational Setting.*

contact: Richard Hyde, Ph.D.

(The program for the 4th Annual Meeting of the Basic Science Education Forum to be held on November 13, 1991 in Washington, DC was designed with this topic in mind. Panel Discussions will explore means currently in use for underscoring basic science content within the clinical years.)

#### TOPIC 2

*Information Overload: Defining Essential Curricular Objectives.*

contact: Alix Robinson, Ph.D.

#### TOPIC 3

*Problem Based Learning: Defining the Role of Basic Scientists in Optimizing Basic Science Content within a PBL Program.*

contact: Bill Galey, Ph.D.

#### TOPIC 4

*Defining Evaluation Standards: Criteria and Consistency.*

contact: Roger Koment, Ph.D.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

### ASSOCIATE EDITOR: *INNOVATIONS IN BASIC SCIENCE TEACHING*

This individual will be responsible for reviewing and editing submissions for publication in *The Forum* which pertain to techniques in progress which enhance the teaching of the basic sciences. Commitment should be for at least one year (two issues of the newsletter).

If you would be interested in serving in this capacity, please contact either **John J. Curry**,

**Ph.D.**, Med I Office, The Ohio State University College of Medicine, 3190 Graves Hall, 333 West Tenth Ave., Columbus, OH 43210; Phone: (614) 292-9687, or **Roger W. Koment, Ph.D.**, Department of Microbiology, School of Medicine, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD 57069; Phone: (605) 677-5174.

## 1992 SPRING REGIONAL GEA MEETINGS

### NORTHEAST

Baltimore, MD      March 30 - April 1, 1992  
*Integrating Basic Science and Clinical  
Education: Breaking Down the Barriers*

For details on BSEF activity phone:  
Alix Robinson, Ph.D.  
(315) 464-5870

### CENTRAL

Lincolnshire, IL      April 9-11, 1992  
*Medical Educators: Reaching for the  
Future*

For details on BSEF activity phone:  
Roger Koment, Ph.D.  
(605) 677-5174

### SOUTHERN

Macon, GA      March 26-28, 1992  
*The Medically Underserved: What can  
Medical Education do to help?*

For details on BSEF activity phone:  
Richard Hyde, Ph.D.  
(405) 271-2133

### WESTERN

Asilomar, CA      April 26-29, 1992  
*Preparing Leadership for Change*

For details on BSEF activity phone:  
William Galey, Ph.D.  
(505) 277-0620

# BASIC SCIENCE EDUCATION FORUM

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**NATIONAL DIRECTOR**

Roger Koment, Ph.D. Univ of South Dakota, Vermillion  
(605)677-5174

**NORTHEAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

Alix Robinson, Ph.D. SUNY Health Science Center, Syracuse  
(315)464-5870

**SOUTHERN REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

Richard Hyde, Ph.D. Univ of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City  
(405)271-2133

**CENTRAL REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

Roger Koment, Ph.D. Univ of South Dakota, Vermillion  
(605)677-5174

**WESTERN REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

William Galey, Ph.D. Univ of New Mexico, Albuquerque  
(505)277-0620

**CHAIR, ELECTRONIC NETWORKING COMMITTEE**

James Swierkosz, Ph.D. St. Louis University, St. Louis  
(314)577-8448 -8432

**CHAIR, INSTRUCTOR SUPPORT COMMITTEE**

Marilyn Robinson, Ph.D. University of Western Ontario, London  
(519)661-3478 -2111

**EDITOR, THE FORUM BSEF NEWSLETTER**

John Curry, Ph.D. Ohio State University, Columbus  
(614)292-9687

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR,  
INNOVATIONS IN BASIC SCIENCE TEACHING**

Thomas Devlin, Ph.D. Hahnemann University  
(215) 448-7947

**GUEST EDITOR,  
CLINICAL CORRELATION IN THE BASIC SCIENCES**

Gabriel Virella, M.D., Ph.D. Medical Univ of South Carolina  
(803) 792-4421

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An Organization of Basic Science Faculty

**Our Purposes:**

- ? To come together, both electronically and at our annual meeting, to discuss issues in medical education of common concern to all basic science faculty.
- ? To formulate where possible consensus opinion on issues in medical education which have direct impact on basic sciences.
- ? To begin resolving those issues with others through the vehicle of AAMC and GEA at the national and regional levels

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**PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_

**FAX** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN TO:**

Roger W. Koment, Ph.D.  
National Director, BSEF  
Department of Microbiology  
University of South Dakota  
School of Medicine  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
Phone: (605) 677-5174  
FAX: (605) 677-5124