

UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY OF NEW JERSEY

Master Educator Program

Introduction

Pursuant to the charge to the Master Educator Committee, the following pages contain the findings and recommendations of the Committee as well as those recommended by the President and the Council of Deans. Also included in this document are those characteristics the Committee agreed are the components of a master educator. The Committee's caveat, however, is that these characteristics ought not to be conceived as a checklist. On the other hand, they should steer the deliberations of the schools in the establishment of specific criteria each will use to determine the faculty members who are eligible for the title "Master Educator." In other words, each school should establish its own set of criteria for the nomination and determination of its master educators.

The Establishment of a University Master Educators' Program and Guild

The Master Educator Committee recommends that the University formally establish a Master Educator program and that the members who become designated as master educators constitute a Master Educators Guild. The University will fund the guild in the amount of \$50,000 annually to further the University's stated goal of increasing the number of master educators and to enhance the University's national reputation as a center of excellence in education. The focus of this goal is on continuous improvement in the achievement of our educational mission at UMDNJ. The funding for the Guild shall be used to support its mission to enhance education throughout the University, including individual or collaborative research or scholarship of its members. To attain the educational goals of the Guild, mechanisms will be established by the Guild in conjunction with a proposed advisory committee to assess what projects should be funded in a given year.

The Committee strongly recommends that three key elements must be incorporated into the bylaws of the proposed Guild. They are:

- 1) The continued assurance of educational effectiveness and innovation as measured by the outcomes of our students' performances on the standards each school uses or will use to measure these outcomes;
- 2) the master educators' continued scholarly activity in support of the University's educational programming, including continuing professional education which may be provided to other health professional educators;
- 3) the provision of service programs for individual or groups of faculty to improve education at every level of the University.

Purpose of the Guild

The purpose of the Master Educators' Guild is to recognize and promote excellence in the fulfillment of the University's educational mission and to contribute to educational scholarship, research and innovation. Such a commitment to excellence may be demonstrated in any instructional setting including classroom instruction, hospital or clinic teaching, laboratory instruction, and research mentoring and instruction, continuing education, community-housed instructional settings or electronically mediated teaching and teaming.

Advisory Committee

The Committee recommends that it should be held in force for some period of time to serve as the Guild's advisory committee in order to ensure that the intent of the Master educator program is maintained. After the Master Educator program is established, a smaller advisory committee shall be constituted by the President. The advisory committee membership shall be appointed by the President and will consist of a designee from the President's Office, an educator external to the University, one or more representative faculty members nominated by the deans' committee and one or more students.

Nominations from the Schools of the University

Nominations of master educators should be made in a way that is consonant with the mission and goals of each school. The actual means through which nominations for master educators shall be determined shall be left to the individual schools, using whatever criteria they will have in place for the assessment of educators. Because there are numerous variations in the teaching components of the schools, the Committee recommends that master educators may be nominated for their outstanding educational performance in such areas as didactic, laboratory/research, simulated patient care, clinical teaching or preceptorships and thesis or dissertation advisement, continuing education, etc.

Nominees shall demonstrate evidence of continued scholarship as a guiding principle of sound education.

Nominations may be initiated by peers, students, faculty administrators or chairs. In any event, the chairperson must submit a letter evaluating the teaching effectiveness of all nominees from his or her department. For the sake of consistency in the process of nominations, the Committee strongly recommends that each dean establish a Master Educator Review Committee with the specific charge to make final recommendations to the dean based on the criteria established by each school. It is essential that the role of students in the process of selection of nominees be underscored. To that end, no nomination should be considered without the students' involvement in the process, including student evaluations and representation on the Master Educator Review Committee. To assure as much fairness as possible, the Master Educator Review Committee will assess the chairpersons' evaluations together with all other sources, namely student input, peer group input outstanding awards, etc. to judge the merits of the nomination. Nominees may, should they choose, provide a letter that outlines their strength in education. The Master Educator Review Committee will make recommendations of nominees for master educator to the dean. The dean of each school shall select one or two candidates for the designation of Master Educator. The deans' selections will constitute the final step in the process with the expectation that each school will have at least one master educator inducted in the Guild in the first year of implementation.

To distinguish this prestigious award, membership in the Guild will be for a period of five years after which past members of the Guild may be re-nominated and reviewed for membership in the Guild according to the guidelines established by each school. In the first year of operation, however, the initial terms will be from five to seven years to assure continuity and faithfulness to the intent of the program. Past members of the Guild whose terms have expired will retain their title as master educators. Hence, re-nomination of such individuals will be for membership on the Guild, not for re-designation as master educators. The Guild and its advisory committee may establish the membership limits to assure the best utilization of both human and fiscal resources.

In the event that a member of the Guild can no longer contribute to its work for personal, professional or reassignment reasons, he or she will no longer be an active member of the Guild and shall be designated "Master Educator Emeritus/ta." If conditions change, such individuals may be re-nominated in the same fashion as those whose terms of appointment on the Guild have expired.

The Committee views membership in this Guild as highly prestigious. Hence, the Committee recommends strongly that once inducted into the Guild, members have responsibilities to maintain the intent of the Master Educator Program, to mentor junior faculty, to sponsor workshops and symposia on appropriate areas of educational concerns or on new and emerging forms of pedagogy. Members should also attempt to secure extramural funding for innovative educational programs and for support of the Guild's activities and to pursue scholarly activities and research germane to education and publications.

Benefits for Master Educators

Given the prestige that the Committee attaches to title "Master Educator," the Committee recommends the following:

- 1) The University have a medallion struck to be given to each master educator inducted into the Guild. The medallion may be worn at ceremonial functions such as the annual commencement exercises
- 2) An unrestricted grant in amounts ranging from \$3,000 to \$5,000 to be awarded on election to the Guild to

further scholarly activities, the amount of which will depend on the number of new members in any given year. It is expected that the recipient would report on the activities generated from the grant at educational symposia or through publications. Given adequate funding to the Guild, the individual could apply for renewal funding for an ongoing project.

- 3) Public recognition at a highly visible ceremony such as commencement or University Day or a day designated for recognition for excellence in education similar to a research day.

Relationship to Promotion in Rank and Tenure

Although the criteria for appointments, promotions and the award of tenure are essentially under the purview of the faculty, if serious respect and honor is to be accorded to the University's educational mission, due consideration should be given to the achievements of the University's master educators when they are being reviewed for promotion in rank, including the award of tenure. To this end, the achievement of master educator status in tandem with other scholarly and service activities should be taken into consideration when such reviews are conducted. Hence, the Committee recommends each school must write into its promotion and tenure guidelines that membership in the Guild be counted strongly in consideration of promotion in rank and the award of tenure.

Benefits to the Departments

Departments from which master educators have been drawn can benefit from the expertise of their own master educators who can mentor junior faculty and increase students' satisfaction with their educational experience. In addition, the Committee recommends that master educators publish in scholarly journals, thus bringing favorable attention to their departments. Master educators will be encouraged to seek educational enrichment grants, the overhead from which shall be distributed according to usual University practice.

Characteristics and Identifiers of a Sound Educator

The following lists outline general characteristics and identifiers most frequently associated with quality educators. They are not meant to be an all inclusive check list; rather, they represent the skills, strengths or competencies of master educators upon which the Committee agreed, including those that refer to clinical teaching. Because of the wide involvement of most of our schools in clinical teaching, the Committee recognizes certain evaluative factors for clinical instructors, as part of the whole of the characteristics of sound pedagogy.

I. General Characteristics

1. The nominee has demonstrated exceptional teaching skills in either the traditional modalities of education (lecture, laboratory or clinical teaching) or in alternative forms of teaching such as Web-based education or other synchronous or asynchronous forms of distance education. Exceptional teaching skills may include such factors as the "set," the clarity and precision of the presentations, the progress of the students under his or her tutelage, including retention of the most at-risk students.
2. The nominee has demonstrated creativity in curriculum design or innovations in the delivery of education to our students.
3. The nominee clearly demonstrates currency and the underlying scholarship requisite for teaching efficiently and effectively.
4. The nominee engenders an enthusiasm among his or her students such that they are motivated to study and master the subject matter or clinical competency under discussion.
5. The nominee is regarded by his or her peers as an excellent educator.

II. Master Educator Identifiers

The following list is neither exhaustive nor in all parts normative for every school of UMDNJ, but some of them at least are universally applicable.

1. performance evaluations conducted by peers or students or both;
2. development of teaching materials;
3. demonstrated effective communication skills;
4. students performance on examinations, national or regional certification, or state licensure examinations;
5. development of innovative teaching/learning strategies or technologies;
6. a record of successful retention of academically at-risk students;
7. employer surveys (if applicable) which address areas of competency that can be ascribed to specific teachers or possibly whole departments;
8. development of patient management problems and the regular revision of practice protocols;
9. continuous improvements of courses or new course development;
10. honors or awards relating to excellence in teaching or in educational innovations; or
11. articles or invited presentations or workshops on teaching strategies and effectiveness.

III. Excellence in Clinical Instruction

Although these characteristics are pertinent to clinical education, many of them are equally applicable to any teaching/learning exchange. Excellent clinical teachers:

- 1) Provide thorough orientation for the students for their clinical experiences;
- 2) are accessible and available to students at the clinical sites;
- 3) provide timely and constructive performance evaluations and feedback;
- 4) discuss the scientific underpinnings for patient management protocols;
- 5) encourage students to acquire new knowledge and ask questions;
- 6) effectively communicate knowledge fitted to each student's level in order to create a challenging experience;
- 7) integrate textbook and didactic learning into clinical encounters;
- 8) cultivate students' analytical abilities and critical judgment skills;
- 9) enhance students' clinical skills pertinent to the current clinical rotation;
- 10) demonstrate enthusiasm about teaching in a clinical setting;
- 11) provide direct observation of the students' clinical assignments;

- 12) serve as excellent role models with high professional standards in interpersonal relationships with patients, students, colleagues and support staff;
- 13) exhibits sound teaching practices with patients in what ever health care setting the exchanges take place.
- 14) demonstrates listening acumen as manifested through the incorporation of students' suggestions.

In summary, the Master Educator program is aimed at enriching the educational experiences of our students be they undergraduate, graduate, post-doctorates, residents or continuing education participants. To determine the success of the Master Educator program, pre- and post-assessments of our students and our faculties will be conducted. The survey instrument will be designed and pilot tested by a sub-group of the Committee. The Committee is dedicated to the premise that this program should enhance the reputation of the University as a great research University which cherishes the very best in education.