University of Missouri at Kansas City
School of Medicine

Report of the Review Committee

prepared by:

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Executive Summary

The University of Missouri at Kansas City School of Medicine is a relatively young medical school that is nationally recognized for its six-year curriculum and docent system pedagogy. The School of Medicine depends to a great extent on faculty members of other academic units and community based clinicians to implement its unique curriculum. Although this arrangement has worked well, the Medical School is now being asked to take on a more prominent role in biomedical research. Most of the faculty and administrators are supportive of the curriculum, and they do not believe that it would interfere with research. Further innovation and research in medical education such as multidisciplinary education, joint degree programs, clinical research fellowships and a graduate program should be developed.

Major enhancement in life sciences research will require a restructuring of organizational support at the University, medical school and departmental levels. A Senior Vice Provost for Research with responsibilities for oversight, planning and coordination of all life sciences research should be appointed as well as an Associate Dean for Research and Basic Sciences in the School of Medicine. Many faculty members have expressed a need for more basic science research and a desire for better collaboration with basic scientists. Currently, the sciences basic to medicine are largely housed in other academic units. Basic sciences within the Medical School should be reconstituted by transfer of faculty and assignment of new faculty lines. Creation of a Department of Molecular and Clinical Pharmacology is possible using current clinical pharmacologists and new appointments. The Medical School needs a mechanism which coordinates discussion of issues and decision-making among its clinical partners. It is unclear whether some of the clinical departments at affiliated hospitals exist within University regulations and whether reporting relationships to the Medical School have been officially established. Departments should be formally recognized as academic units, and the chairs should report through the respective associate deans to the Dean of Medicine for all academic matters. Two councils, a Partnership Council and a Research Council, would facilitate the administration of the various missions at affiliated locations. Improving timely decision-making by both the University and its community partners will be important to the success of the research enterprise.
The School of Medicine compensates physicians for teaching by providing funds to the clinical services or hospitals employing the physicians, which causes physician allegiance to the clinical entity and not to the medical school. The University is not inclusive of the clinical faculty; they are not part of the University faculty governance or reward system. The School of Medicine should provide funding and benefits for a specified number of faculty members. Since the concept of tenure is more one of title than monetary value, the limited amount of funding provided by the School or endowed chair to each faculty line could serve as the tenure base. A list of faculty benefits should be available to faculty. In order to better define faculty responsibilities, faculty members should be assigned to tracks which establish guidelines for scholarship, excellence, and promotion and tenure. Once faculty lines are established, the School of Medicine becomes the lead institution for research grants and contracts.

The School of Medicine is in a unique position to enhance the scholarship of integration as well as the scholarship of discovery by developing "translational teams." Translational medicine, the concept of taking basic research findings to the patient and measuring the outcomes, is an emerging discipline. The translational team includes basic science investigators, clinical investigators, statisticians, data managers, epidemiologists, and research nurses. Since no university can be successful in every research discipline, the following translational teams are recommended based on current and potential research strengths: (a) Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes; (b) Immunology, Infectious Disease and Tissue Injury; (c) Bioinformatics, Health Outcomes and Personalized Medicine. Two emerging research areas, Women’s Health and Behavioral Sciences may develop into translational teams in the future. Translational teams should have priority for any new programmatic dollars, faculty lines, space or other resources.

Research space is badly needed. In addition to planning for the renovation and assignment of space vacated when Health Sciences I is completed, a new medical research building should be a high priority. Several suggestions for funding a research building are discussed.

The UMKC School of Medicine should be the entity that facilitates life sciences research development and performance among its partners and several support services should be established, including a grants preparation office, a clinical research unit to facilitate access to extramural clinical
research funding, core research facilities, a mentoring system, expanded animal care facilities and a Drug Discovery and Development Unit within the School of Pharmacy. Consolidation of University and affiliated support services should be considered in order to enhance collaboration and reduce costs.

Restructuring the research enterprise will require significant funds from multiple sources. The University also may want to revisit its policy for allocation of salary reimbursement and indirect costs. The concept of the University retaining state funds while allowing the Medical School to retain its earnings (tuition dollars, indirect cost dollars, etc.) should be considered.

Once the new missions of the School of Medicine have been established and appropriate recommendations implemented, a plan should be developed for increasing the visibility of the School of Medicine and its community partners.

In light of changing directions by the School, the following more succinct mission and vision statements were adopted.

**Mission Statement:** “The Mission of the UMKC School of Medicine is to provide and foster excellence, innovation, and scholarship in education, research and medical care.”

**Vision Statement:** “To be a leader in academic health and life sciences through unique and vibrant community partnerships.”