A Case to Support the Renaissance Curriculum

Creating humanistic critical thinkers.

University of Maryland School of Medicine
Now in its third century, the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) has built a global reputation for its tradition of innovation — where exceptional students have received the cutting-edge education and training to become world-renowned clinicians, scientists, and academicians. Now, we are raising the bar again to better prepare our medical students with the skills of critical thought, collaboration, and effective communication essential in today’s complex healthcare environment.

The way students learn is changing.

With the advancement of technology, the way students access and process information has changed dramatically. While lectures remain the cornerstone of delivering information, today’s students prefer multimodal access to information using multiple strategies to optimize their learning. Thus, novel curricular models combine a stronger clinical foundation with modern teaching methods, such as team-based/active learning, to enhance critical and clinical thinking.

We must evolve in the way we teach.

To persist as a leader and innovator in medical education, we must seek a renewal of our curriculum — a renaissance. The ability of UMSOM to improve human health demands that we educate and train lifelong learners who are clinically excellent and who possess a clear sense of humanism, professionalism, scholarship, leadership, critical thinking skills, and attention to social justice and diversity.
Therefore, we are excited to launch our Renaissance Curriculum, which will integrate both traditional and non-traditional teaching methods, as we shift to a systems-based approach to learning.

By renewing our curriculum, we will respond to these changing learning styles — focusing less on standard modalities like lectures, and more on skills that promote clinical thinking in a rapidly changing environment, allowing students to develop superior habits for lifelong learning.

The new curriculum, scheduled to be fully engaged by August 2020, will foster a dynamic, collaborative learning environment with inherent continuous quality improvement.

Be a part of the renaissance.

Your philanthropic partnership is needed now to realize this renaissance. Your gift will be used to engage the most brilliant instructors, to invigorate the culture of education through The Academy for Medical Education, to provide spaces with advanced technology that support team-based learning, and to broaden student wellness and mentorship initiatives.

“We are developing a curriculum that will engage and inspire a new generation of learners and creating an environment more conducive to their well-being while fully maintaining the level of excellence in medical education for which our school is known.”

Donna L. Parker, MD ’86
Associate Professor of Medicine, Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, and Associate Dean for Student Affairs
The Renaissance Curriculum will change the way we teach. It takes a systems-based approach to learning, combining instruction in both the health and disease processes of the body related to major organ systems such as heart, lung, and kidneys.

Students will learn about healthy states of function, along with various diseases when malfunctions occur, while interacting with patients who have these conditions. Students will also enter the clinical portion of medical school earlier — in March of their second year instead of early summer — which is critical in maintaining competitiveness for residency applications and will ultimately result in our graduates continuing to match into top-tier residencies.

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Our new endowment will empower faculty instructors to reach their training aspirations as they embark in this new curriculum. We found this to be an incredible opportunity for us to help propel an innovative continuum of learning now and into the future.”

Carolyn J. Pass, MD ’66 & Richard M. Susel, MD ’66
Established The Carolyn J. Pass, MD ’66 and Richard M. Susel, MD ’66 Leadership Training and Innovation Fund

The new curriculum requires a team of highly qualified instructors to teach these systems-based courses. Through the establishment of a group of Core Educators, we will ensure continuity, equivalent experiences for all students, and effective dissemination of information. With increasing demands on faculty for clinical revenue and research funding, resources are needed for compensation to allow faculty to devote more of their time to educating medical students.

Additionally, funds are needed to support the expansion of the Office of Medical Education to provide more support for students and teaching faculty, effective assessment of the new curriculum and educational standards, and continuous quality improvement.

The Academy for Medical Education

Academies for medical and health sciences education are experiencing an unprecedented growth on academic and non-academic medical campuses. Their common goal is to enhance and improve education within their respective institutions, and to bring innovative educational strategies to teaching faculty. Academies provide a central home for educational function: They enhance and build learning communities, invigorate the culture for education at their institutions, provide faculty development in teaching and learning, foster innovation and education scholarship, and help promote the careers of clinician educators.

The Pass-Susel Academy of Educational Excellence, which provides faculty recognition awards for educational innovation, has been highly effective, and has resulted in significant improvements in the education of our medical students. We propose to expand and enhance the mission and scope of our Academy to include educator development opportunities that stimulate sharing of the work of experienced and successful educators with broader teaching faculty.

The Renaissance Curriculum will require a dramatic increase in both the quantity and quality of educator development, which is essential for an expanded Academy.

The new and enhanced Academy for Medical Education will support younger faculty dedicated to UMSOM’s education mission, serve to improve teaching, and inspire and support scholarship and innovation in education. Importantly, it will contribute to positive change in institutional culture, which will value and recognize teaching and education, and will foster a supportive, interdisciplinary community of educators.
Implementing the new learning methods of the Renaissance Curriculum will require renovations to many of the current teaching spaces. Team-based learning will be incorporated as an educational modality to complement lectures and traditional small groups, depending on the nature of the material. Changes in educational methods require reconfiguration of some of our teaching spaces, different IT needs, and standardized exam products. For example, classrooms must have flexible technology and furniture — wireless screen sharing, removable benches and tables, movable walls to combine smaller rooms into large ones — to encourage student collaboration and team building in classes of all sizes.

The Anatomy Lab also will be redesigned to create team stations that resemble operating rooms with height-adjustable tables and surgical drop lights. The addition of interactive smart boards will enable students to share and save digital notes and anatomical drawings.

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I am impressed by what the School of Medicine is trying to accomplish, not only integrating the traditional pathology with the clinical medicine, but also expanding the teaching and classrooms to give students a more relaxed setting to study and learn. It is just so very innovative — I wish we could have had that opportunity when I was a student!”

Maurice Reid, MD ’99
CEO and Medical Director, ExpressCare
Established The Maurice Reid, M.D. Classroom Fund, which provides support for renovation and maintenance of classrooms that promote team-based learning.
UMSOM is aware of the dangers of student burnout and has been making changes to improve student well-being. As part of the Renaissance Curriculum, UMSOM will be expanding these programs and resources, as well as broadening the school’s wellness curriculum, which includes a new required course in culinary arts and nutrition. With the dedicated and robust implementation of student wellness initiatives, UMSOM aims to reduce levels of burnout during medical school by teaching students to place a premium on self-care.

**MEDICAL STUDENT LIFE AND MENTORSHIP ACTIVITIES**

Mentoring and networking activities are designed to enhance the student life experience and promote advising and mentoring for medical students across all four years of medical school. These activities allow students to develop nurturing professional relationships with faculty members and encourage students to serve as peer advisors and role models. The goals are to assist students with career development through advising, mentoring, peer relationships, and professional connections, and to encourage professionalism, humanism, and personal wellness.

**Philanthropy may help to support mentorship initiatives such as:**

- **House Advisory System** - Students are assigned to one of four houses named for prominent UMSOM alumni. One senior faculty educator serves as Head, along with eight other Core Educators per house. This structure promotes class cohesiveness and vertical mentoring from students in other classes, as well as closer associations with faculty.
- **Mentor Meet & Greet** - An annual social event is held for all first-year and second-year medical students, along with the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of Medical Education, and all House Advisory System Heads and mentors. During a two-hour luncheon cruise on the *Spirit of Baltimore*, each first-year student is paired with a second-year student who will serve as their peer-mentor during medical school. Students are seated based on their House Advisory System assignments, so they can have continued interactions with each other and faculty to help build closer bonds.

**MEDICAL STUDENT WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE INITIATIVES**

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**Philanthropy may help to support wellness initiatives such as:**

- **A Wellness Tracker Journal Program** to improve mind, body, and spirit
- **A Wellness Speaker Series** on topics related to wellness for medical students
- Participation at the National Conference on Medical Student Mental Health and Well-Being
- Meal planning services to provide healthy meal plans and prep guidance for busy schedules
- Weekly student-led yoga sessions
- Pre-exam breakfast snacks and coffee
- A wellness tracking and point system with incentives
Be a part of

THE RENAISSANCE.

No renaissance can succeed without support. You can play a pivotal role in ensuring that UMSOM’s history of innovation in medical education not only continues but advances to meet the complex medical challenges of a new age.

Your gift commitment will strengthen UMSOM’s ability to realize the “Renaissance Physician” by changing the way we teach. By employing progressive curriculum methods, implementing mechanisms for continual instructor training and learning assessment, with an underpinning of support and mentorship programs, the Renaissance Curriculum will effectively prepare our medical students to become self-directed lifelong learners who are leaders in their fields.

Join the renaissance today.

To learn more about giving opportunities, contact the Office of Development:

410-706-8503
ON THE COVER

Creating humanistic critical thinkers. Auguste Rodin’s *The Thinker* depicts a figure of heroic size sitting on a rock with his chin resting on one hand as though deep in thought. Several Renaissance masters are believed to have influenced Rodin’s creation of *The Thinker* including Michelangelo and *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, an early Italian Renaissance poet, whom the figure was believed to portray. Today, this image is a universally recognized symbol of philosophy and learning.