

# NEWS RELEASE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL SCHOOL AT DALLAS



*FRANK CHAPPELL Director of Medical Information*

*JOHN WEEKS Science News Editor*

DALLAS -- The first substantive changes in basic medical curriculum in two decades took effect at The University of Texas (Southwestern) Medical School at Dallas this month when classes began for the 1969-70 academic year.

The revisions involve the structure of first-year coursework, and are designed to bring more flexibility and problem-solving capability to the earliest phase of future physicians' medical study, school spokesmen said. Faculty and student representatives participated in the revision process.

Significant reductions have been made in the number of hours spent by freshmen students in traditional basic science courses, historically the dominant portion of the first two years of medical study.

Time thus gained will be spent by students in elective courses and some independent study and research. Under the new schedule, Saturdays and one weekday afternoon are free of required courses. Previously, all weekdays and Saturday mornings were filled.

--more--

first add curriculum

At the same time, first-year classwork has been rearranged so that each subject is taken in sequence within a concentrated time period, followed immediately by the final examination in that subject. Thus exams are "scattered" throughout the year, ending the difficulty caused by all final tests being lumped together at the end of the year.

Restructuring of the school year also leaves the month of May open for study of elective courses, school officials said. Students are required to schedule enough electives during this period to maintain a full course of study.

The changes have permitted addition of an innovative course to help beginning students relate their early basic study to its future application in the practice of medicine.

In this clinical correlation course, explained Dr. Eugene Frenkel, chairman of a faculty committee on curriculum revision, actual patient problems will be woven into basic science courses.

"This way," he said, "the student sees such courses as biochemistry and anatomy not as just abstract subject matter but as they directly apply to a clinical situation."

The interdepartmental clinical correlation teaching program will occupy one hour per week in students' schedules.

--more--

second add curriculum

Dr. Frenkel emphasized that curriculum changes were being made not merely because "change" is currently in academic vogue, but to replace past rigidity with an increased flexibility that is needed "because the face of medicine has changed in the past 10 years."

With greater flexibility beginning in the first year, he said, "students with special talents and interests and those with special training before they came to medical school can more quickly utilize their talents and training and explore those areas of individual interest."

Although total hours spent in such courses as gross and microscopic anatomy, physiology and biochemistry have been reduced, there has been no weakening in the quality of instruction, Dr. Frenkel pointed out.

Reductions were accomplished by using improved teaching techniques and more contemporary instructional devices such as films, slides and other visual aids, and by substituting in some instances faculty demonstrations for more time-consuming practice procedures such as dissection of cadavers in gross anatomy.

Uniformly better undergraduate training of students currently being accepted for medical school also was a factor enabling the streamlining of the curriculum, he said.

--more--

third add curriculum

Dr. Frenkel placed emphasis on the problem-solving aspects of the changing approach toward medical education.

"We not only teach a core of basic data," he explained, "but more critically we want to teach the techniques of learning and enable physicians to keep current in rapidly changing fields of medicine, so that actually they remain students throughout their active practice."

Dr. Frenkel praised student attitudes and cited their contribution to the improvement of their own education.

"Students help us think clearly. They are very interested in what's relevant, and at times their perspective helps the faculty look critically at our own activities."

Changes instituted this fall were proposed by a faculty committee chaired by Dr. Frenkel and were approved by a unanimous vote of the Faculty Senate.

During its deliberations the curriculum panel held numerous informal meetings with about 30 UTSMS students to incorporate their ideas into the changes, Dr. Frenkel said. A liaison committee made up of three student representatives from each of the four classes will work with faculty committeemen in planning of future course revisions.

--more--

fourth add curriculum

Other members of the faculty committee are Dr. J. Richard Crout, Dr. Paul C. MacDonald, Dr. John M. Johnston, Dr. John C. Porter, Dr. Robert N. McClelland, Dr. John D. Nelson and Dr. Leonard Madison. Ad hoc members were Dr. Andres Goth, chairman of a committee which drew guidelines for the medical school's future, and Dr. Gladys Fashena, chairman of an ongoing curriculum study committee.

Teaching hours devoted to Gross Anatomy were reduced from 305 to 200 in the revised curriculum. Other reductions were: Microscopic Anatomy, from 200 to 130; Neuroanatomy, from 125 to 120; Biochemistry, from 220 to 192; and Physiology, from 310 to 285.

Hours in teaching psychiatry were increased, from 48 to 54. Other additions include Clinical Correlation, 31 hours, and cell biology, 24 hours.

Biophysics was deleted as a separate subject and incorporated into other disciplines.

Elective courses open to students during the "free month" of May include Embryology, Evaluation of Data, Genetics, Biochemistry of Special Organs, Mechanism of Enzyme Action, Psychiatry Elective, Neuroanatomy and Physiology, special problems; Research Elective.

SEPTEMBER 22, 1969