The University of Western Australia
SCHOOL OF PATHOLOGY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TEACHING COMMITTEE OF THE
SCHOOL OF PATHOLOGY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE AND PATHWEST
HELD IN THE TEN SELDMAN SEMINAR ROOM 1.6, FIRST FLOOR, M BLOCK, QEII
MEDICAL CENTRE ON THURSDAY, 9 APRIL 2009

PRESENT
Clinical Professor Martyn French (Chair), Dr Jill Finlayson, Professor Jennet
Harvey, Clinical Associate Professor Richard Herrmann, Dr Cyril Mamotte
(Representative, Curtin University), Dr Patricia Martinez, Dr Liam O’Connor,
Associate Professor Patricia Price, Professor David Ravine, Clinical Professor
Greg Sterrett, Clinical Associate Professor Sam Vasikaran, Professor Paul
Waring.

Ms Cora D’Souza (Minutes)

APOLOGIES
Professor Jeff Hamdorf, Professor Don Robertson, Professor Frank
van Bockxmeer

DECLARATIONS OF POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT OR PERCEIVED CONFLICTS OF
INTEREST
The Chair invited members to declare potential for conflict or perceived conflicts of interest with
regard to items on the agenda. None were declared.

1 MINUTES
The minutes of the meeting of the Teaching Committee held on 12 March were confirmed.

2 BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Update on Improving Current Third and Fourth Years of MBBS Course

- The Chair introduced Dr Liam O’Connor to the Teaching Committee in his
  new role as a member of the staff of the School of Pathology and Laboratory
  Medicine. Dr O’Connor will assist with the development of case-based
  teaching methods for Third and Fourth Year programmes. In particular, he
  will establish a model for case-based teaching in each of the disciplines.
  Professor Harvey and Dr O’Connor will be meeting to discuss the way
  forward in this process.

  Action Professor Harvey
  Dr O’Connor

- Professor Harvey advised that there were continued problems with tutors not
  attending to present Third Year bottle tutorials in spite of reminders being
  provided prior to sessions. The absence of tutors resulted in negative
  feedback in SPOT evaluations. During discussion, Ms D’Souza suggested
  that it would be useful for Departmental Heads (Anatomical Pathology,
  Clinical Immunology and Haematology) at the various hospitals, to emphasise
  the importance for trainee staff to fulfill their obligations to present bottle
  tutorials. It was agreed that the Chair and the Head of School would follow
  up on this issue with Departmental Heads.

  Action Clinical Professor French
  Professor Waring
2.2 Update on Improving Pathology Teaching in Fifth and Sixth Years of MBBS Course

Clinical Associate Professor Vasikaran advised that proposed improvements for Fifth and Sixth Years consisted of providing students with an opportunity for exposure to the laboratory environment. This will include their involvement in the entire diagnostic process.

Exposure to laboratory practice could be integrated into the clinical attachment programme. In discussing this proposal with laboratory staff, it had become clear that a well co-ordinated system will need to be devised. It will also require a half-day orientation session on laboratory practice in Fourth Year. Currently, lectures in basic laboratory practice are presented in the Third Year. Obtaining additional time for this discipline in the Third and Fourth Years will be very difficult; in the latter, students are based at various hospital sites. It was suggested that this orientation session be included in the introduction to clinical methods programme undertaken by Fourth Year students at the commencement of the year.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Chair will approach the co-ordinator of the programme on clinical methods regarding the possibility of including such an orientation session within the programme. It was also agreed that Professor French and Associate Professor Vasikaran will subsequently prepare a proposal concerning the inclusion of a laboratory practice component in the Fifth and Sixth Years for transmission by the Head of School to the Dean of the Faculty.

**Action** Clinical Professor French
Clinical Associate Professor Vasikaran

2.3 Proposed Changes to the Third Year of the BSc Degree

In the absence of Associate Professor van Bockxmeer, this item was held over until the next meeting.

The Chair undertook to meet with Professor van Bockxmeer and Dr Richard Allcock to ensure that the issue is progressed.

**Action** Clinical Professor French

2.5 Proposed Changes to the MLM Degree

During discussion, the following points were made:

- Currently there is no reward for those undertaking the MLM; course fees also present a deterrent. As it is envisaged that PathWest will be undertaking the major proportion of the teaching in its laboratories rather than the University, it will be useful to explore options for reducing or waiving of fees. Professor Waring advised that he will be meeting with Mr Robert McCormack of the University’s Planning Services, concerning the issue of fees and will also be holding discussions with the PathWest Executive concerning the possibility of obtaining its support in the form of scholarships.

- Dr Mamotte noted that the Masters by coursework offered by Curtin University is accredited by the Australian Institution for Medical Scientists and that, in general, accredited courses are popular with overseas students.

- It was suggested that the MLM be restructured to allow for the major part of the two years to be devoted to obtaining laboratory experience in the discipline of choice with some of the time allocated to training in other areas.

- Professor Ravine was asked to investigate the potential of the MLM in relation to the Genetics discipline.

**Action** Professor Waring
Clinical Associate Professor Herrmann
Professor Ravine
UPDATE FROM DISCIPLINE GROUPS

3.1 Update on Formation of Discipline Teaching Groups and their Activities (including MBBS, BSc and MLM)

- **Genetics**
  Professor Ravine reported that areas of on-going discussion include the establishment of microarray and bioinformatics facilities.

Professor Ravine was requested to raise the issue of the teaching of Genetics with members of the discipline.

**Action** Professor Ravine

- **Clinical Biochemistry**
  Clinical Associate Professor Vasikaran noted that members of the discipline are working towards the development of case-based teaching methods.

- **Anatomical Pathology**
  Clinical Professor Sterrett reported that the case-based modules developed for Fourth Year by Professor Harvey and Dr Bastiaan de Boer are working successfully. He asked whether the time allocated to these modules could be used for tracking cases through the laboratory process.

- **Clinical Immunology**
  Dr Martinez reported that Clinical Immunology had been allocated a three-hour session in the Campus Week currently underway for Fourth Year students. Eleven tutors will be involved in presenting this session at various venues at QEIIIMC. At Dr O’Connor’s request, Dr Martinez undertook to provide him with details of this session.

Dr Martinez advised that the Faculty’s Education Centre had provided considerable administrative support in the procurement of venues and in rotating students through the venues. The Chair noted that adequate administrative support will need to be provided for new teaching initiatives.

**Action** Dr Martinez

- **Haematology**
  Dr Finlayson reported that the Haematology Teaching Group will meet in May.

Information has been obtained regarding Haematology teaching in the First and Second Years of the medical course. The Teaching Group will review the current lectures given in Third Year in the context of this information.

Dr Finlayson noted the possibility of using the Aperio system for virtual microscopy as a tool for case-based teaching. The RCPA EQA team is offering a slide scanning service, but as yet, costing is not available. Free software is available allowing annotation of the images which is a useful teaching tool. An Aperio system is available locally but there is uncertainty regarding the level of magnification/resolution available. Professor Waring agreed to investigate this further. As this facility will be useful for PathWest, it is possible that an agreement might be reached between PathWest and UWA regarding this type of facility.

**Action** Professor Waring

- **Clinical Microbiology**
  Dr O’Connor noted that there was nothing to report for Clinical Microbiology.
4 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

4.1 Discussion regarding Existing MSc Degree and Possible Master of Molecular Medicine Degree (in conjunction with FLaPS)

Professor Waring reported that Professor Geoff Stewart, Head of the School of Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences, is keen to develop this proposal. He will be meeting with Professor Stewart for further discussions.

**Action** Professor Waring

4.2 Professor Waring reported that he had met with Associate Professor Sandra Carr, Deputy Director of the Faculty’s Education Centre. Professor Carr is involved in the support of teaching developments. It was suggested that an invitation be extended to Professor Carr to meet with the discipline teaching representatives following the next meeting of the Committee.

**Action** Professor Waring

4.3 Professor Harvey advised that the Faculty Education Centre is seeking clinically qualified staff to participate in a mentoring programme for medical students. Those interested in taking on this role are asked to contact her.

5 **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on 14 May 2009 at 8.00am in the ten Seldam Seminar Room 1.6, First Floor, M Block, QEIIIMC.

The meeting closed at 9.05 am.