



Perspective/Opinion

Creating Partnership in Reimagining the Curriculum using

Human-Centered Design

by Chris Decker, MD; Julia Schmitt; and Karen Marcdante, MD, on behalf of all members of the MCW Kern Institute Human-Centered Design Lab

Reimagining a medical school curriculum hinges on many critical factors if it is to be successful. While most agree that it's time for a change, what that means varies from person to person. By understanding the perspectives of all the different groups of people affected by the change – what they value and why – a curriculum that everyone will embrace is possible.

When reimagining a medical curriculum, there are many different groups of people who need to be involved in order to make it successful:

- The curriculum content experts who understand the principles, timing and structure of the curriculum.
- The educational experts (in medicine *and* in higher education) who can help us incorporate today's best practices in developing and mentoring medical students to become the best future physicians they can be and provide outstanding patient care and caring.
- The faculty and staff that teach and administer the curriculum who are experts at the culture, experiences, organizational needs and structures and will help us overcome challenges.
- Last, but not least, the students who must be consulted about expectations, experiences, needs and hopes as recipients of the curriculum.

We are fortunate that we have enthusiastic partners in all of these groups who can bring their “stakeholder” voices into the design of the curriculum. This is a required first step that can ensure the success of a curriculum reimagining project.

The Kern Institute Human-Centered Design (HCD) Lab

The Kern Institute’s HCD Lab uses a blended methodology, drawing from the National Science Foundation’s I-Corps program, Stanford University’s Hasso Plattner Institute of Design (the “d.school”) methodology, and the KEEN Entrepreneurial Engineering Network’s mindset framework.



During this first phase of the re-imagining journey, the Kern HCD Lab is partnering with the MCW Curriculum Re-Imagining Steering Committee to capture the voices of stakeholders throughout MCW. We will be using empathy and curiosity to understand each stakeholder group and learn what is most important to them – in other words, what they value. This will help the MCW Curriculum Re-Imagining Steering Committee deeply understand what the MCW community wants and needs as they create the proposed curricular changes. As the process moves forward, the HCD will be honored to help sustain the focus on empathy and curiosity as we capture the voices of students, faculty and staff to create solutions.

Learn More and Share your Thoughts about the Proposed MCW Curriculum

Dr. Bill Hueston, MCW's Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education and Associate Provost for Education, shared the Curriculum Reimaging Steering Committee's framework for the new curriculum last week at a Kern Institute Connection Café Presentation. If you missed the presentation, you can watch a recording of it here: [Medical School Curriculum Innovations: Impact on MCW's Curriculum Plans](#).

Our Human-Centered Design Lab will be facilitating Design Sprints in April to introduce the draft plans and synthesize feedback for the Curriculum Reimagining Steering Committee. Please sign up to join us on the morning of April 8 or the early evening of April 19 by [completing this survey](#). We hope that all will bring their voice so we can truly apply a human-centered design lens to make this a meaningful and valuable curriculum for our students, our faculty and our staff here at MCW.

For Further Reading:

[Applying Design Thinking to Curriculum Reform](#)

Academic Medicine, April 17, 2017

M. Chris Decker, MD, is a member of the Kern Institute's Human-Centered Design Lab at the Medical College of Wisconsin, where he co-leads the Kern Institute's Design Sprint Program and the Transformational Ideas Initiative seed grant program. He is Chief Transformation Officer of Medical College Physicians, and a Professor of Emergency Medicine.

Julia Schmitt is Program Manager of the Kern Institute's Human-Centered Design Lab at the Medical College of Wisconsin. A former K-12 educator, she

co-leads the Kern Institute's Design Sprint Program and the Transformational Ideas Initiative seed grant program.

Karen Marcdante, MD, is an experienced medical educator and Director of the Human-Centered Design Lab for the Kern Institute for the Transformation of Medical Education.