



Take 3

Report on a Human-Centered Design Sprint for the MCW Curriculum Re-imagined

by Wendy Peliter, MD, and Lauren Stippich, M2

[The Kern Institute's Human-Centered Design Lab](#) facilitated a virtual design sprint last week with 77 participants, representing students, faculty, residents and staff from across our MCW community. Amy Prunuske, PhD, and Travis Webb, MD, provided a [high-level overview](#) of the key principles of the proposed curriculum, which involves development of learning communities and implementation of longitudinal, case-based and experiential teaching formats for foundational knowledge. The design sprint, led by Karen Marcdante, MD, Chris Decker, MD, and Julia Schmitt, provided an opportunity for participants to work in small groups to provide in-depth feedback on the curriculum proposal. This format ensured that every participant's feedback was recorded, and all the information has been qualitatively organized for the Curriculum Steering Committee's use.



The curriculum proposal would involve a major shift from our current, '2 by 2' structure of separating basic science course work from clinical rotations. A potential timeline for approval, and detailed summary of background work over

the last two years leading up to this proposal was provided. Drs. Webb and Pronuske shared, *‘The goal of our curriculum is to produce competent well-rounded physicians who will be excellent clinicians in any specialty and are prepared to practice in the future health care environment’*.

They acknowledged the contributions of many in developing this proposal, including Bill Hueston, MD, Jeff Amundson, PhD, and Jennifer Hinrichs.

1) What surprised you most about the session?

Lauren: I was shocked by the high emotion from many of the participants! As students, we only see the ‘end product’ when a curriculum has been implemented, and I did not appreciate all the pre-work and planning that stands behind our course offerings. It was eye-opening to hear the various worries and hesitations of key faculty for embarking on such a major change in teaching formats. Frankly, it worried me that some of the comments seemed to go a bit too far during the meeting, and without recognition for the immense amount of work that went into this workshop and the proposal itself. This was my first time being part of such a broad group, and I quickly saw how important it will be to have buy-in from all our stakeholders to implement this change.

Wendy: I must say, I anticipated the high emotions, having been at MCW during the transition to the Discovery Curriculum, and from my experience with change management. Hearing the plans for the first time in considerable detail, I was surprised and excited about the spirit behind bringing this new, student-centered approach to adult learning that is explicitly tied to promoting inquiry and innovation in our learners.

2) Did you feel your voice was heard?

Lauren: The small group process really created an authentic, ‘safe space’, to both talk and listen, and we had enough time to review things in detail. There was a basic science faculty in my group, and I developed an understanding for concerns that previously I did not appreciate even existed. Some participants complained that the breakouts were too small with only three members each,

stating they wanted to hear more opinions, but I understood the rationale behind this. It is so important to hear all perspectives, and smaller sized groups help to ensure the collected conversations are representative of everyone, not just the most vocal members of a group. This seems even more important in the virtual setting. Being part of the workshop planning group, I also saw how the detailed feedback would be gathered, allowing the program leaders to have a full appreciation of all concerns.

Wendy: My experience echoed Lauren's. The more 'intimate' breakout sessions created opportunity for in-depth discussion of the guided questions. It was important to hear both the excitement for a new structure, but also concern and worry over the 'heavy lift' involved in implementing such a major change. A strong theme that came through was need for culture change and to explicitly identify ways to honor educators in our community with protected time and recognition for teaching AND administrative efforts.

3) As we reimagine the MCW curriculum, what do you see as important measures of success?

Lauren: The new curriculum really excites me, particularly in the thoughtful and deliberate structures that promote student connection and support, as well as the spiral or 'catch-up' weeks, where students can take a breath, or refine and review important topics. As a second-year student, I can reflect on what a huge transition it was to enter medical school, and how the 4C Coaching program provided amazing support during this challenging time. I consider my participation in this program the most impactful activity of my M1 year—and I can see how the learning communities and small group activities will help that shine through in the new curriculum. I would hope that students being more connected, and the environment continuing to be collaborative rather than competitive, despite our large class size, could be key outcomes. After participating in this workshop, I would also hope that all the faculty who contribute to teaching will feel supported, prepared and confident in launching the new changes.

Wendy: My hope for success would first be a true, institution-wide, commitment to change with resources to manage the transition. Success will be

tied to students and faculty learning together, and for many of us, stepping outside our comfort zone. The evidence behind the need for change, which is robust, indicates that this will be a much needed and important investment in preparing our graduates for future practice. This year has certainly been one that highlights the challenges to our profession and current health delivery systems. To me, training physicians who are prepared to speak up when needed, to care for themselves, and to seek innovation in their daily work, is something to promote and support.

To learn more about the MCW Curriculum Re-imagined and Human-Centered Design:

1. [Discovery Curriculum Exploration Project](#)
2. [Human-Centered Design Lab](#)

Lauren Stippich is a Wisconsin native currently in her second year of medical school with interest in medical education and the Humanities. Lauren is a student member of the Human-Centered Design Lab and this was her 'first dive' into a curriculum re-design process. In her free time, Lauren enjoys reading books, time together with friends and a good game of spike-ball.

Wendy Peltier, MD, is an Associate Professor of Neurology and Medicine in the Division of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine at MCW. She is also a member of the Faculty Pillar of the Robert D. and Patricia E. Kern Institute for the Transformation of Medical Education. In her free time, she enjoys yoga, reading books and home-cooked meals by her husband and son.

