Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University
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Medical Education Programs and Highlights
The mission of the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) as a community-based medical school is to advance the health and well-being of our community by training future generations of humanistic clinicians and scientists and translating discovery to patient-centered care.

Highlights:
- The launch of FAU’s new medical school in 2011 provided the opportunity to reimagine medical education with innovative practices in a community-based model.
- Small class size of 64 students provides a close-knit and collegial learning environment.
- Adaptive and responsive classrooms support a technology-infused curriculum and encourage collaboration and teamwork.
- Early longitudinal exposure to patients, health care systems, and the community as students begin working 1:1 with community-based physicians in their first year.
- Over 1,000 affiliate physicians in a wide variety of clinical practice settings in South Florida.
- Highly successful residency matches for our first 5 graduating classes.
- The recent launch of 5 consortium-based residency programs and 4 fellowships.

Unique features:
- The integrated patient-centered curriculum features a developmental approach to problem-based learning (PBL) that promotes clinical reasoning, problem solving, teamwork, and self-directed learning. Student autonomy is promoted by reducing the full-time presence of faculty facilitators. Students progress from PBL, to inquiry (IQ) cases, to self-led inquiry (SLIQ) cases, to diagnosis and reasoning (DR) rounds across the first 3 years of the curriculum.
- Our Healthcare Careers Outreach Program (HCOP) works toward increasing diversity in the health care workforce.
- FAU medical students, residents, fellows, faculty, and staff lead immersive hands-on educational activities with local K–12 public school students. Over 2,000 students have been involved in HCOP, and graduates of the program pursuing higher education in the health care field have collectively received over half a million dollars in need- and merit-based scholarships.
- Research in the college is focused on 4 major areas: healthy aging and geriatrics, neuroscience (including dementia prevention), chronic pain management and opioid use disorder, and genomics and precision medicine.

Curriculum description
- The preclerkship curriculum includes these courses:
  Fundamentals of Biomedical Science; Neuroscience and Behavior; Pathophysiology and Therapeutics (PT 1–4); PT1, Hematology, GI and Nutrition; PT2, Cardiovascular and Respiratory; PT, Renal, Endocrine, and Reproduction; PT4, Immunologic and Infectious Disease; and Foundations of Medicine (FOM) 1–4.
- Clerkship curriculum: two 22-week sequential blended longitudinal integrated clerkships (LICs). The Medical and Surgical Sciences LIC integrates the core clerkships of medicine and surgery and includes experiences in geriatrics, radiology, emergency medicine, and other related subspecialties; the Family and Community Health Sciences LIC integrates the core clerkships of pediatrics, obstetrics–gynecology, and psychiatry, and includes experiences in related specialties. Students spend 1 half-day per week paired one-on-one with a community-based primary care physician in a 44-week integrated Community and Preventive Medicine clerkship.
- Postclerkship curriculum: Requires all students to complete at least 1 acting internship, 3 selectives, and 3 electives as well as a Transition to Residency course.


Curriculum changes since 2010
- Overall curricular structure, sequence, and class size has remained unchanged since 2011.
- We are planning a curricular renewal for academic year 2021–2022 that would transition from a 2 + 2 model to a 3-phase model (preclerkship, clerkship, postclerkship).

Assessment
- The development of a comprehensive competency-based grading system across all 4 years of the curriculum allows each course and clerkship to assess designated PCRS competencies.
- A new grade designation, Satisfactory with Concern (SWC), was approved to help identify students early who are meeting the minimum expectations for a passing competency grade but...
A longitudinal pediatric preceptor program was launched in 2017 that allows select students with a strong interest in pediatrics to work with a community-based pediatric preceptor for their entire third year.

In the third year, students rotate through two 6-month Clinical experiences.

A hallmark of our model is the developmental progression over the first 2 years from traditional, small-group case-based learning in PBL groups, to IQ case groups, and finally to SLIQ cases, which uses half the number of faculty because 1 facilitator covers 2 groups and is only present for 50% of the case discussions. The SLIQ facilitator’s role is primarily limited to providing feedback on group process.

Parallel curriculum or tracks

- Students may apply into an MD–MBA and MD–MHA with FAU’s College of Business or into an MD–PHD program with the Scripps Research Institute in Jupiter, Florida.
- As GME programs mature, we may develop competency-based education programs that would allow students to move directly from UME to GME within certain specialties.

Pedagogy

- Substantial time spent in small-group, case-based sessions such as PBL, team-based learning, labs, workshops, and small-group clinical skills sessions with standardized patients and high-fidelity simulation manikins.
- Students spend at least 10 hours a week in small groups and are provided with a minimum of 2–3 afternoons per week of independent study to prepare for these sessions.
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Clinical experiences

- Training at affiliated clinical sites within the first 6 months of the curriculum in weekly hands-on patient care experiences with community-based physician practices, local clinics for the underserved, and in our Clinical Skills Simulation Center.
- In the third year, students rotate through two 6-month blended LICs and a yearlong community-based preventive medicine preceptorship including exposures in a rural health setting, skilled nursing facilities, hospice, an interprofessional experience in a memory and wellness center, and a simulation workshop focused on the care of LGBTQ+ patients.
- A longitudinal pediatric preceptor program was launched in 2017 that allows select students with a strong interest in pediatrics to work with a community-based pediatric preceptor for their entire third year.

- As a community-based medical school, we depend on our partner hospitals and more than 1,000 practicing physicians. Like most medical schools, we are in a constant state of recruitment for community-based primary care physicians to serve as preceptors.
- FAU’s partner hospital CMOs serve as associate deans for academic affairs and help identify community faculty to teach in specific sites or disciplines as they credential new physicians to their hospital staff.

• The assistant dean for medical education/accreditation is responsible for CQI and ensuring UME compliance with LCME standards.
• The assistant dean for medical education/curriculum is responsible for curricular management of UME, OME staff leaders, and course-/year-specific support.
• The first- and second-year basic science curriculum director oversees the foundational science curriculum and supervises all the course directors during the preclerkship phase of the curriculum.
• The first- and second-year clinical science curriculum director oversees the FOM curriculum, the annual institutional competency assessments, and supervises the course directors for the following components of the 4 FOM courses: clinical learning groups, clinical experiences, science of clinical practice, clinical skills/simulation, and IPE/service learning.

• The third-year director oversees the year 3 LIC curriculum and supervises the clerkship and cross-discipline directors in surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics–gynecology, psychiatry, medicine, geriatrics/palliative care, critical care/anesthesia, emergency medicine, and community and preventive medicine.
• The fourth-year directors oversee the year 4 curriculum including acting internships, electives, selects, the Transition to Residency course, and the Visiting Student Program.
• The director of program evaluation and assessment designs, implements, and monitors program outcomes, oversees the Data Repository for Medical Education Research, and is supported by 2 full-time evaluation coordinators.
• The director and associate director of the OME oversee the course/year-specific support staff for the UME curriculum.

Figure 1 Organizational chart.
• Education technology coordinators oversee the curricular/technology initiatives, platforms, and resources that support education and provide ongoing faculty development. See Figure 1—Organizational chart.

Faculty Development and Support in Education

• All faculty have opportunities for professional development to enhance skills in teaching, assessment/evaluation, curriculum development, and research/scholarship and are provided resources for career planning, promotion, and tenure.
• The Office of Faculty Affairs provides live and online faculty development and CME offerings, as well as academic enrichment funds to support attendance at professional development conferences.
• Educational Technology holds regular sessions to promote active learning, interactive assessment, and infusing technology thoughtfully into the classroom.
• A peer evaluation of teaching program provides feedback from experienced educators on large- or small-group teaching.
• A wide variety of lecture series are offered on campus, as well as grand rounds at the hospitals.
• All core faculty receive funding annually from their department for attendance at professional meetings, professional membership fees, CME, and resources as needed.
• FAU’s Division of Research and the College of Medicine's departments provide support and mentoring for faculty engaging in research and scholarship.
• A Medical Education Scholarship Workgroup meets regularly to improve skills and provide opportunities for educators to engage in educational research activities.

• The FAU College of Medicine plans to launch its Teaching Academy in 2020 to support educators and educational scholarship. It will serve the medical school community by providing enhanced access to professional development, skill-building resources, and opportunities for collaboration and advancement.

Initiatives in Progress

The following initiatives are planned to enhance the strength and success of the medical education program in the coming years:

• The medical college is deeply committed to diversity and inclusion; a Diversity Action Plan is launching in 2020 as part of the school's refresh of its 2017 Strategic Plan.
• Significant efforts to raise more scholarship funds through a large-scale university fundraising campaign to support recruiting a diverse and exceptional student body.
• Continued expansion of our HealthFirst health and wellness program that will focus on student, resident, faculty, and staff well-being and vitality.
• Ongoing investment in community partnerships with affiliate hospitals and community organizations as these valuable, synergistic relationships are critical to support our mission.
• Lastly, plans to proceed with a curriculum renewal that will aim to build on our strengths while incorporating innovative curricular and pedagogical components and fully embracing a 3-phase curricular structure.

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