Medical Education Program Highlights

The David Geffen School of Medicine seeks to "create world leaders in health and science." The mission of the medical education program of the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is to prepare graduates for distinguished careers in clinical practice, teaching, research, and public service. Recognizing that medical school is but one phase in a physician's education, the faculty has worked to create an environment where students prepare for a future in which scientific knowledge, societal values, and human needs are ever changing. To meet this challenge, our graduates have the skills to provide quality care for their patients, to contribute to the growth of scientific knowledge, and to continue learning throughout their careers. They are involved in service to the community and demonstrate a firm commitment to the humanistic, ethical, legal, and cultural aspects of medicine. We believe that a diverse student body is an integral part of medical education and is essential to the development of patient-centered care.

Our medical education program has several distinct tracks. In addition to our traditional MD program, we also have an MSTP program with 2 subtracks, 1 at UCLA and 1 in collaboration with Caltech. In addition, we have a long, over 40-year collaboration with Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, for students training for the MD degree with special interest in care of the urban underserved. Finally, we have the PRIME-LA program, a 5-year dual-degree program for students training as physician–leaders in addressing health care disparities preventable populations.

Another unique feature of our program has been an increasing emphasis on encouraging students to pursue passions related to our mission and complementary to their pursuit of a career in medicine. This includes actively encouraging students to pursue master’s degree, an additional year for research, or other enrichment activities in pursuit of them becoming "an outstanding physician and...."

The Colleges is a program for fourth-year students that provides academic advising, career mentoring, and advanced clinical skill development. The Colleges program provides a venue for structured learning activities that complement electives taken during the fourth year.

Finally, we have a very active student body with over 100 student organizations, interest groups, and affinity groups, many with a high level of commitment to the community and social justice issues. This translates into a variety of campus activities, such as sponsoring meetings both regionally and nationally, as well as engagement across the campus with medical students and other health professions programs. A recent development has been the creation of the Health Equity Forum, a group of students from across the health professions who meet and plan activities in solidarity around addressing health equity and social justice issues. We also have a very active clinical outreach program, including the student-run homeless clinic, a mobile clinic program, and a variety of health fairs and other clinical outreach activities.

Curriculum

Curriculum description


Curriculum changes since 2010

We are actively involved in curriculum redesign, which will launch in full in August 2021. Among the key features will be early authentic clinical experiences, required clerkships in the second year, and a third year of discovery, in which students will have the opportunity to pursue research, additional degrees, or other enrichment activities.

Assessment

Our medical school competencies and objectives are comprehensive and organized into the ACGME domains of competence. Details are available from our website: https://medschool.ucla.edu/current-graduation-competencies.

We use a variety of assessment methods, including regular weekly formative assessments, performance-based assessments, and traditional knowledge assessments. For many years, we have conducted a multistation clinical performance exam, in collaboration with other schools in California. We have recently modified the standard setting methodology, migrating to a criterion-based standard setting method, using the Angoff approach.

Pedagogy

At our institution, we use a variety of pedagogic methods. We have only a relatively modest amount of traditional lecture and have for many years used problem-based learning as a major instructional approach. In recent years, we have introduced
newer methods of case-based learning, including team-based learning and flipped classroom approaches.

Clinical experiences
We have clinical experiences at our university teaching hospital, a VA hospital, 2 county safety net hospitals, a private hospital, and a Kaiser Permanente facility. This provides a wonderful and diverse set of clinical experiences, with diverse patient populations, and also provides learners with experiences of very different health care delivery systems.

Our learners begin a preceptorship in the second half of the first year, which continues through the second year. They begin their required clinical rotations in the third year.

Students complete their clinical preceptorships, core clerkships, continuity clerkships, and clinical electives at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center and affiliated sites, including 2 county hospitals, the Greater Los Angeles VA System of Clinics, an HMO, a private tertiary care medical center, a charity hospital, and dozens of public and private ambulatory clinics associated with these medical centers or based in the community.

Curricular Governance
We have a curriculum committee that oversees all aspects of the MD program, the Medical Education Committee. That committee has 4 subcommittees, 1 for our basic science curriculum (human biology and disease), 1 for clerkship the curriculum, 1 for our fourth-year program, and 1 for curriculum CQI.

The vice dean for education oversees all aspects of UME, GME, CME, and graduate and postdoctoral education. This individual is supported by associate deans for curricular affairs, student affairs, admissions, medical student research and scholarship, GME, graduate bioscience education (senior associate dean), and CME (assistant dean). In addition, the following offices support the entire educational affairs enterprise: faculty development, educational measurement unit, simulation center, education technology service, and alumni affairs.

Faculty Development and Support in Education
In the faculty development realm, we have a longstanding medical education fellowship, which recently has evolved to 2 specific tracks. First is a 1-year program for early-career clinician-educators, which focuses on helping them to become scholarly teachers. In the program, the participants work on an education innovation through the lens of education theory, such as developing high-quality learning objectives and more. The second half of this program is a series of 7 seminars that originated in the internationally acclaimed Stanford Faculty Development Program for Clinical Teachers. Through these seminars, these first-year fellows develop high increase capacity as highly effective teachers. The second-year fellowship is for a select group of faculty seeking to become teaching scholars, and as a research training program done in collaboration with the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. Fellows in this program engage in research methods seminars and develop a publication-ready research project over the course of this year and beyond.