

## **Clinical Laboratory Science 2005 Program Changes**

In the fall of 2005 the CLS program made several changes to the curriculum. Perhaps the most significant involved splitting HSC 260: Introduction to the Medical Laboratory – Immunohematology & Serology into two separate courses. Beginning in the fall semester of 2005, the coursework will now be HSC 260: Introduction to Clinical Immunohematology which is a 2 credit hour lecture with a 1 credit hour laboratory and HSC 263: Introduction to Clinical Immunology; which is also a two credit hour lecture with 1 credit hour laboratory. The decision to make these changes was based on the results of the national certification exam. The two individual courses allow for a more comprehensive view of the content in each area. With separate courses in place, the students will be better prepared for both their professional practice experience and the certification exams.

In addition, HSC 316: Special Topics was redesigned and renamed HSC 316: Research Design in Clinical Laboratory Science. This decision was based on a recommendation by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science (NAACLS) accreditation site visit team. Previously research design had been infused in several existing courses, but the site visitors felt a specific course on research design was a better fit with the expectations of the accrediting agency.

The CLS program modified its professional practice placement process for the 2004-05 year. The changes were based on the recommendations that were made at the annual clinical affiliates meeting. The clinical affiliates decided that moving the placement process from late in the fall semester to early in the spring semester of the following academic year would be a better for their schedules and it would avoid the busy holiday season. They also requested that the CLS faculty implement a selection system that would reduce the number of applications sent to each site. The suggestion was that 2 or 3 student applications be sent for each student opening. Subsequent review in April 2005 indicated the clinical affiliates were pleased with the outcome and felt the scheduling change was advantageous for them.

Another suggestion from the clinical affiliates impacted some of the pre professional practice or junior level courses. It was suggested that more group activities be implemented into the laboratory sessions. Many of these changes were implemented in the fall of 2004. The rationale for this change was that the CLS new graduates were expected to work as part of a team in the work place, and by incorporating these activities into the laboratory classroom, the pre professional practice student would be at least minimally prepared for this real life situation before they entered their professional practice experience.

Senior evaluations indicated that returning to campus for the second semester of senior level course work after having been away from campus for professional

practice was a barrier. In response to this, the faculty developed and transitioned the second semester senior level courses to a distance learning format for the first time in the spring of 2005. The courses were offered via WebCT with the majority being self paced. In addition to reformatting the second semester senior coursework to distance education, certain components of the junior level course work were transitioned to WebCT to better prepare the junior students for their future as distance learners.

Student evaluations indicated one of the course requirements in HSC 260 involving the development of a PowerPoint presentation was a negative experience. This requirement has since been eliminated and a unit on differential diagnosis will be implemented beginning in the fall semester of 2005.

The CLS program currently subscribes to MediaLab, which is a unique online learning system consisting of fully-integrated online courseware specifically designed for the clinical laboratory and for clinical laboratory science education programs. The CLS students use MediaLab at various times throughout the curriculum both in the junior and senior experience to enhance their educational experience. They can also use this as a resource in preparing for the national certification exams. This service allows students to review and take practice exams anywhere they have internet access. The faculty continuously monitors the student participation rate and the subsequent certification exam scores.

In the spring of 2005, a national certification agency offered a practice certification exam similar to the exam students take once they have graduated from the CLS program. The exam was given on-line and covered the same content areas as the official certification exam. Any senior was eligible to take this practice exam and those who participated were given feedback on their performance. This experience allowed the seniors to identify subject areas that they may want to concentrate on before they take the official exam after graduation.

New content was added HSC 308: Introduction to Clinical Microbiology, to better reflect current trends in clinical microbiology. A discussion of current events has been added to the epidemiology portion of the course, as was a module on bioterrorism in an effort to give the CLS students the most up-to-date information regarding infectious diseases and bioterrorism.