Editorial Comment

The ASC Cytopathology Program Directors Committee (CPDC) would like to take this opportunity to welcome our membership back to the Program Directors (PD) Communicator again. In this issue, we discuss the implantation of the Cytopathology Milestones and the new Clinical Competency Committee Guidebook. We ask for your help planning the Strategies in Cytopathology Education (SCE) session provided by our committee at the ASC 63rd Annual Scientific Meeting this November. We provide the results of 2015 Cytopathology Fellowship Match Survey conducted by the Fellowship Directors Ad Hoc Committee (FDAHC) of the Association of Pathology Chairs (APC). There are many useful handouts and links available on the ASC PD Committee web page - some are highlighted here.

Marilyn M Bui, MD, PhD and Leslie G Dodd, MD

Cytopathology Milestones Go Live

A milestone is an “important or significant point in progress or development.” Milestones have become an integral component of the Next Accreditation System (NAS) of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The purpose of implementing a milestone-based evaluation system was multifactorial. The ACGME recognized that the “one size fits all” model of program evaluation was a less than ideal method of providing oversight of the quality of all of graduate medical education. For training programs, teaching faculty and program directors, evaluating trainees by milestones verifies that they acquire specific, defined skills that will ensure their ability to become competent practicing physicians. In addition, milestones offer objective “measures” to monitor training progress and allow for early intervention for individuals who may be struggling with skill and knowledge acquisition. For trainees, having an explicit set of “milestone” based expectations provides transparency to expectations of performance.

ACGME began phasing in the milestones (as part of the NAS) in 2013. Milestones began in July 2014 for Anatomic and Clinical Pathology (AP/CP) programs. Cytopathology is required to use milestones beginning July 2015. For Cytopathology programs there are 18 specific milestones. These cover all of the core competencies and include assessment of a variety of skills including: professionalism, patient safety, medical knowledge, lab management and compliance, and cultural competency. The milestones are divided into 5 levels, and throughout the training interval, fellows are expected to progress. Level 1 is considered the minimum expected level for incoming fellows, although many fellows may be at a higher level based on prior training and experience. Level 4 is the general target for the end of fellowship, although not every fellow is expected to achieve level 4 on every milestone before completion of training. The milestones also include a level 5 that is an aspirational level of achievement for exceptional performance, expected of cytopathologists in practice after several years. The Cytopathology Milestones must be reported for all ACGME-accredited cytopathology fellowships in December 2015. Be sure your program is prepared! The Milestones document is available on the ACGME Web site www.acgme.org and can be reached directly by this link Cytopathology Milestones. The Milestones will be discussed again at the upcoming ASC Annual Scientific Meeting in the Strategies for Cytopathology Education Session on Friday, November 13th.
We need your help in planning the Strategies in Cytopathology Education sessions at the ASC Annual Scientific Meeting in 2015 and beyond. For 2015, we will again focus, in part, on Milestones and Clinical Competency Committees (CCCs). The first ACGME-required Milestone reporting will be in December 2015, and we want this year’s SCE to help answer your last minute questions as you hold your first required CCC meeting and prepare to report your first fellow Milestones. Please let us know what parts of the new process are giving you the most difficulty, as well as what you want to learn more about in the future, through our online survey [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MBC3FCK](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MBC3FCK).

Thank you in advance for your help!

The ACGME released a new resource for Program Directors and Clinical Competency Committee chairs in January 2015 entitled “Clinical Competency Committees: A Guidebook for Programs.” Available for free on the ACGME Web site at [www.acgme.org/acgmeweb/Portals/0/ACGMEClinicalCompetencyCommitteeGuidebook.pdf](http://www.acgme.org/acgmeweb/Portals/0/ACGMEClinicalCompetencyCommitteeGuidebook.pdf), this 54-page guidebook is designed to answer many questions Program Directors and Clinical Competency Committee members may have about the purpose of a Clinical Competency Committee and how it should be structured. It also provides suggestions on how to prepare for and run a CCC meeting, as well as discusses issues surrounding legal considerations that CCC members may encounter. Finally, the last 3 pages review examples of common dilemmas, in an attempt to answer many of the most frequently asked questions about CCCs. In addition to this resource, we will be reviewing issues around Clinical Competency Committees at the next Strategies in Cytopathology Education at the 2015 ASC Annual Scientific Meeting. We hope to see you there!
Results of Fellowship Match Survey

In early 2015, the Fellowship Directors Ad Hoc Committee (FDAHC) of the Association of Pathology Chairs (APC) sent a survey to Cytopathology Fellowship Directors in order to determine their interest in participating in the San Francisco (SF) Match Program. The survey was vetted by Drs. Baloch and Henry, the Presidents of the Papanicolaou Society of Cytopathology and American Society of Cytopathology, respectively. The survey was sent to all members of the American Society of Cytopathology and the ASC Fellowship Program Directors listserv on February 5, 2015 and was available for 29 days.

Information about the San Francisco (SF) Match Program was provided, so that Fellowship Directors could better understand the San Francisco Match Program process as well as proposed dates for the match to occur. This included the following bullet points:

- The SF Match has provided residency and fellowship matching services to specialties and subspecialties for 40 years.
- The SF Match needs about 25 programs in total participating to run a match (i.e. 25 total programs in several subspecialty pathology fellowships, rather than 25 programs for each subspecialty fellowship)
- Programs can hold positions out of the match to accommodate residents in their own program or to make multi-year commitments.
- An “umbrella” society of individual specialty societies may serve as the sponsor. The sponsoring society established a code of conduct and enforces that code. The SF Match requires a match liaison from the sponsoring society who responds to questions from programs and assists with interpretation of rules for programs.
- Programs and resident applicants pay to participate. The program cost is $325 for year 1 and $125 for subsequent years, regardless of number of positions. The participant cost is $100 to register and $60 to rank 10 programs ($15 for each additional program).
- Resident applicants can list more than one specialty on their rank list (e.g. molecular and cytopathology).
- Resident applicants would use the common application. Programs may require supplemental material in addition to the information in the common application.
- The SF Match maintains the match data so that trends may be examined.
- The SF Match provides flexibility to accommodate extended timelines and variation in timelines between programs, but the goal would be to get all programs on the same timeline.

Results of the Survey:

Nationally, there are 91 Cytopathology Fellowship Programs. There were 34 survey respondents (37% survey response rate), with a total of 56-57 fellowship positions represented. Thirty-three respondents replied that they were the Cytopathology Fellowship Program Director (97%). Fifteen respondents (44%) indicated that their Program was interested in participating in the San Francisco Match.
Results of Fellowship Match Survey (continued)

The Program Directors indicated that 26-28 positions would be available through the Match if the San Francisco Match was offered. There were 11 individual comments regarding alternative ideas to streamline the fellowship application process that is summarized below:

- Our program will participate only if ALL cytopathology fellowship programs participate. If there isn’t full participation, those that participate in the Match may be undercut by programs that aren’t participating in the Match. (5)
- It is time to finally standardize the process with common application deadlines and end of interview time deadlines. (3)
- Keep the process as it is now. (2)
- Our program is not a good example for this survey as we are a small program and I serve many other roles other than my role in cytology. (1)
- In summary, at this time, it is unclear if there is sufficient support among cytopathology fellowship programs for a fellowship match. Although 44% of respondents were interested in the match, less than 40% of all programs nationally responded to the survey. Cytopathology programs may be able to participate in a fellowship match in the future if combined with other subspecialty fellowship programs to gather the requisite 25 program minimum required for the SF Match. These results will be shared with the FDAHC members at an upcoming conference call as the committee continues to explore options and interest around developing a fellowship match in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friday, August 1, 2015 – Applicant Registration Begins</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 31, 2016 - Match Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 2016 - Match Results</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2016 – Post-Match Vacancies Posted</td>
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<td>July 2017 – Training starts</td>
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A sample timeline that SF could accommodate

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