



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

April 3, 2017

The Honorable David J. Shulkin
Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shulkin:

It is with great pleasure that I submit the minutes from the National Academic Affiliations Council's (NAAC) meeting held via teleconference on March 2, 2017. The NAAC Council is in the process of establishing a Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee which will focus on academic partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions.

The Council discussed the current hiring freeze and the impact on trainees and the educational community across VHA. Included you will find a recommendation from the Council requesting to prepare a letter outlining the impact of the hiring freeze.

In order to further strengthen VA's national leadership in health professions education, the Council makes the recommendations contained in the attached minutes.

We look forward to your feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Malcolm Cox".

Malcolm Cox, MD (Chair)
VA National Academic Affiliations Council



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

**Response to the National Academic Affiliations Council (NAAC)
March 2, 2017 Recommendations**

Recommendation: NAAC Council will prepare a letter to the Secretary of the VA outlining the impact of the hiring freeze on trainees and educational programs across VHA.

VA Response: Concur. The Secretary of the VA will review the NAAC letter outlining the impact of the hiring freeze on trainees and educational programs across VHA.

Actions to Implement:

VA Action Plan						
Recommendation	Lead Office	Other Offices	Tasks	Due Dates	Current Status	Contact Person (DFO)
<u>Recommendation:</u> NAAC Council will prepare a letter to the Secretary of the VA outlining the impact of the hiring freeze on trainees and educational programs across VA.	10A2D		Prepare letter	FY2017	Complete	Dr. Malcolm Cox and the Council

**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Federal Advisory Committee
National Academic Affiliations Council (NAAC)
Meeting Minutes for March 2, 2017
VANTS 1-800-767-1750; Code: 45206**

The National Academic Affiliations Council (NAAC) met via phone conference on March 1, 2017. A quorum was present, affording the Council the opportunity to conduct normal business.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Cox called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm eastern standard time and conducted the roll call of the NAAC members. All NAAC members and guests introduced themselves.

II. Review & Status of Committee Minutes, Recommendations and Action Plans

Stephen K. Trynosky, JD, MPH, MMAS, Staff Assistant & Designated Federal Official
Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA), Veterans Health Administration (VHA) provided a review and status of the committee minutes, recommendations and action plans.

Discussion: The September 2016 meeting minutes and recommendations were signed by the newly confirmed VA Secretary, Dr. David Shulkin. The November 2016 meeting minutes and recommendations are now being reviewed by OAA Leadership.

The recommendations and updates from previous NAAC meetings were reviewed:

- The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) question development team has prepared over 1,100 Veteran centric questions for four United States Medical Licensing Examination cycles. An additional NBME Subject Matter Expert meeting will be held over the next few months with the ultimate goal of producing 1,200-1,400 Veteran-centric USLME questions.
- OAA released another round of infrastructure grant funding under the Veterans Access Choice and Accountability Act (VACAA). These grants will provide funding for faculty development, as well as the hiring of additional faculty and staff. As NAAC has recommended in prior meetings, OAA will continue to work with both internal (VHA Office of Rural Health) and external (Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)) stakeholders to identify additional funding sources for the faculty development necessary to fully implement the GME expansion envisioned under VACAA.

- VA has issued a new memorandum that provides some modest relief to facilities from the PIV card requirements for trainee on-boarding. OAA is still trying to find out the current status of the “collaborative governance structure” to oversee health IT in VA.
- OAA drafted a legislative proposal for the sole source leasing authority necessary to advance Joint Ventures with academic affiliates. This proposal must be vetted through VA leadership and the Office of Management and Budget before it can be submitted to Congress for formal consideration.
- In September 2016, the NAAC members requested an in-depth review of VA’s health professions education portfolio. This overview was successfully conducted at the Council November 2016 meeting at the VA Boston Healthcare System.
- On October 7, 2016, the Under Secretary for Health approved Phase III of VA’s VACAA GME Expansion initiative authorized under Public Law 113-146. 175.2 FTEE positions were approved in Phase III of the expansion. The original 2014 funds allocated for the GME Expansion are projected to run out some time in 2019-2020. OAA leadership and VHA Finance are currently exploring funding plans to support the expansion’s full life cycle which runs through AY24-25.

III. Overview of Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives for Health Professions Education

Monica L. Lypson, MD, MHPE, Director, Medical & Dental Education, OAA provided an overview of the Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives for Health Professions Education.

Discussion:

NAAC Diversity & Inclusion Subcommittee: During the fall face-to-face meeting in Boston, the NAAC Council recommended the establishment of the NAAC Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee. The Diversity & Inclusion Subcommittee was finalized in February 2017. The Subcommittee will meet twice a year and will be responsible for reporting back to the NAAC. Dr. Monica Lypson, Director of Medical and Dental Education, will facilitate the Subcommittee. A Chair will be selected from NAAC membership. NAAC Diversity & Inclusion Subcommittee membership includes at present Malcolm Cox, MD; Thomas A. Cavalieri, DO; Edgar Colon Negron, MD; John Duval, MBA; Lucinda Maine, PhD, RPh; Arthur Kellermann, MD, MPH; and Jeanette E. South-Paul, MD.

OAA Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Outreach Efforts: OAA leadership and staff have been diligently meeting with leadership from all the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) schools of medicine. OAA has met with leaders from Meharry Medical College, Morehouse University, Howard University and Charles R. Drew

University. The goal of these meetings is to strengthen the relationships between the HBCU's and VHA. VHA and OAA acknowledge the importance of collaborating with HBCU's and HSI partners. OAA will continue to collaborate with HBCU's to develop successful training opportunities to improve the diversity of the Nation's workforce pipeline.

VA Diversity Summit: The VA Diversity Summit will be held at the Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, June 28-29, 2017. The VA Diversity Summit will be held on the heels of the Empowerment 2 Conference being held on the campus of the Meharry Medical College, June 26-28, 2017. The VA Diversity Summit will include speakers from VA, VHA, Congress, HBCUs, and AAMC. Drs. Maine, Cunningham, South-Paul and Kellerman provided recommendations of several staff that would be willing to assist and participate in the VA Diversity Summit.

IV. Update on VACAA Graduate Medical Education Expansion Initiative

Monica L. Lypson, MD, MHPE, and the new OAA Director of Medical and Dental Education, provided an update on the VACAA Graduate Medical Education Expansion Initiative.

Discussion: OAA has full intent to meet the Congressional language included in the VACAA Act of 2014. Over 547 trainee positions have been awarded across VHA. Two-thirds of those positions are in primary care and mental health, the remaining are in critical needs inclusive of other sub-specialty areas. There are continued efforts to develop new programs in rural areas and bring GME to small Complexity Level 2 and 3 VAMCS. VA Medical Centers are being encouraged to use their Community Based Outpatient Clinics for residency expansion, as well as using other clinical partners such as FQHC/Teaching Health Centers and Indian Health Service sites. Best practice VACAA sites are being highlighted within the educational community.

In addition to the trainee position awards, infrastructure grants have been offered/awarded to medical centers. Infrastructure grants provide funds to support education, faculty and administrative salary, minor construction and curriculum development.

Dr. Lypson highlighted two VACAA best practice sites, Harlingen, Texas (VA Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System) and Black Hills VA Medical Center, South Dakota. These rural sites have faced staff hiring challenges due to rurality. With the VACAA awards, the sites have been able to hire educational staff, administrative staff, and develop partnerships with new medical schools.

Dr. Cox has encouraged the NAAC Council to develop a plan for additional resources for the VACAA Initiative.

V. Emerging Issue: Federal Hiring Freeze and Potential Impacts on VHA Trainees & Educational Staff

Kenneth R. Jones, PhD, Director, Associated Health Education, OAA and Karen M. Sanders, MD, Deputy Chief, OAA provided an update on the federal hiring freeze and potential impacts on VHA trainees and educational staff.

Discussion: Dr. Karen Sanders shared details from the [Presidential Memo](#) dated January 23, 2017, placing a hiring freeze on all federal agencies. The hiring freeze has the potential to impact the hiring of educational staff and trainees across VHA. In addition, the hiring freeze has the potential to impact the current VACAA initiative and the federal funding grants allocating funds for faculty and trainees.

Dr. Ken Jones provided an overview of how the freeze had the potential to negatively impact the Associated Health educational community, using psychology doctoral internships as the illustration. The hiring freeze blocked new appointments for ninety days, only Cabinet Secretaries had the ability override the directive. Trainees were not exempt in the original memo. Most trainees are appointed as without compensation under affiliation agreements; however the freeze was directly impacting those trainees being directly paid by VA. OAA immediately took action to alert VA leadership the importance of this exemption. The doctoral psychology internship was to experience a match cycle four days after the hiring freeze announcement. VA trains over one-fifth of the national psychology doctoral trainees across the US. The Association of Psychology Postdoctoral Internship Centers (APPIC) contacted VA with great concern about the upcoming match and the impact of the hiring freeze.

OAA submitted a white paper to VHA leadership emphasizing the urgent situation, and requesting that trainees be exempted from the hiring freeze. On January 27, 2017, the Secretary of the VA exempted clinical positions to include trainees from the hiring freeze.

Given the critical role that VA plays in training the Nation's health care providers, the above exemptions should be interpreted in a way that does not disrupt ongoing health profession training programs and residencies within VA. (VHA Memo dated January 27, 2017)

OAA leadership is now assessing the national impact on the VA educational community. While the exemption was executed for clinical trainees, it is unclear whether the exemption applies to certain advanced fellows who are not primarily clinicians.

Recommendation: NAAC Council strongly recommends that a letter be written from the NAAC Council to the Secretary of the VA outlining the impact of the hiring freeze on trainees and the conduct of educational programs across VHA.

VI. Emerging Issue: Impact of Federal Immigration Enforcement Initiatives on VA and Affiliate Training Programs

Karen M. Sanders, MD, Deputy Chief, OAA provided an overview of the impact of federal immigration enforcement initiatives on VA and Affiliate Training Programs.

Discussion: On January 27, 2017, President Trump signed an executive order banning entry into the US by seven countries for a ninety day period, to include; Yemen, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria, Somalia and Sedan. While the original travel ban has been stayed, there is concern that another ban will occur this year. The travel bans have the potential to impact health professional trainees and faculty. Foreign medical graduates going through the National Resident Matching Program may be especially affected this year. GME residents and their VA assignments may be disrupted.

Most council members agreed that long term impacts are likely

VII. Council Discussion & Recommendations

Discussion: Dr. Cox opened the meeting to NACC discussion and questions. Dr. Cox reviewed the letter that will be sent directly to the administration transition team, educating them about the National Academic Advisory Council and the importance of academic partnerships in VA. The NAAC should take the opportunity to provide edits to this letter.

VIII. Public Comment

Discussion:

1. Lodriguez V. Murray – Healthcare and Medicine Counsel of Washington: Mr. Murray commended the OAA staff and NAAC on the development of the VA Diversity Summit and the NAAC Diversity & Inclusion Subcommittee. He encouraged VA to ensure they invited and included HBCU's for pharmacy, dental and other health professions education to the VA Diversity Summit.
2. Christie Warnke, PhD, Hogan Lovells LLP: Dr. Warnke has offered to host a diversity summit in the DC area.

Dr. Malcolm Cox adjourned the meeting at 2:48pm.

Appendix 1: Meeting Attendance

Council members present: Malcolm Cox, MD, (Chair), Retired Federal Executive, Department of Veteran Affairs; Doreen Harper, PhD, RN, Dean, School of Nursing, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Eileen Breslin PhD, RN, FAAN, President, American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN); Candice Chen, MD, MPH (Ex-Officio), Director, Division of Medicine and Dentistry, HHS Bureau of Health Workforce, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); Thomas A. Cavalieri, DO, FACOI, FACP, AGSF, Dean, Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine; John Duval, MBA, Vice President for Clinical Services and Chief Executive Officer, Virginia Commonwealth University Health System [in attendance November 29th only]; John Prescott, Chief Academic Officer, Association of American Medical Colleges; Paul Cunningham, MD, Dean Emeritus, East Carolina University School of Medicine; Jeanette E. South-Paul, MD, Chair, Department of Family Medicine, University of Pittsburgh; and Richard W. Valachovic, DMD, MPH, President and Chief Executive Officer, American Dental Education Association; Arthur Kellermann, MD, MPH (Ex-Officio), Dean, F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS); and Jacqueline Maffucci, PhD, Research Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

Council members unable to attend: Lucinda Maine, PhD, RPh, Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP); Edgar Colon Negron, MD, FACR, Dean, School of Medicine, University of Puerto Rico; Robert L. Jesse, MD, PhD, (Ex-Officio) Chief Academic Affiliations Officer, Department of Veteran Affairs; and Michael F. Mayo-Smith, MD, MPH, (Ex-Officio), Network Director, New England Healthcare System (VISN 1), Department of Veterans Affairs.

VHA Office of Academic Affiliations staff attending: Karen M. Sanders, MD, Deputy Chief Academic Affiliations Officer; Kenneth Jones PhD, Director, Associated Health Education; Tiana Brown, MHA, Management Analyst; Kathleen Klink, MD, FAAFP, Director, Health Professions Education; Jemma Ayvazian, DNP, ANP-BC, AOCNP, National Nursing Education Evaluation Manager; Kathryn Rugen, PhD, ; Christy Clary, MSW, (Alternate Designated Federal Officer for the NAAC) Medical & Dental Education; and Stephen K. Trynosky, JD, MPH, MMAS, Staff Assistant (Designated Federal Officer for the NAAC).

VA and VHA staff attending: None

Guest Presenters: None

Members of the public attending: Kate Machado, Atlas Research; Christopher Fletcher, HMS Group; Sidath Panangala, Congressional Research Service; Julie Crockett, ACOM; Lodriguez V. Murray, Healthcare and Medicine Counsel of Washington;

Christie Warnke, Hogan Lovells LLP; Matthew Shick, Association of American Medical Colleges; Lauren Lettney, American Osteopathic Association; and Allison Evans, Council of Social Work Education.

Court Reporter: Art Miller & Associates (Adina Berman)