

Executive Summary of QEP
Medical University of South Carolina
February 2007

The focus of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) is interprofessional education, and has been entitled Creating Collaborative Care (C³). This initiative responds to the fact that today's health care system is highly complex and involves interaction of many different health care professionals in providing optimal patient care and advancing biomedical research. C³ will establish the framework for redesigning MUSC's formal and informal educational programs whereby future graduates not only continue to excel in the academic challenges of their own chosen profession, but additionally excel in today's complex interprofessional health care system.

The educational offerings of MUSC have been distinguished by the rigor and intensity of the programs in each college: dentistry, graduate studies, health professions, medicine, nursing, and pharmacy. While their excellence is well established and recognized for preparing individual providers of clinical care and biomedical research, there is a growing concern nationally that the continuum of health care could be greatly improved. As suggested by an increasing number of articles, most notably in a series of reports by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), an improved health care system should be safe, effective, patient centered, timely and efficient. One of its four recommendations deals with preparing the health care workforce with emphasis on interprofessional teamwork as a necessary approach to increase patient safety and improve health care delivery.

MUSC was chartered in 1824 as the first medical school in the southern United States. The five sister colleges were established on various dates between 1881 and 1966. As with most academic medical centers, the additional colleges were added to the enterprise because of the value their professions contributed to the clinical practice of medicine. Each subsequent educational program was established with a great deal of autonomy, owing primarily to its unique specialty and accreditation requirements. Because of increased dependencies and complexities among the specialties, there is increased recognition that the educational and training aspects of each specialty should be modified to better prepare students for careers that will rely increasingly on teamwork and teambuilding skills. C³ is MUSC's approach to building an academic and institutional culture that not only appreciates and values the need for interprofessional training, but that provides opportunities for effective integration of this knowledge and skill into health care delivery or research prior to graduation.

From an educational perspective, C³ offers a continuum of knowledge and teambuilding experiences, from acquisition, to application, to demonstration. It represents a dynamic process of student engagement in increasingly more sophisticated and expansive opportunities promoting and advancing interprofessional education while receiving their formal education. Each step of this continuum is motivated by four inter-dependent goals:

Goal 1: Students will acquire a set of defined teamwork competencies -- knowledge, values, attitudes, personal and interprofessional skills, principles, beliefs and standards

Goal 2: Students will acquire knowledge, including the values and beliefs, of health professions different from their own discipline that will enable them to define interprofessional health care delivery or research

Goal 3: Students will apply their teamwork competencies in a collaborative interprofessional health care delivery or research learning setting

Goal 4: Students will demonstrate their teamwork competencies in a collaborative interprofessional health care delivery or translational research contexts.

These goals will be achieved through a carefully structured organization that focuses on four primary domains: formal curriculum; informal extracurricular activities; the Teaching Scholars Academy; Clinical Effectiveness and Patient Safety. Each of these domains will have a Team Leader who will report to the C³ Director having overall responsibility for the initiative within the Office of the Associate Provost for Education and Student Life. A proposed C³ Council, chaired by a senior academic officer, will be established to assist the C³ Director in reviewing progress, resolving major barriers, and addressing major changes/improvements. In addition, an Assessment Team will be composed of institutional researchers to provide objective analysis to issues requested by the Associate Provost, the C³ Council and/or the C³ Director. One of their primary tasks will be to assess the progress of C³ regarding QEP standards.

MUSC faculty, staff, and students understand C³ as an essential pathway to improving education and tie the provision of health care at all levels with all professions working together. If successful, it may also serve as a model for other academic health centers.