

**2022 Academic Program Review Report
Combined BA/MD Degree Program
University of New Mexico**

Introduction

The Academic Program Review (APR) of the Combined BA/MD degree program was conducted on site March 1-3, 2022.

Members of the review team:

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At the invitation of Dr. Pamela Cheek, Associate Provost for Student Success for the University of New Mexico's Office of Academic Affairs, and Dr. Sushilla Knottenbelt, Director of the Combined BA/MD program, this department review was conducted in March 2022. In preparation for the on-site review, the review team members read the materials provided in advance, including a detailed department self-study. During the campus visit, we met with university administrators, department leaders, faculty, staff, alumni of the program, and undergraduate and medical students. We were invited to tour the campus facilities also. We greatly appreciate the hospitality and graciousness from all of those who were able to participate in this review. We especially appreciate the preparatory communications, coordination, and on-site assistance from Amanda DiMercurio, Academic Program Review Specialist, Dr. Knottenbelt, and Karen McGillvray, the arts and sciences program manager.

At the conclusion of our visit, we presented our initial findings to department, and university leaders, following the criteria we had been given. In the pages that follow, we expand upon those initial findings.

Criterion 1. Introductory Section & Background Information

Overall Findings: Exceeds

Findings on Strengths:

The BA/MD Program leaders and staff compiled a thorough summary of the program itself including content that addressed each of the criteria in detail. The review team found the self-study information comprehensive, especially coupled with presentations by BA/MD Program staff and leadership. The introductory packet addressed the following areas in depth: recruitment, admissions, curriculum and student support, faculty, program outcomes, broader impact, future directions and challenges, and administration. The vision and mission of the program was consistently at the forefront of our discussions. We also found provision of the prior report details useful. During the course of our visit, we had an opportunity to engage with all stakeholders and ask questions. The review team wants to give a special mention to the staff who engaged the team using well-designed games which was a nice touch to the review. We found the meetings productive and useful toward our review and this report.

Findings on shortcomings/opportunities:

N/A

Criterion 2. Teaching & Learning: Curriculum

Overall Findings: Met with Concerns

Findings on Strengths:

There are multiple notable strengths related to the curriculum for the program. These include student preparatory instruction programs (e.g., Bridge Program and Jump Start), activities designed to meet the objectives of the program and its specific coursework (e.g., use of active learning in the studio classroom for chemistry, opportunities for engagement in clinical practice (e.g., Summer Community Practicum), study abroad programs, engagement in activities relevant to the future practice of medicine (e.g., HMHV curriculum). In addition, we found that the- Academic and Professionalism standards provide early exposure that continues throughout the career trajectory.

Findings on shortcomings/opportunities:

Despite major strengths of the overall curriculum, we found that the opportunity to incorporate education about research processes and experiences into the BA portion of the program could be enhanced. This occurred as a theme throughout multiple meetings from both staff and students.

We feel as though alumni could be utilized to obtain information about whether current BA coursework prepares students for the MD program, which may be important information that could be fed back to the BA portion of the program for continuous quality improvement.

Criterion 3. Teaching & Learning: Assessment

Overall Findings: Exceeds

Findings on Strengths:

The BA/MD Program has a robust system for assessing of student learning, part of which includes survey of students. There was clear demonstration that assessment data is consistently used for program improvements/adjustments. This theme became clear through discussions with students as well as staff who utilize the data to design curriculum and refine the program. One specific example was the use of LASSI to help design learning activities.

Findings on shortcomings/opportunities:

N/A

Criterion 4. Students (Undergraduate & Graduate)

Overall Findings: Exceeds

Findings on Strengths:

The UNM combined BA/MD program's mission is to:

1. Provide doctors to rural and medically underserved communities and address the critical physician shortage in the state of New Mexico
2. Strive to admit and educate a diverse social, economic, geographical, cultural group of students committed to staying in New Mexico to practice medicine
3. Connect students with New Mexico communities and the health care needs of New Mexicans

Our review team agrees with the self-study that the undergraduate component of the BA/MD program meets this mission. More specifically, the admission rates reflect the program mission above. Through multiple discussions with students, staff, and faculty, we found that all are appreciative of the services provided to students. Students discussed the robust faculty and staff support for their time in the undergraduate program. In fact, students noted a contrast between the level of support when comparing the BA and MD programs. This contrast may wish to be addressed by the UNM School of Medicine, but we did not feel was within the purview of this review. Students also pointed out that the living, learning communities are a source of student support. Of significant note, both current and graduates of the BA/MD program found that the flexibility of the curriculum and encouragement to pursue interests was robust.

In addition, we note that attrition rates have improved over time, that the Merge Program is an asset even though not commonly utilized, and that the staff support of students is one of the highlights of student support overall.

Findings on shortcomings/opportunities:

We noted that admission process interviews are not conducted at standardized time intervals, which is a risk for introduction of bias into process. For example, one interview may last 30 minutes while another may last one hour.

Alumni of the program noted that the perceived lower minimum GPA to matriculate to medical school may lead to less effort in learning in the undergraduate curriculum, although this was conjecture and not substantiated by evidence. We found it important to include here as it may deserve further study.

Both current students and graduates of the BA/MD program noted a potential stigma regarding identity formation as a BA/MD student to be of concern. This is more related to social situations in which some students would purposely neglect to mention to other non-BA/MD students that they were in the BA/MD program. This was done to prevent stigmatization given the amount of support and resources provided to this group. Students are extremely appreciative of this level of support although many student groups we spoke with did request further guidance and or strategies on how to address stigma concerns in these social situations.

Current BA/MD students and graduates of the program felt that the undergraduate (BA portion) and graduate (MD portion) could be further linked utilizing a peer mentoring program between the two groups.

Criterion 5. Faculty**Evaluation Measure: Exceeds****Findings on Strengths:**

The BA/MD program is an interdisciplinary program in the College of Arts and Sciences that is the only one that has joint-appointed faculty, which is a unique strength. The 17 faculty members who teach in this program are from 11 different academic departments and truly provide an interdisciplinary experience to students. Each faculty member serves on the BA/MD Committee for Curriculum and Student Progress (CCSP), which results in a sense of responsibility to the students and program.

We appreciate the time allowed to engage with the faculty and found them to be enthusiastic, invested in the program, and appreciative of the joint appointment positions. At least one faculty member we met has been with the BA/MD program since its inception, which we found to be representative of the devotion to the program expressed by the faculty members. They are dedicated to the program's mission and students, and proud of the role of the liberal arts inclusion in the curriculum to prepare students for a career in healthcare.

Each faculty member is accomplished, several have been awarded for teaching excellence, and all participate in professional development activities. The faculty are dedicated to the BA/MD program, are supportive of the program's mission, and expressed value and pride in aligning with the mission of the

program. Sharing this information outside of the program could benefit recruitment, university, and community support. The longevity of the faculty members involvement with the program is a strength.

Findings on Shortcomings:

N/A

Criterion 6: Research, Scholarship and Service

Evaluation Measure: Met with Concerns

Findings on Strengths:

The scholarly and research activities of the faculty include subject matter pertaining to their respective academic units as well as to student education and social science aspects of health. Several faculty members engage with students in extracurricular research, scholarly activities, and community service to offer learners a wide range of opportunities. The faculty are also involved in a wide array of university and community service pursuits, including regional and national positions.

Students have multiple opportunities to be involved in community service and scholarship with faculty members and take advantage of these opportunities. All students participate in a rural, community-based learning experience during the BA/MD curriculum. Faculty and students are committed to service for the university, including serving on committees and leading extracurricular organizations.

Findings on Shortcomings:

Standardization of research education and integration into the curriculum does not currently exist, however was mentioned by all constituent groups as a desire. Undergraduate students, medical students, faculty, and administrators all expressed the desire to offer more research opportunities to students and noted the challenge of sharing information, opportunities, and interest with each other.

Undergraduate students want knowledge about research as well as the opportunity to participate. They identified a lack of a central resource to identify faculty research projects as a detriment to pursuing opportunities. Medical students shared concerns about the lack of research knowledge in the undergraduate program as a detriment. A research project is a requirement of the medical school portion of the program, and students commented that they did not feel prepared for this requirement.

Faculty inquired about the possibility of funding to support additional students on their projects. Administrators recognized the challenge of identifying available research positions to students who are seeking experiences. Identification of funding to support student involvement in faculty research projects may augment student education and participation.

Criterion 7: Peer Comparisons

Evaluation Measure: Exceeds

Findings on Strengths:

Our review of the data provided in the BA/MD program self-assessment noted comparison of the University of New Mexico program to programs at the University of Colorado-Denver and CUNY (City College of New York) School of Medicine-Sophie Davis Biomedical Education Program. As general background information from the reviewers, combined BA/MD programs in the United States are not common, and each tends to be a bit different in mission, educational experience, and structure. We found that the selection of these two comparison programs was appropriate, as both comparison programs have similarities to the structure of the University of New Mexico program. Of the demographic information compared, the University of New Mexico BA/MD program has many unique opportunities that we identify as strengths. Its mission, state financial support, diversity of the student body, community practicum experience, low advisor:student ratio, academic support, and active learning pedagogies are several noted.

There are many strengths, as mentioned in the summary paragraph above. In addition, support, and recognition of the program's value by the university administration, the medical school and the state legislature are a strength.

Findings on Shortcomings:

Student support: Students in both the undergraduate and medical school portions of the program shared a desire for peer mentorship with a student 1-3 years ahead of them in the BA/MD program. They identified this as a resource to obtain information about future coursework and experiences to provide information and alleviate uncertainty. All students were supportive of a casual relationship with a group of experienced students who would be willing to answer questions rather than a formal mentor partnership program. Less experienced students were comfortable contacting more experienced students who had been vetted to agree to answer questions rather than being assigned a particular student who may not be interested in a peer guidance relationship.

Specialized courses in addition to pre-med prerequisites: During our engagement with students and alumni, all shared a desire for specialized courses in addition to the pre-medical prerequisites. Students desire information on learning methodology differences between the BA and MD portions of the program. They identified this as information that would assist to ease the transition between the two portions of the program and contribute to student success in the MD component of the curriculum.

Criterion 8: Resources and Planning

Overall Findings: Met with Concerns

Finding on Strengths:

The BA/MD Program is solely funded by the New Mexico State Legislature through an instruction and general (I&G) Allocation (p.84). The program budget has been set since the program was established with

the exception of the student scholarships which have increased to include the 'Basic Education Cost' (BEC = tuition, fees, housing, book stipend). The funding model provides the integration of UNM SOM as the fiscal agent, and the program is considered a School of Arts and Sciences program. This funding model and support has sustained the program since its inception in 2006. That represents a major commitment from the State of New Mexico to fulfill the gap for under-represented minorities in medicine.

During the 2022 APR, the site reviewers agreed unanimously that senior leadership of both the main campus and UNM SOM support and value the program, demonstrating a commitment to the program and their missions. Scholarships are provided for the BA portion of the student experience.

There has been collective agreement for the need for an advisory board.

Findings on shortcomings/opportunities:

Though this program has been consistently funded by the UNM State Legislator since the beginning, this could pose a potential threat because of the growing need and development of additional combined programs such as nursing, pharmacy, and public health. This growing threat could put the program at risk of less funding allocation from the State Legislator.

Students are requesting more exposure to research and stipends to support student research. Stipends help to reduce the financial burden on students.

Working with the Office of Advancement to secure additional funding for students could also include philanthropy from Alumni and others for students who continue to medical school.

Criterion 9. Facilities

Overall findings: Exceeds

Finding on Strengths:

Accessible program office embedded with all BA/MD support staff helps to increase community capacity among staff and students. The current facilities are centrally located on main campus in the University Advisement and Enrichment Center building (UACE). The location is clearly marked with the program name promoting institutional support within the built environment.

Finding on Shortcomings:

N/A

Conclusion: Strategic Planning
Overall findings: Meet Criterion

Findings on Strengths:

The longevity and commitment of the program administration and program leaders was resounding throughout the program review. The program adheres to the mission and vision and clearly demonstrated throughout the review that the mission of the program remains “front and center” in all program planning, admissions recruitment efforts and other program supports.

The previous Academic Program Review Self-Study Report was provided to the reviewers, and all reviewers unanimously agree that most of those recommendations were completed and integrated as continuous program improvements. For example, the creation of the ‘merge program’ was added and has demonstrated successful outcomes for student retention.

Students, faculty, residents, and alumni are a core component of strength for this program. The students’ testimonials about the program’s impact on their lives and career trajectories are essential to the narrative of the program impact. These aspects need to be highlighted more in program materials and other applicable opportunities and serves as an additional recruitment tool.

Legislative funding and support from New Mexico administration (Exec. VP’s Deans of A&S and SOM) demonstrates continuity and commitment for this program.

Findings on shortcomings:

There needs to be a formal strategic plan for this program in the following areas:

Recruitment: Identify recruitment goals for the three counties where recruitment efforts have not been successful. Assess what additional resources (including human capital) is needed to engage these communities. Highlighting the leadership roles students and alumni from the program have achieved is under-represented throughout the program.

Program support and student success:

Strategic planning for program expansion would identify additional funding needs for personnel or budget for stipends or additional socioemotional supports that are tied to student learning outcomes. Also, a strategic plan demonstrates the integration into the broader university’s mission focused areas. This includes research initiatives.

Utilization of marketing and alumni:

The success of the program, and the success of alumni who are in practice needs to be bolstered. This information should be used for philanthropic efforts to obtain additional funding support for the program and students, as well as providing information to the campus and other communities about the successes of this program. Alumni could also serve as mentors in the program as well.

Budget and Resources:

Strategic planning efforts should include budget goals to increase student scholarships, stipends and other identified resources needed for student and program success. A strategic planning process also allows the

program to look at potential threats to the current funding model and strategically plan accordingly by obtaining commitments from the UNM SOM and other resources.

Appendix F:
Review Team Worksheet

Review Team Members: Patrick Rendon, MD; Regina Richards, PhD, MSW; Brenda Rogers, MD

Unit: Combined BA/MD program

Site-Visit Dates: March 1-3, 2022

APR Criteria	Evaluation Measures (E/M/MC/NM)	Comments
1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND	E	
2. TEACHING & LEARNING: CURRICULUM	MC	
3. TEACHING & LEARNING: ASSESSMENT	E	
4. STUDENTS (UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE)	E	
5. FACULTY	E	
6. RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, & SERVICE	MC	
7. PEER COMPARISONS	E	
8. RESOURCES & PLANNING	MC	
9. FACILITIES	E	
CONCLUSION. STRATEGIC PLANNING	MC	