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UNIVERSITY OF Notre-Dame - Perth W.A.

Notre-Dame Australia: School of Medicine

Development Documents

Points for Senate Hearing for Vice Chancellor

McK 27 July 03

Issues about the need for more medical graduates in Western Australia generally.

- Over 200 registrations on the basis of area of unmet need are made annually in Western Australia, about half being mainly in outer metropolitan and rural areas, and the remainder being in tertiary teaching hospitals.
- Commonwealth designations of areas of need in primary care involve just about everywhere south of South St, and east and north of Reid Highway.
- For whatever reason, doctors trained at the east coast tend not to cross the Nullarbor, while they do migrate up and down the east coast to some extent.
- As in all states, there are problems related to professional and geographic maldistribution, as well as the overall issue of total numbers of doctors. Solutions need to address this maldistribution.

Issues related to Notre Dames role in filling the need for Western Australian Graduates.

- The issues that make the Notre Dame course specifically well suited to meeting the needs of the Community in Western Australia are:
- a **commitment to consult the community**, and to **involve the community in School governance**, including the direct involvement of community representation on the School Management Committee,
- an **emphasis on ethics, communication and social justice** programs that are central to curriculum rather than 'additional',
- an **emphasis on the professional challenge and worth of Primary Care and specialist practice outside the tertiary hospitals**, with an emphasis on appointing these doctors as staff,
- use of Private Hospitals and Public Non-Teaching Hospitals to **demonstrate and model medical care in the wider community outside the highly specialised teaching hospitals**,
- **early clinical exposure to aged care and primary care**, with value placed on the worth of working in these settings,
- a **strong program in ethics and medical ethics**, with a philosophy foundation; to produce graduates who can weather the storms of the ethical difficulties of medical practice,
- a **strong program in Social Justice**, developing an understanding of the worth of community service (done in association with the Edmund Rice Centre),
- **collaborative teaching** with other health professionals (nurses, physiotherapists, counsellors, health promotion at Notre Dame, and others at Curtin) to **model future best practice as multidisciplinary teams**,
- **specific curriculum attention to small business and legal issues, to reduce barriers to practice in areas of need** related to these factors,

Issues related to 'Fairer Medicare'.

- The School of Medicine, in planning its curriculum, has recognised similar issues to those in the Fairer Medicare initiatives, and has developed similar initiatives.
- The School recognises that the bulk of medicine is practiced in non tertiary hospital settings, and has an emphasis on teaching the practice of medicine in the primary care setting, and in outer metropolitan 'non teaching' hospitals.
- The School's teaching setting in private hospitals models the medical models of care in private and public non teaching hospitals where a very large proportion of hospital based medical care is delivered by non salaried doctors.
- The School recognises that teaching bases in Tertiary Hospitals with highly specialised staff can skew student interest from the value of a professional life in other areas, and sets out to avoid this.
- The School recognises that the economics of running a medical small business can be a barrier to practice in areas of need; the curriculum addresses small business practice.
- The School recognises that a key to effectiveness, safety and satisfaction in delivery of medical care is quality management, the curriculum content and process emphasises medical practitioner engagement with quality activity as a routine.
- Notre Dame recognises that a commitment to Social Justice is important to the development of the type of doctor that the community wants, and specifically addresses this in curriculum.

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