

## **BUILDING THE PERFECT MEDICAL CURRICULUM: BEYOND COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATION.**

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### **Abstract**

As undergraduate medical programs incorporate eLearning into the curriculum it becomes necessary to select or build software that facilitates the development, delivery, evaluation and administration of eCurriculum content. Many medical schools have selected commercial products, such as WebCT, Blackboard or Desire2Learn for this purpose. At the University of Ottawa, we have been using WebCT to build a comprehensive on-line eCurriculum that supports student learning through their four years of undergraduate medical education. However, we have found that there are critical limitations of any of these products when they are applied to medical education. These products, and many similar ones, are referred to as *Course Management Systems* and have been successfully used to deliver eLearning in disciplines outside of medicine where the curriculum is structured on individual courses managed by individual teaching faculty. However, a typical medical curriculum is not based on discrete courses but rather on themes, systems, and blocks for example. Teaching faculty, many of whom are drawn from clinical staff at academic health science centres, frequently deliver only one or two lectures in their area of speciality.

This break-out session will examine the unique features of an undergraduate medical curriculum and how these features and other issues, such as accreditation requirements, force us to consider a novel *Medical Curriculum Administration System*. The goals of this session will be to identify these features, to develop draft functional specifications for the ideal curriculum administration system and to decide on next steps to have such a system developed.

### **Opening Questions**

- What are the features of a medical curriculum that are unique and distinguish it from a conventional university program?
- What are the limitations of currently available course management systems that constrain their usefulness in medical programs?
- What are the workflow models in medical schools that develop eCurricula?
- What would an ideal curriculum management system look like?

### **Intended Audience**

- Medical educators
- Curriculum administrators
- IT specialists in medical curriculum development and delivery
- Software developers