Accelerating Medical Education for Family Medicine: Student Perspectives on the 3-Year MD

Erika Bahamonde, Ann Bass, William M. Davis, Michael de Leon, Vivian Hase, Nadia Jamil, Alan John, Ryan Klitgaard, Christopher Leach, Jared Mataska, Jenny Nguyen, Alison Pain, Bobby Patterson, Jarrett Ross, FMAT Class of 2016

Frank Babb MD, Fiona Prabhu MD, Betsy Goebel Jones EdD, Department of Family & Community Medicine

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine

FMAT Program Description:
TTUHSC is currently implementing and assessing a 3-year accelerated medical school curriculum that culminates in the MD degree and prepares students for a standard 3-year family medicine residency.

This program, which has graduated two classes of students and has another three classes in training, offers a seamless transition between predoctoral and residency training settings and curricula. It accelerates the standard 4-year predoctoral curriculum through the development of new curricular experiences, with extensive mentoring and evaluation, for completion in three years.

Project Methods:
Current FMAT students, drawing on data from previous FMAT classes and program evaluation, developed a 10-item online survey to assess FMAT student and graduates’ perspectives on motivation to participate in the program and the importance of current program opportunities and resources. Of the 21 current FMAT students (MS2 and MS3) and 13 program graduates (PGY1 and PGY2), 26 responded to the survey (response rates of 95% for students and 46% for residents).

Sample Narrative Comments
How’s participating in the FMAT program changed your perceptions of family medicine?

• It has not changed my perceptions, but it has increased my awareness of the challenges and rewards associated with the field of family medicine.

• Absolutely; I gave FM very little consideration until I learned about FMAT. I honestly thought clinic would be dry and dull, but it is literally the opposite. Very few patients are similar, and it is a great opportunity to treat all body systems while considering just about all of the modalities of care.

• What were your biggest concerns about participating in FMAT?

• Not being prepared to start residency without having completed 4th year. Being able to have time to study for board exams with the additional course load.

• Concerning to no years in west Texas far away from my family and that I don’t pass or moved up one year.

• Projecting that there would be no clerkship options. FMAT is still a clinic clerkship, so only an MS2.

• Committing to FMAT before having the opportunity to do other clerkships. It has a high opportunity cost.

• Having to choose between FMAT and primary medical education. Many current MCs who might be contemplating doing FMAT.

• As long as you’re committed to FMAT, you’re making the best financial and time-saving choice with FMAT.

• You really don’t know if you are going to like FMAT, but you should not be the deciding factor for doing FMAT.

• FMAT is a great program: the teaching over the summer, the close mentoring during FMAT2, and the patient interaction makes everything worth it. For many students, FMAT has opened the door to FMAT.

• You must really love FM; having one less year of med school should not be the reason for doing FMAT.

• Finding another field that I would enjoy more.

• This is sell a concern since I am only an MS2.

• Not being prepared to start residency without having completed 4th year.

• Being able to have 3 years to be fully prepared to start residency.

Discussion & Conclusions
Overall, FMAT students’ and graduates’ top 3 motivators for participating in the program are:

1. Starting a medical career earlier
2. Having a link between FMAT and a residency program
3. Receiving increased faculty support and mentoring

While financial factors were not important among all respondents, FMAT participants who consider themselves “non-traditional” medical students did rate financial factors more highly than more traditional students. Significantly, the ability to start one’s career earlier has financial benefits, by decreasing the need for loans and generating income one year earlier. Additionally, FMAT students tend to rate their own clinical skills highly, especially in comparison to their same-class peers. TTUHSC has developed a unique response to the primary care crisis. FMAT affords students a complete medical education in three years, increased faculty support, financial incentives, and earlier clinical experiences. The inaugural FMAT classes have overwhelmingly positive remarks about the program and continuing with Family Medicine.