III. MEDICAL STUDENTS

A. Admissions

1. Critically review the process of recruitment and selection of medical students, and evaluate the results of that process. Is the size of the applicant pool appropriate for the established class size, both in terms of number and quality? How do you validate your selection criteria?

Applications to the School of Medicine (SOM) are welcomed from every state in the union and other locations where American citizenship is granted. There are no state residency requirements, but U.S. citizenship is required. Thus, the entire pool of U.S. citizens applying for medical school admission each year is available to the Uniformed Services University (USU). Selection criteria are dominated by undergraduate academic performance, but include an array of highly valued non-cognitive characteristics such as leadership, integrity, loyalty, commitment and service to others. All selectees must also demonstrate the adaptability and physical standards required by the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Public Health Service officers. The current selection algorithm includes initial screening by the director of admissions and her staff to ensure that basic prerequisites have been met such as appropriate course work, minimum academic standards, and citizenship status. Once applications are complete, secondary reviews, interviews, and tertiary reviews are conducted by faculty interviewers and admissions committee members. Final review and approval of the admissions committee’s recommendations is done by the SOM dean. Approximately 500 applicants are interviewed each year for the 171 positions. They visit the campus for an entire day, often hosted the evening before by a current student in the SOM, during which they are provided with a series of informational sessions, a tour of the university by medical students and 2 one-on-one interviews. An optional tour of additional teaching resources at the National Capital Area Simulation Center is also offered at the end of the day. Feedback about the interview process has been uniformly positive and is often cited as one of the primary reasons that students chose to matriculate at the USU-SOM. For the first year classes of 2004-2007 matriculants, approximately 50% have some first-hand experience with military service, so recruitment from current active duty and reserve officer and enlisted ranks as well as the ROTC units and service academies is an important feature in our overall recruitment plan. Joint recruitment for USU as well as for other scholarship programs offered by the armed forces under Title X and the National Health Service Corps has also resulted in more inquiries nationwide.

Validation for our selection process can be inferred by our high retention and graduation rate. Success in graduate medical education programs, licensure, and board certification also validate our selection criteria.

2. Evaluate the number of students of all types (medical students, residents, visiting medical students, graduate students in basic sciences, etc.) in relation to the constellation of resources available for teaching (number of faculty members, space, clinical facilities, patients, educational resources, student services, etc.).

Starting with the Class of 2010, medical student enrollment increased from 167 to 171, and it is anticipated that class size will hold to 171 over the next 5 years. Large group teaching sessions have not been affected by this small increase, as the M1 and M2 lecture halls seat 175. Also, work orders have been submitted to add seating beyond 175 to accommodate faculty and others who wish to attend lecture (in the interim, temporary seating is used for this purpose). Laboratory space and small group rooms have sufficient capacity to accommodate 171 medical students. Due to the configuration of our Simulation Center, this small increase in class size has required a rearrangement of the schedules for the 3 Introduction to Clinical Medicine courses. The new schedule is being implemented at the start of AY 2007-08, and will require 2 academic years for a full transition, but assures that the Simulation Center can support the 3 ICM courses. Additional faculty support is required to support the schedule, and is being accomplished through recruitment of non-physician faculty and use of standardized patient instructors.
Expansion of the GSN class size now requires use of a satellite room and lectures via video teleconference for nursing students taking medical student courses. There is concern that any further expansion in class size in the GSN will disrupt availability of small group teaching space for medical students.

All clinical teaching facilities are accredited and support ACGME-accredited programs. The use of 23 clinical sites for required M3 clerkships and 14 sites for the required M4 emergency medicine clerkship ensures that patient volume is sufficient to support clinical education, and patient volume/mix is monitored through our electronic Weblog. The more than 2200 clinical faculty and 2600 residents are considered sufficient in number and variety to properly support medical student clinical education. Each clinical department has established plans to back fill for hospital-based faculty deployed overseas. We have more than 100 billeted basic science faculty to support the M1 and M2 courses, as well as faculty billeted at various local federal facilities and institutions.

As described in the Educational Resources self-study report, on-campus study space, library services, and computer resources are considered excellent. The quality and availability of student services receive high ratings in the annual AAMC Graduation Questionnaire and are also rated highly in the LCME student self-study report.

3. Describe your goals for gender, racial, cultural, and economic diversity of students. How well have they been accomplished? Are there student recruitment and support programs and professional role models appropriate for the school’s diversity goals?

The SOM goals for diversity are aligned with that of the armed services, since the SOM provides medical officers to serve the members of the armed services and their beneficiaries. The Public Health Service students likewise are specifically selected because of their dedication to serve the underserved either through the Indian Health Service or biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health. Thus the diversity goals for the SOM include selection of a student population with economic, racial, ethnic, gender, and experiential diversity that reflects that of the population they will serve. Particular attention is given to enlisted personnel whose personal qualities reflect their ability to overcome adversity, commitment to academic achievement, and desire to serve others who have come from similarly disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition, USU has supported a variety of programs to increase overall name recognition for the university nationwide including a student ambassador program and a mentoring program for enlisted personnel deployed worldwide. The process of recruitment to the SOM has evolved over time, and during the past 5 years has expanded to include four distinct areas of concentration. The vice president for recruitment & diversity (ORD) oversees USU representation among admissions and recruitment professionals from undergraduate institutions, other schools of medicine, and national medical education organizations as well as national medical and undergraduate student organizations. In addition, ORD hosts groups of prospective college students and their families to allow an opportunity to meet some basic science and clinical faculty as well as admissions counselors and current students. Finally, ORD has established some community based pipeline programs that provide both visibility in the community and an opportunity for medical students to engage in community service after matriculation. In 1999, a post-baccalaureate program was established, funded privately, to enhance the academic background and skills of students who were educationally disadvantaged or underrepresented in medicine and science. More recently, this program evolved to include all persons whose educational, ethnic, racial, economic, or experiential diversity could enhance the educational environment in the SOM. These students are supported by private funds, as graduate students, and must meet all commissioning requirements prior to matriculation. Students eligible for the post-baccalaureate program, have been rejected by the full admissions committee due to a weaker record academically, but meet all of the criteria for matriculation in non cognitive areas. Lastly, between 5-10% of each matriculating class consists of individuals with prior service as enlisted personnel. For the most part, these students received their undergraduate degrees over several years while working full time as military enlisted personnel. This group typically demonstrates a profoundly disadvantaged background both economically and educationally, above which the military has allowed the individual to rise. Thus
recruitment from this unique subgroup represents our commitment to matriculate individuals who have already shown loyalty, perseverance, and the ability to overcome personal and societal obstacles within the context of academic competence. Staffing at the major clinical teaching hospitals is controlled by the respective armed services, and thus, in keeping with their commitment to improve diversity among military officers, particular attention is paid to ensure that underrepresented minority faculty members are appointed to the teaching faculty of the university’s affiliates.

4. Evaluate whether the acceptance of transfer students, or visiting students in the school’s affiliated teaching hospitals, affects the educational program of regular students (i.e., in the context of competition with the school's own students for available resources, patients, educational venues, etc.).

Due to legislative statute of the USU-SOM, no students are accepted with advanced standing. All medical students must take the full 4-year curriculum. Only USU-SOM students may attend our clerkships and electives. Between July and November of each calendar year, USU third and fourth year students share some experiences with other active duty military students rotating from civilian institutions. These military students are fourth year students participating in the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) performing their annual active duty requirement just prior to the military’s graduate medical education selection board (GMESB) which is the equivalent of the National Residency Match Program. Each uniformed service (Army, Navy, or Air Force) carefully regulates how many students may rotate on any clinical service during those “audition” months to ensure that USU third year students performing core clerkships remain the focus of teaching at all the affiliated hospitals. Typically fourth year student rotations are designed not to interfere with the third year experience, with most of the rotations offered in subspecialty areas. Core clerkship feedback is obtained at least twice yearly to ensure adherence to this requirement.

B. Student Services

5. Comment on the levels of student attrition and academic difficulty in relation to your school’s admission requirements, academic counseling efforts, and remediation programs. How effective are counseling and remediation systems?

The primary reasons the medical school enjoys a high level of student retention are the thorough admissions procedures, student commitment to service to country, and the built-in support system provided by the OSA. Historically, 97.0% of all students who matriculate graduate from the medical school. Of the 3.0% of students who have not graduated (n = 139), only 1.3% have been for academic reasons. The remaining 1.7% of students left USU for non-academic reasons, i.e., personal or family matters, career changes, health issues, etc. It is recognized that matriculating an applicant is an expensive process and every effort is made to ensure the highest graduation rate. As noted in the 2006 AAMC Graduation Questionnaire results, 41% of our students were “very satisfied” with academic counseling received as compared with 24% for all medical schools. Similar results were found with the Student LCME Self-Study. Students receive full pay and allowances as commissioned officers; additionally, there is no charge for books, tuition, etc. Beyond the cost, a medical student at USU-SOM is potentially an important asset to the military/country upon graduation. Hence, every step is taken to maximize individual talents and strengths in order to obtain graduation status.

Our medical students are commissioned officers of the United States, so our system of management works on an adult-to-adult paradigm, and we seek every possible way to avoid the trappings of the parent-child models – from faculty as well as students! Each class has its own elected government, and the entire student body is represented by the Student Advisory Council (SAC) consisting of the president, academic officer and vice president of each class. These bodies meet regularly, have full access to the administration and faculty, and are represented on many standing committees of the university, including even the student promotions committee, admissions processes and many faculty/staff search committees. In additional there is a Peer Development Consultation Committee (PDCC) elected in each class to provide a forum for private discussion about any events affecting students, including integrity, abuse or standing policies and practices.
The PDCC has a faculty advisor, and can be quite valuable for students to sort out perceptions on a variety of compelling issues. Student satisfaction in this area is very high. Access to the administration has always been a top priority, and the Student Community Center serves as a model for this concept. It is a large, open area surrounded by all the offices of anyone having administrative professional relationships with medical students. This includes the offices for student affairs, commandant, diversity, military command, brigade military command, personnel, consulting legal services and chaplain — all within 300 feet of each other, and all immediately accessible. The large open space is a high traffic zone and provides for numerous, casual, comfortable and unprogrammed encounters with students that do not involve secretaries, administrative assistants, appointments or customary expressions of authority. There is also a student military command structure representing a format that is customary in any military unit. Leadership positions are all held by students who report to the service commanders and the commandant. This system largely deals with the ordinary responsibilities associated with being a commissioned officer.

In this critical area medical students are managed, reviewed or obligated through a variety of systems. In the matters of behavior, discipline and professional comportment, all students are active duty military officers, governed by the direction of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and must pass a National Security Background Check prior to admission. This generally insures that our students are wrinkle free in major areas of concern, and it is very unusual for the administration to find itself processing some sort of violation. Should this ever happen, students have full rights to counsel as part of the military judicial process, and the military brigade has its own full time lawyer available for guidance.

The SOM’s student promotions committee (SPC), consisting of several faculty members with 3-year appointments, and 2 M4 students with one-year appointments, addresses both academic deficiency and professional comportment. The SPC is chaired by a senior faculty member and is guided by a university instruction, USU 1102, Student Promotions Committee. The university registrar serves as the committee executive administrator, and the associate dean for student affairs represents the dean’s office-ex-officio. In the history of USU, the SPC has worked extremely well and has been very responsive to students having difficulties; there has only been one lawsuit, and the university processes and procedures were upheld by the court in that case. The SPC has the authority to review professional comportment, and serves as the honor committee when such a case surfaces; this seldom occurs, roughly about once every 3 to 4 years.

In terms of everyday working style, student progress is tracked by the OSA, test-to-test and clerkship-to-clerkship during the entire time spent in our program. Hence, academic difficulty is detected early, counseling takes place by faculty and deans, and remedial and support procedures are promptly put in place. When students receive a grade of D or F, an automatic review of their record occurs at the SPC under the provisions of due process and the university instruction, USU 1201, Grading and Grading Policies). Normally, the SPC encourages a student to be adaptive and move forward, but the SPC may also recommend extension in the program by one year, or disenrollment in more serious cases. When it hears an honor case or rare behavioral problem, it may recommend disciplinary action or disenrollment. The university lawyer is present at every SPC meeting and always advises students of their due process rights; in the last 20 years, only a small number of students have brought a private attorney to a SPC meeting. Prior to any SPC meeting, all students under review are counseled by the OSA about due process, and – if they wish - are provided assistance in preparing and reviewing their written statements or oral presentations.

While the SPC part of our program is more serious and sober, students understand the reason such an entity exists, feel well prepared for meetings/appearances and only occasionally disagree with its recommendations.

6. Analyze the pattern of career choice among your recent graduates. Is the pattern congruent with your school’s mission and goals? Evaluate the effectiveness of your systems of career counseling, residency preparation, and the selection of elective courses.

A review was conducted regarding GME-1 specialty choice by M4 classes for the last 5 years, graduating
classes 2003-2007. This review of data by the Office for Student Affairs, which manages the GME application process and provides career counseling, revealed no surprises. Our students have a preference for Family Medicine, Surgery, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics and Transitional Programs. It has always been our practice to encourage an independent approach to specialty choice by students; there are no system-wide prescriptions, and the entire student body has exposure twice yearly to the vast majority of specialty program directors throughout the entire military medical educational system. This is usually done on campus in a specialty/program fair atmosphere, sponsored by the Office for Student Affairs and Alpha Omega Alpha.

The school seeks to graduate a broadly balanced physician on a professional pathway that leads to both specialization and an ability to serve as a broad generalist, if conditions require this. The curriculum sponsored by our Department of Military and Emergency Medicine is a key educational ingredient insuring breadth that will satisfy the variety of experiences that could be faced in military operations, regardless of specialty. Training takes place in classrooms, laboratories and field conditions to unify these features in the identity of our graduates. We are also careful about the planning of the M4 year, striking a balance between student preferences, the realities of the GME selection process, and the requirements of the curriculum committee which acts for the faculty.

So, the outcome of our data review for the last 5 classes, and a review of our M3 and M4 curriculum, confirm our expectations and satisfy the goals and objectives of the school’s educational programs.

Career counseling, specialty choice counseling, residency preparation and the GME application process are all managed by the 3 permanent deans and 4 administrative support staff in the Office for Student Affairs. Through one-on-one meetings with students and constant interaction and referral to individual faculty who can match student preferences, the deans establish an individualized network of support for each student. This process begins in earnest during October and November of the M3 year, and continues until the selection board meets in December of the M4 year. We have recently examined our selection rates (specialty and location) for the last several years, and are quite satisfied that outcomes match expectations, and generate student satisfaction. This is also reflected in the 2006 AAMC Graduation Questionnaire.

The curriculum committee recently introduced the concept of academic intersessions with their own set of priorities. For those of us engaged in the student counseling processes, this has been of great benefit, because the entire class is in town for a defined period, and we can easily meet with students who would otherwise be deployed to many distant locations. The winter intersession for M3s and the summer intersession for new M4s are particularly beneficial for this purpose.

7. Evaluate the level of tuition and fees in relation to the size of graduates’ accumulated debt, and to the level of financial aid needed and available. What is the school doing to minimize student indebtedness and comment on the effectiveness of these efforts? Comment on the effectiveness of debt counseling programs.

The SOM is a tuition-free institution. In addition, books, equipment and instruments are furnished to students either on loan or without charge. While enrolled here, students serve on active duty as Reserve commissioned officers in grade O-1 (i.e., second lieutenant in the Army or Air Force, and ensign in the Navy and U.S. Public Health Service) with full pay, benefits and allowances. The approximate gross salary in 2007 for a student with no family members and no prior military service is $50,566.48 annually. Each student’s monthly salary is comprised of Base Pay, Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) and Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). The only portion of a military member’s pay that is taxable is the base pay. The base pay might also be taxed by a student’s state of residency, depending on which state has been designated as a student’s official residence.

As active duty officers, students are eligible for a wide range of benefits. They may use commissary (military supermarket) and Post Exchange (military department store) facilities where costs are considerably
lower than for their civilian counterparts. Certain legal services, such as advice on income tax matters and executing personal wills are free. Students are eligible for low-cost life insurance and are provided comprehensive medical and dental care at no charge. The university has its own University Family Health Center and Student Counseling Service which are available to students and their families for medical care and counseling. Dependents of students have the same entitlements as dependents of other active duty personnel. Like their military sponsors, they have commissary and Post Exchange privileges, and they may seek the services of military legal officers.

The university does not have dormitories, and students are responsible for arranging their lodging and meals. The BAH, adjusted for the high-cost Washington, D.C., area, helps defray housing expenses. In addition, the base housing office is available to help students locate suitable living accommodations, in some cases, in military family housing at a number of local military installations. If they desire, students may dine in the school’s cafeteria or the military dining facilities at the National Naval Medical Center. All of these on-base facilities provide meals at reasonable prices.

Students must wear prescribed military attire in class. Students receive an initial uniform allowance of $400 during orientation if they are entering commissioned service for the first time. Initial uniform and accessory costs vary but are approximately $2000.

Our experience has been that the combination of a tuition-free program, active duty pay, and health benefits enables students to live within our metropolitan area without financial hardship. A very low percentage of our students seek permission (as required by military regulation) to take on part-time jobs. We believe that our applicant pool has not been affected adversely by financial need issues.

8. Evaluate the adequacy of student support in the following areas:

- Personal counseling and mental health services.
- Preventive and therapeutic health services, including immunizations and health and disability insurance.
- Education of students about bodily fluid exposure, needle stick policies, and other infectious and environmental hazards associated with learning in a patient care setting.

Medical student support services and the professional formation process are managed by the Office of Student Affairs and its 3 deans. Additional counseling is provided by the military brigade command system that includes commanders, non-commissioned officer advisors, a full-time military lawyer, and a chaplain. Personal counseling has been a strength of our program for many years, and this is well documented in student reviews and the annual AAMC Graduation Questionnaire. After matriculation, the 3 deans interview every new student according to a standard format, and a management record is established that will chart formation through graduation. In the early years, most counseling is associated with basic academic issues such as study habits, time management, test-taking skills, and board preparation. During the middle of the M2 year the early stages of specialty choice become a subject of constant discussion and counseling, and this continues throughout the M3 year where all students are once again formally interviewed about progress and future plans. Financial and legal counseling is infrequent, but always available by the military brigade.

Health services are very successful and provided for students and members of their immediate families (spouses and children). An outpatient health clinic, located in our Packard Building, is open daily and provides pediatric, family and adult care, and a full range of mental health and social services. Health care also includes inpatient care for students and family members, and unlimited dental care for students. All services are financially supported by the DoD benefit system known as TRICARE; there is no fee for active duty members and their families. Students who become disabled while enrolled are provided disability under service-specific disability systems either at full pay and benefits on limited active duty or retirement and disability benefits on temporary or permanent medical retirement.
Concerning education of students about bodily fluid exposure, needle stick policies, and other infectious and environmental hazards associated with learning in a patient care setting, the students are briefed on arrival at the SOM and yearly thereafter on the risks of occupational exposure to infectious agents, on universal precautions and risks of environmental exposures. These briefings are required both by the military and the SOM. Students are briefed again when they report to each of their clinical rotation sites at various military treatment facilities about local policies. Memoranda of understanding between the SOM and these facilities document the procedures for handling exposures to these risks. The military has financial responsibility for evaluation and follow-up. Students also undergo annual “periodic health assessments” through the University Health Center where they are screened for risk behaviors, environmental exposures and coronary artery disease risks. They are required to have annual PPD testing and HIV testing by the military.

The military has a standardized needlestick and body fluid exposure policy whereby individuals receive initial therapy at the nearest military emergency department, with follow-up performed by the University Health Center to ensure testing at 6 months after exposure. All SOM students are required to have Hepatitis-B vaccination or documented antibodies.

C. The Learning Environment

9. Comment on the effectiveness of school policies for addressing allegations of student mistreatment, and for educating the academic community about acceptable standards of conduct in the teacher-learner relationship.

The school’s policies for addressing student mistreatment are published in the Student Handbook, which is provided to all students each year. Orientations at the beginning of each academic year always address this subject and call the attention of students to the published guidance. In addition, since all students are commissioned military officers along with the vast majority of their teachers, all must abide by the code of conduct for military personnel, and the direction of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The latter codes are made clear to students by the Commandant through his monthly program of officer professional development (OPD). In reviewing this subject, the Student Affairs staff could only recall a single instance of student-reported “abuse,” and this was during the academic year 2006-2007 regarding the behavior of a young attending physician who was considered hostile and degrading to students in an operating room environment. Students reported this to the Office for Student Affairs, and the issue was immediately addressed with the SOM Department of Surgery and the Department of Surgery in the hospital where these concerns existed. Subsequently, despite our efforts, more concerns were raised, and a summit meeting took place with the same principals along with a senior dean. While the behavior of the young attending surgeon was unprofessional in everyone’s judgment, it became clear that more than discipline and counseling was required to improve the situation. This surgeon does very delicate operations, and did not have sufficient support in the operating room; a second attending was added to the team, and the anxiety and stress for the young surgeon decreased, and so did the hostility toward students. In working through this issue, it served as a good model for our approach to most problem solving issues regarding concerns of students: take them seriously, deal with them right away, gather the appropriate parties together for review and discussion, consider the perceptions from each person’s position, make obvious adjustments, keep students informed, and monitor continuously.

SOM student government has a system known as the Peer Development Consultation Committee (PDCC) which addresses a variety of issues of interest to students ranging from the honor code to student mistreatment. The PDCC provides a peer group willing to review any issue of concern to a student who may prefer fellow student advice, prior to bringing the matter to the administration. The PDCC operates solely under student leadership, but has a faculty advisor. So, this forum provides an additional avenue for students to report concerns and get an opinion about dealing with the issue.

At the USU-SOM, the Student Community Center (SCC) architectural concept adds an additional dimension
to encouraging students to dialog frequently with colleagues and supervisors. The SCC is a management model as well as a community center; all the offices of the school’s administration responsible for student programs are located around the periphery of this single area. Students, staff and faculty constantly pass through the SCC; administrator’s offices are all open and accessible, so interactions across student-faculty-staff boundaries are surprisingly informal. We believe this encourages good communication and trust from the very beginning of medical school, and then extends into the clinical years, and students know we are still there for them.

On the AAMC Graduation Questionnaire, reports of student abuse at USU are extremely low – but we take them seriously and inform classes at the beginning of the year what was reported – so that some kind of pragmatic reality is added to the published guidance in the Student Handbook. Standards of conduct for faculty and staff in the student-teacher relationship are addressed by the individual departments and clearly spelled out by the military commanders

10. Evaluate the familiarity of students and course/clerkship directors with the school’s standards and policies for student advancement, graduation, disciplinary action, appeal, and dismissal. Review the adequacy of systems for providing students with access to their records, and assuring the confidentiality of student records.

The school’s standards for student achievement, advancement, discipline, dismissal, appeal and graduation are published in The Student Handbook, but fully developed in 2 university instructions, USUI 1201, Grading and Grading Policies, and USUI 1102, Student Promotions Committee. All faculty members in positions of curricular leadership are familiar with these documents and the attending policies; this includes course and clerkship directors, department chairs, clinical site coordinators and the various deans. There are regular meetings several times each year, hosted by the Office for Student Affairs, with both course and clerkship directors, and these policies are regularly reviewed and discussed through the medium of these meetings which largely focus on student issues. Students are all provided a copy of the Student Handbook each year, and will find abbreviated summaries of the policies within; both students and faculty can access all this information on the university website via the section on Instructions, or via the section on the Registrar.

All SOM students are active duty officers, so issues that affect one’s identity as a student also affect one’s identity as a commissioned officer – particularly anything that has a bearing on professional comportment, discipline and officer standards. The principal document for these issues is the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The commandant of students, their military commander, holds regular officer professional development meetings with each class, to define these issues along with a host of other factors affecting career development in the military services.

Student academic records are maintained under appropriate U.S. government security standards in the Office of the Registrar. Every student has an official academic folder that contains the usual documents associated with academia such as the transcript, course and clerkship evaluations, letters of recommendation and an assortment of other documents that are generated in the four year cycle. These records continue to be part of a student’s portfolio after graduation, and contain copies of licensure requests, USMLE requests, future applications for training positions, and related documents central to professional development. Students may access these records by request to the registrar, and an informal recent review of the registrar’s staff, the dean’s office and our lawyers produced a unanimous agreement that no one could recall a single instance where student access was denied for any reason. Student requests are very infrequent at USU, so it is hardly an issue except for those students whose records are reviewed by the SPC. In those cases, any student to be reviewed by the SPC is directly counseled by a dean in the Office for Student Affairs about their due process rights, including access to any materials that may be reviewed at an SPC meeting. Students reviewed by the SPC have an additional record, separate from the principal record, and maintained under even greater security.
The Office of Military Personnel and the Office of the Commandant maintain records as well, regarding required military matters. These are standard records that would be a part of any military unit and can address a range of requirements from fitness standards to rank promotion and the annual military officer efficiency report. Any and all of these documents are available for student review at any time, and in most cases copies are provided to students when they are generated.

As a government entity, USU must follow appropriate guidance and direction for the security and confidentiality of professional records. Both students and staff agree that the system works quite well, and the checks and balances have insured a nearly flawless record for more than 25 years.

11. Assess the adequacy and quality of student study space, lounge and relaxation areas, and personal storage facilities. Do available resources for study contribute to an environment conducive to learning?

Study space is readily available throughout the university buildings as well as at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) Library. Most students choose to study in our Learning Resource Center (LRC). Classrooms, the multidisciplinary laboratories (MDL), Anatomical Teaching Laboratory (ATL), and conference rooms are also popular study spaces.

The LRC provides continuous access to current medical information 24 hours a day through its electronic knowledge-based resources. The LRC provides immediate material on new or alternative treatments, diagnostic tests, background information for a student’s case presentation, practice of evidence-based medicine, or a literature search in preparation for a research article or grant, whether or not the LRC is open. The LRC is a favored site because many different types of study space and equipment are convenient to the students. There are 10 study rooms and 64 private carrels for independent study. Numerous computers, with computer-based educational software programs developed either commercially or on-site, are accessible in the LRC for students to use while learning, reviewing and self-testing information. A training classroom in the LRC with 40 computers can also be reserved for student testing and/or review.

Another site for study space is the student lounge in Building C where there are 14 study tables and 4 computers available for students to utilize. During afternoon hours students can also study at tables located in the large cafeteria.

The MDL, established for the support of teaching and dedicated to the assistance of students, provides a home base of operations for study and scheduled laboratory exercises. The MDL is open for student use 24 hours a day. The ATL conducts laboratory teaching support of the anatomical sciences. The lab provides cadavers for dissection, anatomical materials, models, and audiovisual materials along with the necessary specimens for all anatomically-related laboratory teaching. ATL is open 24 hours a day during the anatomy courses and at scheduled times during the remainder of the year.

In addition to the MDL and ATL services, audiovisual equipment is available for student use and may be checked out at scheduled times. Lab and conference rooms are also available for student study, as are the computers in the labs. Certain textbooks, microscopes, 35mm slide sets, bone sets, surgical sets, and microscope slide-sets are loaned to each student to facilitate independent or group study. Each M1 and M2 student is provided an assigned locker in the MDL. MDL personnel are available to assist students in the use of their equipment. If equipment is not functioning properly, it will be replaced or corrective action will be taken to ensure a successful laboratory experience for all students.

The Office for Student Affairs coordinates and facilitates most student activities, such as the student newspaper, student chapters of national organizations, social events, and all other organizational/club issues related to students. As each group forms its own organization and leadership, the Student Affairs staff assists to make everything a success and a source of pride for the university. The Office for Student Affairs is committed to enhancing the university’s rich and stimulating environment for individual growth.
development, and learning. One way to accomplish this is by simply being available, and the staff welcomes the opportunity to have students call upon them at any time. The deans observe an “open door” policy, and they encourage students to stop by the office for informal visits.

Students are eligible to use the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) services on the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) campus. The MWR Information Center provides the following services: information on interesting classes, adventure trips, as well as discounted tickets for popular amusement parks, ski resorts, movie theaters, special events, and other area attractions. Brochures, maps and flyers are also available for quick reference and trip planning. MWR also provides limited funding for USU athletic teams to compete in coeducational Montgomery County Leagues in such sports as soccer, ice hockey, ultimate frisbee and swimming.

The Bethesda Naval Bowling Center houses 20 bowling lanes with automatic scoring, a snack bar with a large outdoor deck, a game room with pool tables, video games and a pro shop. Both open-play and league bowling are offered year round.

In addition to the University Gym, which has a limited amount of weight lifting and aerobic equipment, students may use the Comfort Zone, conveniently located near the university on the NNMC campus. The Comfort Zone offers a large variety of services to choose from, including: 25 yard indoor swimming pool, Cardio Zone exercise center, Weight Zone strength conditioning area, locker rooms, and a variety of classes. Outdoor recreation facilities on campus are available for student use and include four tennis courts, basketball court, softball field, running track, and picnic pavilions.

The Student Community Center offers a relaxing atmosphere where students can study, socialize or rest. Comfortable couches are located throughout the area with sitting areas at tables and desks. Several computers and telephones are available for student use. Refrigerators and microwaves are provided for student use for those wishing to bring their lunch or snacks, a change machine and an assortment of vending machines are also available for student convenience. Students may unwind with a game of pool, ping pong or foosball in one of 2 indoor university recreation areas. Each student is provided a locker in the student lounge area as well as in the MDL and university gym areas to store their books, lab equipment and personal belongings.