

February 1, 2014

Membership Committee
Academy of Medical Educators
University of Colorado School of Medicine

To the Membership Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to apply for membership in the Academy of Medical Educators at the University of Colorado. Enclosed you will find my teacher's statement and portfolio. This letter serves to provide an overview of my application and attempt to express my level of commitment to the Academy and my goals for becoming a member.

In my application and teacher's statement, I have identified the two areas in which I believe I most competitively demonstrate excellence: **educational research and scholarship, and Instructional development and curricular design**. As my teacher's statement demonstrates, I have a strong philosophy of what learning involves for learners, teachers and curriculum. This strongly underpins the lenses through which I conduct educational research and scholarship, as well as influences my approach to designing and developing learning environments and experiences.

I have included a letter of support from Dr. Eva Aagaard, who is most familiar with my areas of excellence. While I am relatively new to this campus, I have experience in national and international circles of scholarship and curriculum development, which I have relayed in my teacher's portfolio.

I envision making contributions to the Academy of Medical Educators in two key ways, which reflect my areas of excellence and leverage my professional training in Education and Research. First, I plan on continuing my contributions of innovative curriculum and content design and development to faculty development sessions, online faculty development modules for the Academy, and, as Director of the XXXXXXXXX, continuous improvement in the curriculum offered to the next generation of educational scholars on our campus. In my role as Director of XXXXX, I also plan to continue to foster instructional development and innovative curriculum design and development skills in the cohorts of learners, that they may also design and implement strong evaluation and research studies of learning and teaching throughout their careers. This latter activity leads to the second way in which I hope to contribute to the Academy: by evaluating Academy programs; through academic research publications of educational activities on our campus; through research grants; and through leading and supporting scholarly activities, such as continuing to chair the annual Educational Research and Innovation Symposium. I hope to also extend the Academy's reputation nationally through collaborations with Academies at other institutions, and through presenting scholarly work at national and international conferences.

Thank you for considering my application to the Academy of Medical Educators at the University of Colorado. I look forward to applying my professional preparation in Education and Research to the benefit of the Academy, and our campus.

With sincere gratitude for your consideration,

Dr. XXXXXXXXX
Director, XXXXXXXXX
Assistant Professor, XXXXXXXXXX

Statement of Academy Contribution

I envision making contributions to the Academy of Medical Educators in a number of ways that align with the benefits and responsibilities of being a member of the Academy:

- Maintaining a high level of work in educational scholarship and research:
 - Working with Dr. Aagaard to create an evaluation framework for the Academy of Medical Educators and then implementing this towards evaluating Academy programs
 - Continue to mentor TSP participants in evaluation and research skills
 - Conducting research of educational activities on our campus and publishing these in academic journals and presenting this work at academic conferences
 - Obtaining grants to support research
 - Continuing to chair the annual Educational Research and Innovation Symposium.
- Maintaining a high level of work in innovative curriculum and content design and development:
 - To continue to design and develop faculty development sessions and online faculty development modules for the Academy
 - Conduct continuous improvement to the design of the TSP curriculum as well as mentor TSP participants in curriculum design and development skills
 - Implement a new type of faculty development: 15-min online video “boot camp” updates on emerging trends in Education (these may follow a TED-talk format)
- Actively participate in Academy activities:
 - Continue to attend Academy meetings and Induction of New Members ceremony
 - Continue to participate in Academy working groups. I am currently a participant in the faculty development working group. In 2013, I served on the Rhymer grants committee, where I redeveloped the application template for the next application cycle.
 - Continue to facilitate faculty development workshops, particularly around topics of educational technology in medical education to help advance knowledge and skills of our faculty in this ever-changing digital era
- To advance the Academy’s mission by strengthening the cross-departmental community of dedicated educators through:
 - *Education Scholarship and Innovation Day*. I see this day as a community-building event that allows members of the Academy to gain recognition as a highly accomplished educator, as well as an opportunity to engage in their responsibilities to mentor junior faculty members in educational scholarship.
 - *Local collaborations on grants and research*. I am collaborating with a cross-departmental team towards a grant application for the AAMC’s Group on Educational Affairs education grant competition.
- Continue to serve as a liaison at non-Academy activities related to the Academy’s mission and promote educational excellence:
 - In 2013, I was a guest speaker for the Masters program in Anatomical Sciences, where my experience in Education was helpful to mentoring and teaching graduate students. I hope to continue this outreach as future opportunities on campus arise.
 - *Promote Academy reputation through local collaborations on faculty development sessions*. In 2013, I collaborated with a colleague in the Faculty of Nursing to co-lead a faculty development session on MOOCs (Massively Open Online Courses) and in 2014, am planning a deeper set of sessions on social media for social learning with a colleague in Anatomy.
 - Promote Academy reputation through national and international collaborations:
 - Collaborating with other Academies to develop peer-reviewed, evidence based modules for faculty development
 - With Dr. Aagaard’s permission, in 2014 I am pursuing application to an international collaboration of universities focused on systematic reviews in medical education.

Regards,

Dr. XXXXXXXX, PhD

Personal Statement

Educational And Teaching Philosophy In The Context Of Students' Learning

The act of learning is fundamentally a shared pursuit between learner and teacher, who partner together in the journey and co-influence each other's development in the process of knowledge building. This philosophy of learning is influenced by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory; constructivist theories of learning; theories of expertise development; Bereiter & Scarmadalia's knowledge-building communities; and complexity theory. Accordingly, the mechanisms by which anyone learns are an interwoven tapestry involving the learner-as-agent in the world; that is, the external environment may provide conditions (e.g. learning environment, rich stimuli) or tools (e.g. pencils, computers, books) in which the learner acts, either independently or with the guidance of a more knowledgeable other (e.g. teacher, near-expert) to acquire new skills and understanding along a developmental continuum; but as the learner acts on the world, the world changes in both meaning and in the affordances of the tools it provide (i.e. as we learn to use a pencil, we understand it may be used for writing, drawing...or even as a lever!).

Learning is complex, and interconnected. The developmental trajectory of a learner towards expertise may be influenced by many variables, including: time, repetition, tool and/or skill availability, feedback, reflection, emotion, and the learner's willingness to participate. Additionally, each educational event is embedded within a larger, interconnected system of curriculum, program, institution, and world contexts, not to mention social norms and expectations. The design of learning should be user-centered: on one level, this means designed with the learner in mind; but with respect to the design of educational tools or environment, concepts of usability, flow, affordance, and goodness-of-fit equally matter.

The aforementioned elements of my philosophy of teaching and learning frame and underscore the frameworks I use for instructional design and research. In research, I tend towards mixed methods approaches that allow me to capture the complexity of the learning and teaching taking place. In instructional design, I take a user-centered approach, considering both learner and teacher perspectives, as well as the embedded nature of instruction within a dynamic environment of the learning space (classroom), program and institution.

Reflections on My Career: Past, Present and Future

I did not set out to be an Educator, but the signs were there: the informal tutor to anyone who needed help; my reading list always gravitating to any resource on how people think and learn; and, passionate about how educational systems can be designed to better support deep learning. Over the past two decades, informal participation has given way to formal preparation: first, as a swimming instructor; next, as a volunteer health educator on international development projects; then, as a professionally trained high school Science & Math teacher; followed shortly as an instructional designer, then as an eLearning manager; and, now as a PhD in Education who both designs and evaluates teaching and learning.

If this concentrated preparation in Education is my foundation, then my parallel passion, health professions education, is my context: the complexity of the real world, to me, is both exemplified and modeled in the many acts and actors in health care practice. The gap between the manner in which health education is typically conducted, and the ways in which clinical practitioners practice is my passionate reason to be a Designer and Evaluator of learning who advances health professions education. I am fortunate that my present role at the University of Colorado affords me both the opportunity to design and evaluate, but as I look to the future, I see not only much work to be done to design and evaluate systems for deep, life-long learning, but that I have an important voice to share in guiding the discussion of what it means – and looks like – to train health care professionals in a rapidly-changing world. My future career path also involves both the preparation of the next generation of learners, as well as the preparation of future colleagues who are willing to challenge – with evidence – the frontiers of health professions education. Being a member of the Academy of Medical Educators allows me to accomplish these goals, within a vibrant community of fellow educators.