

# GHEC

Global Health Education Consortium

# Annual Report. 2008.



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**2008** has been a major and transformative year for GHEC. Originally founded in 1991 under the name of the International Health Medical Education Consortium and limited to medical schools, GHEC adopted its current name in 2005 and opened membership to all health professional disciplines. This brief report highlights ongoing and new activities as well as a description of operational developments.

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## Program and Products

### 1. Annual Conference and Symposium

A very successful conference was held in Sacramento with almost 500 registrants. For the first time GHEC added a third day by starting out with a one day symposium that featured GHEC activities. This three-day arrangement will be continued at the April 3-5, 2009 Seattle conference to be hosted by the Univ. of Washington. As an added attraction initiated at the Sacramento conference the distinguished medical journal, *Lancet*, has agreed to fund several student awards and host receptions for students and residents. Starting next year *Lancet* would like to facilitate student and resident access to its online resources. Mexico's prestigious Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública will host the 2010 conference, probably in Cuernavaca, an easy trip outside of Mexico City.

### 2. GHEC Participation in Four Global Health Meetings

- GHEC was well represented at the May conference of the Global Health Council and Tom Hall participated in a panel presentation organized by GHEC member, Dr. Neal Nathanson of the Univ. of Pennsylvania.
  
- The Ben Gurion University (Beer-Sheva, Israel) Medical School for International Health hosted a meeting on Sept. 28-30 on the theme, "Expanding Frontiers in Medical Education. Held on at the Rockefeller Foundation center at Bellagio, Italy, the 23 participants from all the major world regions considered such questions as: What basic global health competencies should be acquired in medical schools; How can these competencies best be learned; and What should be the role of international collaboration in enhancing the teaching of global health? With five participants, including four Board members, GHEC was well represented and made substantial contributions.
  
- Former GHEC president, Judy Lewis, attended the Bogota conference of The Network (Towards Unity for Health), and gave a luncheon presentation on GHEC's program.
  
- Seven GHEC members, including four from the Board, attended and made presentations at the PAHO/WHO conference on "Medical Education for the 21st Century: Teaching for Health Equity." Held in Havana, Cuba, December 1-3, the conference provided an opportunity to learn about developments worldwide on the theme and to showcase the innovative medical school project and other GHEC activities.

### **3. Innovative Medical School Project**

GHEC will complete this December the first phase of a project involving eight medical schools in Africa, Australia, Canada and Latin America. Through community-based facilities and programs the schools are training physicians to have both the skills and commitment to serve the disadvantaged among their national populations. The project involves developing a common evaluation framework that will allow the schools to share their experiences and use common measures of progress so they can compare accomplishments and accelerate program development. Deans and other senior officials from the eight medical schools met in Havana, Cuba, during the December 1-3 conference and made presentations on their programs on a panel in the opening plenary session and later in concurrent breakout sessions. They also used this meeting to plan the second phase of this project, which will involve monitoring, evaluating and identifying base practices at the schools as they implement their programs.

### **4. US/Canadian Joint Initiative on Global Health Medical Educational Standards**

This project started in September under the leadership of Dr. Tim Brewer at McGill University, Montreal. Building on work done by multiple groups and individuals, the Committee is charged with constructing minimum core competency standards for global health education appropriate for all undergraduate medical students. After this first phase the Committee would like to extend its work to encompass more advanced programs and other disciplines. The 12-person Committee, including two students, has held three conference call meetings. Initial work has been concerned with the collection and review of existing materials relevant to its charge. The first report will be presented at the April GHEC conference.

### **5. Learning Modules Project**

By year's end over 50 modules were posted on GHEC's website and 60 more are in preparation. A selection of high priority modules are being translated into Spanish and five modules will be developed by Latin American and African partners on global health topics relevant to these regions. The Spanish modules will also be available in English. The student and peer module reviews will start in 2009 once the process has been partially automated on the new website. In late 2008 discussions were held with InfoMed, the Health Network of Cuba in collaboration with PAHO/WHO, to consider how GHEC can make its resources more readily available to countries with low bandwidth accessibility. As a result GHEC will change some aspects of its module platform to ensure that low bandwidth users have essentially the same user experience as persons in high bandwidth locations.

## **6. Pediatric Residency Modular Course**

GHEC is collaborating with the Section on International Child Health of the American Academy of Pediatrics to develop a modular course for pediatric residents. Funds will be contributed by both organizations, a part-time project assistant will be employed at the Univ. of Washington, and work started in 2009 on 10-15 modules. The focus will be on the special problems of delivering child health services in low resource situations. GHEC is in early discussions with another medical discipline for a similar modular course that would deal with adult health.

## **7. Global Health Residency Guidebook**

*Developing Residency Training in Global Health: A Guidebook*, was published in 2008 and is available through [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and numerous other online booksellers as well as by pdf download from GHEC. The guidebook is the first of its kind to explore the hurdles and opportunities posed by global health graduate medical education. It includes a comprehensive list of resources, ethical considerations, and highlights selected existing programs. Work on an improved and expanded 2nd edition will take place in 2009. In addition, a searchable online residency database is a long-term concurrent goal. Those interested in helping with the revised 2nd edition or other resident education initiatives should email Jessica Evert MD at [residency@globalhealthedu.org](mailto:residency@globalhealthedu.org).

## **8. Curriculum Guidebook**

In 2005 GHEC collaborated with three student organizations led by IFMSA in the preparation of the document, *Developing Global Health Curricula: A Guidebook for U.S. Medical Schools*. A minor revision was completed in 2007 and a major update and expansion will begin in early 2010. The revision will benefit from current work on specifying desirable global health competencies and teaching standards as well as from the involvement of Canadian medical schools. It is available for download in pdf on GHEC's website.

## **9. Clinical Case Studies Workbook**

In late 2008 Dr. Gerald Paccione of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine organized a working group to develop over the next several years approximately 100 clinical case studies covering common problems encountered in low income countries. A typical case study, consisting of 2-3 pages of presentation and supplemented by instructors notes, will help clinical year students and residents develop skills for providing care in low resource situations. A similar workbook on community and public health case studies could be initiated in latter 2009, aimed especially for pre-clinical students.

## **10. Global Health Directors Network**

As a result of interests expressed at the Sacramento conference GHEC is developing a network of global health directors under the leadership of Dr. Calvin Wilson of the Univ. of Colorado School of Medicine. The network will facilitate exchanges among program directors about common program problems, challenges, opportunities and methods. To date about 30 directors of Global Health Centers, Institutes and programs have expressed a desire to begin discussing their mutual interests, and many have completed a survey to identify common issues such as funding, governance, and internal politics. A listserv has been established for network members and the initial meeting will be held at the 2009 conference. We believe these arrangements can facilitate mutually beneficial exchanges between the directors as they work to improve their programs.

## **11. Trans-Institutional Alliance for Global Health**

A one year project was started in 2007 in collaboration with the University of Virginia Center for Global Health. The central objective was to identify and prioritize actions that North American universities can take individually, and especially collectively, to increase the quality, scope and effectiveness of their global health programs. The project involved structured interviews with global health program leaders involved in such collaborations, a literature review, and identification of almost 200 organizations involved in global health education. A first report was presented at the 2008 Sacramento meeting, a journal article is in preparation, and several followup activities are now in progress including initial explorations of work with a nascent consortium of African universities.

## **12. Website Resources**

The resources section of the website continues to expand and improve. In late 2007 major revisions were posted of the global health bibliography and the annotated website list. These and other time-sensitive website resources will be updated every several years. During 2008 the website itself underwent major changes including: improved website appearance; new information sections; server purchase, server relocation to California, major platform and software changes, and remote backup.

## **Administration, Governance and Future Plans**

### **1. Governance and operations**

GHEC is governed by a Board of distinguished educators and includes two students representing American and Canadian student organizations. A Student Advisory Committee with representation from six student organizations provides valuable inputs to GHEC policy and programs. In late 2007 GHEC signed a MOU with Child Family Health International ([www.cfhi.org](http://www.cfhi.org)), a San Francisco-based NGO that provides field placements to about 800 students annually at 17 sites in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This partnership arrangement enhances the effectiveness of both organizations while maintaining their legal and financial independence. CFHI works to provide high quality field training while GHEC works to strengthen global health education in universities. In December 2007 GHEC moved from New York to San Francisco, co-locating with CFHI. Through most of its existence GHEC membership and focus has been on North America. GHEC recently added overseas institutional members and will increase international participation in its program. GHEC currently has about four full-time equivalent staff including purchased services from CFHI and part-time volunteers.

### **2. GHEC affinity organization opened in Europe**

In 2007 GHEC named Andre-Jacques Neusy as its Vice President for International Operations. In this capacity he has visited numerous countries, consulting extensively in countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda and South Africa. In the fall of 2008 he incorporated a new organization in Brussels called the "Training for Health Equity Network" (THEnet). With similar objectives to and in close collaboration with GHEC, THEnet can seek EU funds and provide a 'presence' closer to evolving projects in low income countries.

### **3. Plans for the future**

Since 2006 GHEC has been involved in a major transition leading toward a more capable organization able to support multiple projects and programs, work with collaborators in other organizations and overseas, and host an increasingly useful website. During 2008 GHEC developed a five-year plan (2010-14) that calls for substantial growth, a number of new projects, and the periodic review and upgrade of existing ones. Major activities will include the expansion and upgrade of the modules project and other educational materials, collaborations with universities in low income countries, faculty training and exchanges, and evaluation of the effects of global health education and experiences.

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