SAU Taskforce Updates

Match Changes

SAU Match task force

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A survey was sent, and the results were:
Survey sent to 788 SAU members. A total of 142 respondents, 80 self-identified as Chairs or Program Directors. The survey responses were very similar when you look at Chairs/PDs compared to all respondents.

The Task Force held a conference call and discussed the results, with additional information provided by Gary Lemack's survey of last year's applicants.

Highest priority:

1. **Coordinated start date for interview invitations** (e.g. Oct 1). This will allow programs at least a safe time to review the large number of applications. We are unsure how to enforce this, but nearly all faculty who have heard this plan (at the SAU meeting in Miami) strongly support this.

2. Discourage the practice of **2nd visits**. Applicants should be able to initiate these for their benefit, but there should be no undue influence from programs. This is seen as an unnecessary cost to the applicants. In Lemack's survey, 53% of applicants reported that they were encouraged to take a 2nd look. We do not know what percentage of programs are accountable for this number. Whether this practice should be banned outright or merely discouraged is debatable.

3. Decrease the churning of **interview invitations**. Perhaps the best way to do this is by limiting the number of interviews an applicant may accept. However, we do not have the infrastructure to support this.

The second idea is to limit the number of applications per applicant. There is strong support from the SAU members and there is likewise support from the applicants themselves (Lemack's survey). There is not agreement on what that limit should be.

Faculty tend to suggest 20-40. The applicants strongly support 60, and to a lesser extent, 40.

We recommend looking at the AUA Match data over the recent years and applying some statistical analysis and "game theory" to (try to) determine the appropriate limit, beyond which more applications would not be helpful.

Medium priority

4. **Standardized letters of recommendation**. Faculty recognize the inherent problems of letters—flowery prose, inaccurate praise, overstating the applicant's abilities. There is pretty fair support for some standardization, but not universal. The way forward is to learn from the experience of other specialties (ER Medicine, ENT, Ophthalmology, and Plastics all some version of an SLOR) and propose some templates for discussion.

5. **Regional coordination**. There is no real infrastructure to do this. It is noteworthy that 90% of applicants support such an arrangement. The best we can recommend is that geographic centers be encouraged to take this on. Perhaps sectional leadership can help with this.

Recommendations for non-action

6. **Moving the ISE**. There is some appetite for this, but in the end, the amount of energy it would take to effect this change is probably not worth it for a relatively small gain.

7. **Moving the match timeline**. It is our feeling that increasing the length of the interview window will simply result in the top applicants doing more interviews, without substantially changing the outcome of the match. A majority of applicants (86%) favor keeping the early match date.

Other issues

There is a need for enforcement of match rules. This is the subject of another task force, but we think it is a timely topic.

Fifty percent of applicants were told by programs that they would be "ranked highly," which should be a match violation.

Fifteen percent of applicants would like a couples match. This has long been a difficulty with the early match, but affects a relatively small portion of the applicants.