

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meharry Medical College (MMC) was founded in 1876 and today is an independent academic health sciences center that exists to improve the health and health care of underserved communities by offering excellent education and training programs leading to degrees in the health sciences. Meharry admits approximately 255 students annually to its Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, and Graduate Studies and Research. The current Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is designed to transcend the boundaries of academic disciplines to enhance every student's ability to receive and logically evaluate information or evidence; apply knowledge to yield the best results for patient care, basic, clinical and translational research; and foster programs, services, and policies that advance public health.

After extensive campus-wide discussions, and review of needs for the improvement of student success, the topic of critical thinking was selected for the Quality Enhancement Plan. The title “**C**ultivating **S**tudents’ **C**ritical **T**hinking at **M**eharry **M**edical **C**ollege” or “**CSCT@MMC**” was chosen. The QEP document provides details about the selection of the topic and describes:

- The definition of critical thinking that will guide implementation of the QEP;
- Empirical evidence that supports selection of the topic;
- A review of the literature that documents the importance of critical thinking in the health professions and biomedical research;
- Objectives and actions to be implemented through selected courses;
- Instruments that will be used to assess student learning;
- Procedures for longitudinal assessment of student learning outcomes and the QEP itself;
- Projected budget for implementing the QEP; and
- Timeline and organizational structure for implementing the QEP.

The two goals of CSCT@MMC are to: 1) assess and improve students' critical thinking skills, specifically inference, and 2) demonstrate the application of critical thinking skills, specifically inference, by students. We expect to see the following two student learning outcomes for goal 1: (1) Students will clearly articulate reasons and evidence and (2) Students will use reasons and evidence to draw conclusions, develop hypotheses, make recommendations and come to decisions. For goal 2, the three learning outcomes are: (1) Students reason to a logical conclusion after considering relevant and significant information, (2) Students distinguish between consistent and inconsistent inferences and make inferences that are consistent with each other and (3) Students distinguish between assumptions and inferences and are able to uncover and assess underlying assumptions.

The Director of this program is Dr. Carol Freund Taylor, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Professional Medical Education. She can be contacted at 615-327-6066 or cfreund@mmc.edu.