By Alyssa Martino

The ACR Task Force on Medical Student Education in Radiology, in partnership with the Alliance of Medical Student Educators in Radiology, surveyed academic radiology department chairs and medical school deans in late 2012 to understand how medical imaging is currently taught and how physician education can adapt going forward.1

What should teach imaging?
Nonradiologists cannot adequately teach imaging skills

98% radiology program chairs
25% medical school deans

What obstacles exist to implementing these changes?

Radiology faculty time and availability
18.2% radiology program chairs
18.2% medical school deans

Available curriculum time
16.4% radiology program chairs
22.7% medical school deans

Resistance from other departments
16.4% radiology program chairs
13.6% medical school deans

Financial reasons
12.7% radiology program chairs
13.6% medical school deans

How is radiology usually taught in medical school?

During a radiology elective
89% radiology program chairs

Integrated into other courses, such as anatomy
81% radiology program chairs

Radiology interest group
67% radiology program chairs

Didactic clinical lectures
54% radiology program chairs

How can the ACR and the Alliance of Medical Student Educators in Radiology help?

Support advocacy efforts
26.9% radiology program chairs
7.1% medical school deans

Establish a national standard curriculum
13.5% radiology program chairs
21.4% medical school deans

Provide curricular resources
25% radiology program chairs
53.6% medical school deans

What should change in the next ten years?

More imaging education across all four years of medical school
44.1% radiology program chairs

More involvement of radiologists in teaching imaging to medical students
18.6% radiology program chairs
20.6% medical school deans

What Does All of This Mean?

Christopher M. Straus, MD, associate professor of radiology and director of medical student education at the University of Chicago and a member of the ACR task force, says this survey highlights the surprising disparity between academic radiology chairs and medical school deans on such issues as who should teach imaging. He believes the task force summary demonstrates the “need to promote greater involvement through minimizing the effort required. This can be achieved through the deployment of a nationally available curriculum that each program can adopt and integrate in parts or in its entirety to best fit its specific needs.” Straus says, “We need to increase the availability and involvement of radiologists in the education of our future referring physicians.”

ENDNOTE