Lessons Learned from the CEO

Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the California wildfires, tornadoes throughout the Midwest, and now the COVID-19 pandemic are recent adversities affecting millions of US citizens. It is not a matter of IF a crisis occurs, but rather WHEN a crisis will occur. Before a crisis strikes, leaders must determine how a disaster will affect employees and constituents; therefore, advance planning is critical to the success of any organization. Regardless of the size of the organization, everyone should have a contingency plan in place. The plan will assist the organization in returning to business as normal with the least amount of disruption to its constituents while protecting the organization’s resources and safety of its employees. The plan should address any catastrophic event that could affect the operations of the organization. The development and the success of a contingency plan requires input from the entire staff.

A critical component of developing the JRCERT’s plan was to assess potential risks that would impact our ability to perform day-to-day responsibilities if staff were unable to access the office. It is imperative that staff have the appropriate technological tools permitting them to work remotely, such as hardware, software, internet capabilities, and the ability to access accreditation files and data. After identifying potential risks, a key component of the plan was to develop communication strategies. An integral part of this strategy is for the JRCERT staff to engage in daily virtual meetings. This allows staff to participate in discussion to assure continuity in delivery of the accreditation process. The daily communication also enables staff to stay connected on a personal basis. It provides an opportunity for our leadership to affirm that staff are maintaining their health and well-being and are safe during the crisis. It is important to inspire and motivate your team from a distance.

An additional component in our communication strategy is to maintain ongoing consultation with our programs. The JRCERT staff continues to provide support and guidance for our programs. We are affording programs the creativity and flexibility in an effort to enable students to matriculate through their program. This latitude will allow sponsoring institutions and program officials the ability to make sound decisions that will provide positive outcomes for their students during these difficult times.

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Lessons Learned (Cont’d From Front Page)

The safety and well-being of our program faculty, students, site visitors, and JRCERT staff are always at the forefront of our decision making. It is uncertain when educators and students may return to the classrooms or face-to-face site visits may resume. We continue to respond in a proactive and dynamic manner in the environment in which we operate. It has been said that a crisis is an excellent opportunity to prepare for the next crisis. With that being said, it is important to revisit your plan periodically to assure it is up-to-date.

As always, the JRCERT staff is available to assist you with any questions you may have. Stay safe and healthy.

Leslie

“The safety and well-being of our program faculty, students, site visitors, and JRCERT staff are always at the forefront of our decision making.”

April 2020 Board Update

On April 15, 2020, the JRCERT Board of Directors met for the first of their semiannual business meetings in 2020. The Board regularly meets in April and October to discuss important topics related to the organization, the radiologic sciences, and the medical imaging profession. Historically, the Board meets at the JRCERT office in Chicago over two days. To promote the health and safety of the Board and staff, the meeting was condensed into one day and held using video-conferencing. The Board was still able to discuss topics including the 2021 Standards, reports from committees and meetings, and the continuing accreditation of several programs.

At the conclusion of the meeting, David P. Daugherty, Jr., M.B.A., C.R.A., R.T.(R)(CT)(MR), FACHE, was installed as a new director. David is the Market Sr. Director of Imaging Services at Novant Health, which is based in Winston-Salem, NC. David was nominated by the Association for Medical Imaging Management (AHRA) and will provide valuable insight from the employers’ perspective regarding the medical imaging profession. The JRCERT Board and staff welcome David and look forward to working with him.

Finally, the Board of Directors adopted the 2021 Standards for an Educational Program in Radiography, Radiation Therapy, Magnetic Resonance, and Medical Dosimetry. JRCERT staff is working diligently on finalizing the documents for publication on the JRCERT website. Please find more information in the Standards Revision Update article on the next page.
2021 Standards

Before the April 2020 meeting of the JRCERT Board of Directors, the Standards Committee met to discuss comments received since the October 2019 meeting of the committee. The committee received feedback from individuals through online surveys regarding Draft 3 and Draft 3 Revisions. Additional comments and feedback were received during the past six months from several national and state organizations including: American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) - Radiation Therapy and Medical Dosimetry Chapter, Association of Educators in Imaging and Radiologic Sciences (AEIRS), Medical Dosimetrist Certification Board (MDCB), and The Association of Educators in Radiologic Technology of the State of New York (AERTSNY). The JRCERT is very grateful for all of the comments and feedback received throughout the duration of the Standards Revision project.

Based on feedback and comments, the Standards Committee made minor changes to the Draft 3 Revisions document. Some of the changes are as follows (underlined phrases note changes):

**Objective 3.1** (all disciplines) – Institutional policies and practices for faculty workload and release time must be consistent with, and comparable to, faculty in other health sciences programs in the same institution. Faculty workload and release time practices must include allocating time and/or reducing teaching load for educational, accreditation, and administrative requirements expected of the program director and clinical coordinator.

A definition of comparable will be added to the glossary.

**Objective 3.1** (Medical Dosimetry) - A full-time program director is required. The program director may also be identified as the radiation therapy program director. Also, a full-time equivalent clinical coordinator is required if the program has more than fifteen (15) students enrolled in the clinical component of the program. The clinical coordinator may also be identified as the radiation therapy clinical coordinator.

**Objective 4.2** (all disciplines) - A well-structured curriculum ... variety of situations and patient conditions. The well-structured curriculum is guided by a master plan of education. The JRCERT encourages innovative approaches to curriculum delivery methods that provide students with flexible and creative learning opportunities. These methods may include, but are not limited to, distance education courses, part-time/evening curricular tracks, service learning, and/or interprofessional development.

**Objective 5.4** (Radiography) - Students must be directly supervised during surgical and all mobile, including mobile fluoroscopy, procedures regardless of the level of competency.

The Standards Committee arrived at a consensus to adopt the 2021 Standards and brought forth the recommendation that the full Board adopt the Standards during the April Board Meeting. At the April 2020 Board Meeting, the JRCERT Board of Directors moved to adopt the 2021 Standards with an implementation date of January 1, 2021.

JRCERT staff are making final editorial and grammatical revisions to the 2021 Standards documents before the documents are copywritten. These documents will then be published on the JRCERT website as soon as possible thereafter.

New Program

The radiography program at Hunter Business School in Levittown, NY received an initial 3-year accreditation at the April 2020 Board of Directors meeting. Congratulations on a job well done during the initial application process!
In response to the pandemic, the JRCERT has fielded numerous questions and the answers may be applicable and helpful to other programs facing many of the same scenarios.

Q. Can we exceed our program total capacity (PTC) if we accept a new cohort of students while our senior students are waiting to resume their clinical rotations and complete their competency requirements?

A. Consistent with JRCERT policy, an increase in PTC must be approved by the JRCERT. Before the JRCERT will improve an increase in PTC, the JRCERT must be assured that all enrolled students are supported by the appropriate human and physical resources and educationally valid clinical experiences.

Q. Do I need to seek approval from the JRCERT if we are utilizing hybrid/distance education as a result of the pandemic?

A. Currently, it is not necessary for the JRCERT to approve online learning if it is a temporary response to the pandemic. If you decide in the future you wish to continue to utilize hybrid/distance education, the JRCERT considers this a substantive change and this will require submission to the office for approval.

Q. Can our program utilize a pass/fail grading system?

A. The JRCERT will accept the pass/fail grading system if it is supported by the sponsoring institution; however, the same grading system must be utilized for all students.

Q. What happens if my sponsoring institution furloughs program faculty during the pandemic?

A: It is the expectation of the JRCERT that program officials remain in contact with their students during the pandemic. Additionally, the JRCERT requires that when the program resumes operations it must fulfill its commitment to the currently enrolled students and furlough employees return to the program. Should administration decide that the program cease operation, the JRCERT requires immediate notification.

Q. What if my students are not comfortable with returning to the clinical setting due to high risk factors and/or immediate family members with high risk factors?

A. The program must consider the health concerns of the students and provide an alternate clinical plan should students not wish to participate in the clinical experience. If PPE is not available for the students, the JRCERT will not support the students participating in clinical education.

Q. We have recently received inquiries from local hospitals requesting to employ our senior students. Can these students apply their work hours to the program’s clinical hour requirements and/or complete required competencies during employment hours?

A. The activities of a student employed at these settings must remain separate from those activities required of the student enrolled the program. Employment hours cannot count toward the program’s clinical hour requirements. Additionally, competencies may not be performed during employment hours.
Q. It does not appear that our students will return to clinic this summer; how can these students make-up missed clinical time?

A. The JRCERT has granted temporary flexibility in clinical education, such as evening and weekend rotations exceeding 25% of the total clinical clock hours and students volunteering to exceed 10 clinical hours in a day. Appropriate supervision policies must be adhered to.

Q. Can I enroll my students in summer clinical course(s) even though the clinical setting will not allow students in the facility?

A. Should the program continue with its summer session, the JRCERT remains steadfast that laboratory hours, including virtual simulation, do not take the place of clinical hours. Additionally, final grades may not be able to be issued until the summer clinical course(s) have been completed. The program may wish to consider providing didactic courses until students can safely participate in the clinical component of the program (i.e., temporary restructuring of the curriculum).

Q. Will the JRCERT grant an extension for the due date of my self-study report/interim report? If so, is there a fee associated with this extension?

A. The JRCERT is currently extending all accreditation reports and required documentation upon written request. There is not a fee associated with a reasonable extension request during the pandemic.

Q. We are concerned about our Advisory Committee meeting face to face. Are we required to meet this year?

A. Programs may consider alternative methods to obtain feedback from their Advisory Committee that do not involve meeting face to face; this may be performed in a variety of ways (e.g., email, webinar, surveys, etc.).

Program Annual Report

The JRCERT will be distributing information regarding the 2019 Program Annual Report by July. This year’s reporting process will be very similar to last year’s. Radiography, radiation therapy, and magnetic resonance programs are reminded that they must submit a copy of the Candidate Exam Results report from the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) using the graduation date range of 1/2015 – 12/2019. Medical dosimetry programs must submit the Medical Dosimetrist Certification Board (MDCB) reports from 2015-2019, indicating the number of graduates who passed on the first attempt during each year of this period. Additionally, all programs will be required to submit a completed representative sample of documentation that reflects employment verification for students graduating during 2019.

Resources to help complete the 2019 Program Annual Report will be available on the JRCERT website by mid-June. The completed 2019 Program Annual report will be due October 2, 2020 for programs whose final 2019 class graduation was between January 1 and September 30, 2019. For programs whose final 2019 class graduation was between October 1 and December 31, 2019, the 2019 Program Annual Report will be due January 15, 2021. The JRCERT thanks its programs for taking the time to complete the 2019 Program Annual Report, and, as always, we are here to help should you need any assistance.
Organizational Report

The 2019 JRCERT Organizational Report is now available here. The 2019 report as well as reports from previous years are also available on the JRCERT website under the “About JRCERT” tab. The Organizational Report contains information about the organization, the Board of Directors, JRCERT staff, and JRCERT site visitors. The report also contains aggregate data about JRCERT-accredited programs in radiography, radiation therapy, medical dosimetry, and magnetic resonance. Data regarding the number of students that pass the credentialing exam, the number of students finding employment, the number of students completing programs, and the number of graduates and enrollments is collected from the Annual Reports. Please take the opportunity to read this report and contact the JRCERT office if you should have any questions.

“The JRCERT will now be distributing clinical site certificates of recognition electronically, rather than being delivered through USPS mail.”

Clinical Setting Recognition

The JRCERT will now be distributing clinical site certificates of recognition electronically, rather than being delivered through USPS mail. When programs receive the electronic certificate, please print them for display.

Please note that when submitting a request for approval of a new clinical setting, the program must supply documentation to comply with Standard Six – Objective 6.5. Clinical settings may be recognized by The Joint Commission (TJC), DNV Healthcare, Inc., Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP), American College of Radiology (ACR), American College of Surgeons (ACS), Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC), Center for Improvement in Healthcare Quality (CIHQ), or an equivalent agency. Programs may also submit a state-issued license and/or inspection report to document compliance with this objective. Please note that licenses issued by a municipality are not acceptable, nor is documentation from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) or the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).
The JRCERT is proud to announce that Jennifer Michael, Ed.D., R.T.(R) has been promoted to Assistant Director. Jennifer’s drive and dedication to the organization has proven invaluable over the last several months. We’re excited for the leadership that Jennifer will provide!

The JRCERT family continues to grow. Accreditation Assistant Tim Ebrom and his wife Amanda welcomed their first child, Benjamin Louis Daniel, to the world on April 28. Mother and baby are home and doing well. Congratulations!

IT Administrator Paul Luhn’s son got married on April 18. Another son and daughter-in-law are expecting a child. Paul is looking forward to celebrating all of these new additions to his family later this fall. Congratulations on all the fantastic news!

Top right: Jennifer E. Michael, Ed.D., R.T.(R)  
Above: Timothy J. Ebrom, M.S.  
Lower right: Paul Luhn, B.A.