**Anatomical Society - Departmental Seminar Series.**

**The Anatomy learning journey: travelling together.**

Hosted by the Centre for Learning Anatomical Sciences (CLAS), University of Southampton on 9th May 2012. Funded by the Anatomical Society.

**Background**

The University of Southampton offers Bachelor of Medicine five year and four year (graduate entry) programmes. Anatomy is studied mainly in the first two years of both programmes using: lectures; small group teaching; living anatomy sessions; prosection-based laboratory sessions; and symposia. Students’ learning is also supported by an e-learning platform hosting virtual patients, interactive packages and formative assessments. The majority of the teaching is undertaken by a team of anatomists. However, recently students have established near-peer teaching sessions (in neuroanatomy) and a number of clinicians have expressed an interest in becoming more involved in anatomy teaching.

When CLAS was offered funding by the Anatomical Society as part of the Departmental Seminar Series, it seemed apposite to use this to bring interested parties together and explore ways in which they might work together to support the anatomy learning journey of Southampton medical students.

**Seminar format**

The seminar attracted sixteen participants including anatomists, clinicians and students. Following a brief welcome and introduction by Dr Jennifer Skidmore (Director of CLAS) the visiting speaker, Professor Darrell Evans, shared his experiences of anatomy education at Brighton and Sussex Medical School. The focus of his presentation was the ‘Student’s Learning Journey’ and Professor Evans enthused the audience by relating how he has created a dynamic and engaging anatomy learning environment for Brighton medical students. There was a short tour of the CLAS facilities which was followed by a workshop.

In the first part of the workshop each group of individuals (clinicians, anatomists or students) explored what ‘travelling together’ meant to them. In mixed groups they then worked together to develop an anatomy learning activity that they would like to see developed.

**Outcomes:**

Professor Evans presentation prompted lively discussions and a number of valuable messages were identified. These related to the following broad topics: integration of anatomy knowledge; contextualising anatomy learning; building on prior anatomy learning; revisiting anatomy throughout all years of the undergraduate programme; streamlining undergraduate and postgraduate anatomy learning; and improving communication between stakeholders.

Three types of learning development were suggested. These included: enhancing the existing living anatomy sessions; applying a well signposted step-wise approach to complex anatomical concepts as a longitudinal thread throughout the curriculum; and expansion of the anatomy spiral by initiating a series of ‘Master Classes’ to take place in later years of the curriculum.

The workshop participants identified a number of ways to involve clinicians and students in anatomy teaching and a number of pilots will be developed for next academic year.

With thanks to the Anatomical Society for the funding to run the seminar, to Professor Darrell Evans for his inspiring talk and to all participants for their energetic engagement in a great workshop.

Dr C. F. Smith and Dr J.R. Skidmore