The Association of the Faculties of Medicine of Canada
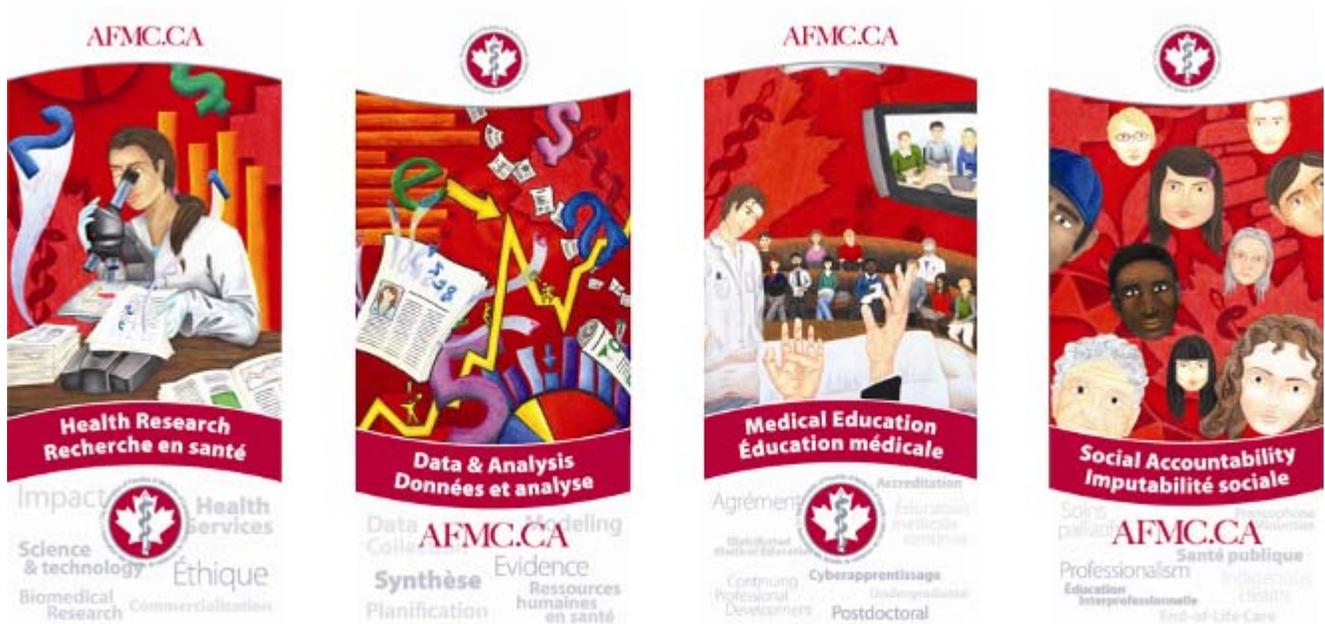
THE FUTURE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION IN CANADA

DATA NEEDS & ACCESS GROUP MEETING REPORT

Toronto, Ontario

March 23-24, 2009

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Acknowledgements

AFMC wishes to thank…

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. . . Steve Slade and Yannick Fortin for advice and input on the elaboration of the meeting agenda.

. . . Ross Smith of HFI & Associates for planning and development of meeting materials, facilitation and drafting of the synthesis report.

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Introduction

Representatives from 16 of Canada's Faculties of Medicine attended the AFMC sponsored Data Needs and Access Group (DNAG) meeting on March 23rd and 24th, 2009 in Toronto. The meeting was chaired by Steve Slade, Vice-President, Research & Analysis, CAPER-ORIS, from the Association of the Faculties of Medicine of Canada. Steve was supported by Yannick Fortin, Catherine Moffatt and Claire de Lucovich from the AFMC. The meeting was facilitated by Ross Smith, President, HFI & Associates. A list of meeting participants is available in Appendix A.

Process

The DNAG meeting was a combination of positioning presentations, plenary and subgroup activities, enabled by in-session readings, exercises, report-backs, handouts and facilitated discussions. A meeting agenda is available in Appendix B.

What follows is a transcription of **Consensus Statements** reached by meeting participants during a session entitled **The Way Forward.** Very few words have been added or changed and only then for the purpose of clarity.

General Observations

Several members of the group re-acquainted themselves easily with colleagues from other institutions with whom they have worked in the past. Newer members of the group were made to feel welcome and attendees quickly engaged with one another. Although they came from contrasting backgrounds, by the end of the first afternoon meeting participants established that they had much in common.

Subgroups worked well together, learned from each other and new professional relationships were formed. The make-up of subgroups is available in Appendix C. Although each subgroup approached the working paper questions differently [i.e. - strategically versus tactically; long-term versus short-term], there was significant congruence between the two approaches. This adds considerably to the conviction shown in the consensus statements. Overall, meeting attendees reported they felt they had accomplished a great deal, given the limited timeframe.

Executive Summary

Much of the agenda for the AFMC Data Needs & Access Group meeting was based on input from a pre-meeting survey. As a result, the meeting agenda concentrated on the three major areas that participants had identified in the survey as 'Somewhat' or 'Extremely Important.' They were:

1. Privacy and Data Sharing Agreements,

2. Tools, Timelines and Harmonization, and

3. Building a Secure On-line Environment

Day Two of the meeting was devoted entirely to these three important discussion areas in either plenary or subgroups sessions. A major aim of the meeting was to reach consensus on as many of the targeted discussion topics as possible. See Appendix D for a listing of discussion questions for each topic.

There are 19 statements from a combination of "Privacy," "Tools" and "On-line Environment" about which meeting participants did reach consensus. Of these, participants also identified 10 areas as high pay-off, priority initiatives for AFMC.

Privacy and Data Sharing Agreements

Consensus Statements - High Pay-off, Priority Initiatives:

1. Convene inter-sectoral meetings [including privacy officers] to overcome barriers through notification or consent of participants in keeping with provincial privacy legislation

2. AFMC to provide a statement on its role and relationship relative to the faculties and the purpose of data collection and its use to satisfy the privacy issue [precursor to # 1]

3. Advance a unique identifier system to replace names to facilitate #1

4. AFMC to conduct analysis of general provincial requirements [the universities are getting tighter, what are the common denominators]

Consensus Statements – Subsequent Initiatives:

5. AFMC must communicate to the Deans the need for adherence so that AFMC data is nor compromised [privacy officers are driving schools to ensure notification is transparent and consent is obtained]

6. The goal would be to come to a common agreement with each school. [Note: With time and experience on developing an agreement, a common agreement may evolve]

Tools, Timelines and Harmonization

Consensus Statements - High Pay-off, Priority Initiatives:

1. AFMC must begin to 'market' its reports and services [e.g. – Be more visible, provide Faculty-specific 'slide decks,' offer 'information education/interpretation' as an important part of its service offering as a way to 'nurture' expertise. This might include e-mail links to reports; portals or newsletter distribution, etc.]

2. AFMC should consult with everyone in the Faculty involved in data reporting [linked to #1]

3. AFMC to develop a consistent set of 'definitions' and data needs [i.e. accreditation]

Consensus Statements – Subsequent Initiatives:

4. AFMC should reaffirm its report distribution list[s] [i.e. – make sure top level gets a copy of the Faculty–specific report, including history, important trends, AFMC contact person, etc.]

5. AFMC to "match" its data gathering activities with various timelines [e.g. – CaRMS, June/Fall convocation, academic year/graduation data, financials to year-end, etc.] Do data reporting with different dates.

6. AFMC should send out a "customer requirements" questionnaire [same/similar questions as today] to the Faculty 'point people' who provide the data [e.g. – What are your timelines, How many reports you need to send out? etc.]

7. Faculty[s] need to streamline the process [i.e. – Identify the people involved to avoid working in silos - linked to #5 & #8]

8. AFMC might suggest to the Deans that they form their own 'working group' [i.e. - AFMC could meet with working group "SME's" to identify new needs for the report[s]. Membership would 'ebb and flow' depending on the subject matter - linked to #7 and #5]

Consensus Statements - High Pay-off, Priority Initiatives:

1. A secure portal is necessary, whose functionality will include upload and download capabilities for current and past data, and online discussion [i.e. Base-camp.]

2. Longer-term goals for the secure portal functionality of data manipulation will require additional resources.

3. A virtual DNAG advisory group to meet as necessary.

Consensus Statements – Subsequent Initiatives:

4. User group/community has specifically defined ownership of data.

5. Faculties to work with AFMC to ensure it is able to identify and respond to future data need requests.

Privacy and Data Sharing

Each subgroup was given approximately 75 minutes to discuss and respond to the following four "Privacy"-related questions. Upon reconvening, each subgroup was given five minutes to review their responses and current thinking on the topic. The groups were asked to reach consensus, where possible. What follows is a transcription of the flip charts from each group.

Q1	"What are the key issues and requirements surrounding privacy and confidentiality that are relevant in the context of your work? Please consider things like Notification, Informed Consent and Research versus administrative uses."	
	Subgroup One	**Subgroup Two**
	Informed consent is needed from students. Notification seems to be the most important factor and is driven by the privacy people	More requests for information. Difficult to determine what we can release
	Ontario med students are told their application info will be shared, but no signature is obtained until they are registered with a med school. Students don't have a problem with this, in fact they expect information to be shared. It's the university who is concerned with the informed consent	National network but "Privacy" is a provincial jurisdiction
	When information is aggregated or de-identified, there is no problem distributing or communicating it	Are we aware of cross-Canada variants in privacy?
	De-personalizing info on applications [eliminate names, or gender, or birth date] might work for the school, but for data collection at AFMC level, this will limit statistical analysis	Issues arise within individual institutions who can interpret "queries"
	Schools should discuss what data is necessary/valid [i.e. – marital status] and keep AFMC informed	Complicated by privacy versus health environment [info sharing]
	Informed consent should be re-enforced along the way [i.e. entrance level, PGME level, etc.]	Act, react, pro-active responses to queries

		Proper notification versus consent
		Sharing rationale for the collection of data. Sharing details of what is shared, what is confidential
		Professionalism paradigm and responsibility to study data. Sharing with other organizations not done by AFMC
		Research versus administration and classification
		"Decision Support" data
Q2	**"Is it possible to develop a data collection process that adheres to all provincial and federal privacy legislation? If so, what steps would be necessary to develop such a process? For instance, would unique identification numbers aid our work?**	
	Developing a data collection process is probably necessary, but driven by confidentiality & privacy	M.I.N.C.
	Steps [using the same ID number]: 1. At application 2. Thru UGME [at registration, graduation] 3. Thru PGME 4. Throughout their career	Currently need name in order to determine duplicate files
		Current data does not need to D.O.B. for reporting
		Issue created if MINC used, as MINC not assignable to "applicants"
		Faculty sends info ➜ AFMC creates identifier and deletes personal data ➜ Faculty uses identifier for future sharing <center>OR</center>AFMC sends a set of unique identifiers ➜ Faculty assigns unique identifier [problematic for translation from UG to PG or transfers]
		"Just do that MINC thing"

Q3	**"Is a common 'Data Sharing Agreement' desirable? What are its key elements?"**	
	Yes, a data sharing agreement would be beneficial, even if just to cover off the information that is being collected and relayed to AFMC	Desirable? Yes, Concerns? Opt out possible Key elements? Universal, including applicants
	Without an agreement, future info may not be readily available for AFMC collection	
Q4	**"If an agreement is desirable, how do we move forward? What issues must be overcome?"**	
	Agreements would have to be individualized by school; they may change; it may evolve into very similar agreements	Consensus meeting that includes faculties, university privacy officers, AFMC, MCC & FMRAC
	Schools may have to assign <u>one</u> person to coordinate data collection and be the contact for the development of an agreement	Overcome? "Internal" privacy officers need to be engaged in the discussions
	Data, if questioned, should be justifiable as to the reason it's being collected.	

Tools, Timelines and Harmonization

Again, each subgroup was given approximately 75 minutes to discuss and respond to the following five "Tools"-related questions. Upon reconvening, each group was given five minutes to review their responses and current thinking on the topic. The groups were asked to reach consensus, where possible. What follows is a transcription of the flip charts from each group.

Q1	"What are your current and emerging data collection priorities?"	
	Subgroup One	**Subgroup Two**
	April to Sept timeline; CaRMS, convocation. Academic year – Graduation data for June and Fall convocation	Provincial accreditation
	Various reports with various timelines	The # educated versus the # staying in the province
	Financial report to year end	Regulatory agencies
	Doing data reporting with different dates	Internal "issues." Bring stakeholders together
		Need to reframe the question: Who are we collecting for and what are their priorities?
		Overlap/wasted effort between multiple requests
		Common templates?
		Tracking career data/ alumni choices; follow-up data [would like]
Q2	"Are there any current data reports or requests that could be streamlined? If so what are they?"	
	Need to consult with everyone involved in the faculty for data reporting	Streamline integration of accreditation data versus surveys
	AFMC should send out questionnaire to 'point people' that provides you data. What are your timelines? How many reports you need sent out? [same/similar questions as today]	Streamlining includes coordinating definitions across requests Merit in having central data contact for each university? Separate people/offices. Group reports?
	Faculty needs to streamline its processes. Who's involved? Identify those people [avoid working in silo's] Have a 'Working Group' named by the Dean	AFMC "service" for data. Provide data back to schools; develop standard indicators. Needed by a number of schools

Q3	**"What AFMC report/information do you find most useful? What other report, information and/or service might AFMC provide?"**	
	Use gender data to look at admissions	Annual data comparing an institution versus national; relative indicators. Standard set for each school [slide deck]
	Top level gets a copy of the report. Important for accountability. Important report to give us <u>history</u>	Provide excel files [or data to manipulate instead of PDF's]
	Need to <u>market</u> reports to faculty	User friendliness
	Send e-mail with link to report to faculty. They can put on portal or newsletter for broader distribution	AFMC needs to do a better job of saying what is available; "selling" its services. Standard requests
	AFMC to provide help in interpreting data	Question of anonymity
	A faculty working group may identify new needs for report	
Q4	**"Are there more opportunities for data education? How can AFMC better support your data and information requirements? Would a faculty 'resident expert' on AFMC data be useful?"**	
	AFMC could meet with working groups	Deans need to educate their people better on what data is available/better communication
	Working group would ask 'expert' within their faculty; Working group member could ask AFMC for clarification	Resident data expert? Institutional data; institutional-specific needs. Nurture experts within the faculties
	Customize data decks/needs. Research of undergrad, etc.	Need to track trends – make info available [emerging/new trends]
		Educate at the annual meeting – take advantage
Q5	**"Would an AFMC-sponsored 'Working Group' on Tools, Timelines and Harmonization be worthwhile? If so, would you be prepared to participate in such a group?"**	
	Each faculty working group would nominate someone to represent the working group depending on the subject matter	Need to "Close the Loop." Need feedback on how AFMC data is used by schools. How does the data influence/inform the activities? What's the purpose of the data
	Working group would ask different people to join the group as needed depending on the subject matter	**Main Points:** AFMC better sell its services. Be more visible; provide institution-specific slide decks. Adopt service provider attitudes/behaviour. Develop consistent definitions. Nurture expertise at each faculty

Building a Secure On-line Environment

And finally, each subgroup was given approximately 75 minutes to discuss and respond to the following four "Portal"-related questions. Upon reconvening, each group was given five minutes to review their responses and current thinking on the topic. The groups were asked to reach consensus, where possible. What follows is a transcription of the flip charts from each group.

Q1	"Over 90% of meeting participants saw 'Secure Portal' as 'Somewhat' or 'Extremely' important. What features would you like to see in a secure on-line system?"	
	Subgroup One	**Subgroup Two**
	Being able to upload and download reports	What's the actual meaning of 'Secure portal?' For data submission?; encryption issues
	Ability to save data	Log on – upload/download functions
	On-line web forms & data file transfer	Communication possible within the secure portal
	Access to previous years data	A place for a glossary of definitions
	Ability to pull out aggregate data for all schools, similar to current reports	Data coming to schools could be customized for output needs MOH or LCME/CaRMS
	Data validation	<u>Resources</u> needed to accomplish this. CFI grant?
	Instructions for completion are available	A secure http:// with login/password
	Ability for working groups to use as a communications tool	Ability to extract and reuse what's available in publications [e.g. – graphs, charts, etc.]
Q2	"What concerns do you have about access, retrieval and input of data using such a portal, if any? How do we mitigate the risks?"	
	Specific roles assigned to specific login/user. Dean must approve/assign appropriate access levels	Obvious security checks
	A 'Submit' button at the end may be left to a high level of authority	Individual privileges for access to data bases
	Workflow/approval needs careful consideration ['versioning']	Agreement of stakeholders of the information
	<u>Data validation</u> that compares variances from prior year	Output alone from AFMC versus analysis
		How to respond to new types of data

Q3	**"Would a secure on-line portal be an effective and efficient way to exchange information and conduct analyses? What, if any, are the 'downsides' to an on-line portal?"**	
	Yes, could be effective and efficient. Downsides – If you stop printing reports, online version should not replace existing means of data distribution. Need to keep it simple	
	<u>Assume</u> it remains secure	
Q4	**"Would an AFMC-sponsored 'Working Group' assembled to study the issue be a worthwhile first step? If so, would you be prepared to participate in such a group?"**	
	Suggest that on-line meeting might be preferred to a 'Working Group' [CHEC]	Possibility of an on-going DNAG group? Meet during CCME; different topics each year. Risks and potential of a working group
		Presentation on Tuesday am of the CCME
		"Advisory Group" versus "Working Group"

APPENDIX A - Meeting Participants

Title	Last Name	First Name	Position	Faculty of Medicine
Ms	Arsenault	Ginette	Senior Student Affairs Officer, PGME	McGill University
Ms	Bowes	Kris	Assistant to the Dean	Queen's University
Ms	Chenard	Linda	Operations Manager	University of Ottawa
Mr	Diduck	Murray	Program Director, UGME office	University of Alberta
Mr	Fortin	Yannick	Data and Analysis Manager	AFMC
Mr	Hughes	Denis	Director, MD Undergraduate Admissions	University of British Columbia
Ms	Hymowitz	Mady	Senior Consultant - Research Office	University of Western Ontario
Ms	Irvine	Judy	Faculty Registrar	University of Toronto
Ms	Knock	Melissa	Manager, Educational Services	McGill University
Ms	Lapointe	Marielle	Coordonnatrice aux opérations	Université Laval
Mr	Lauzière	Marc	Directeur du cabinet	Université de Sherbrooke
Dr	Martin	Bruce	Associate Dean, Undergraduate Education	University of Manitoba
Dr	Neville	Alan	Associate Dean, UGME	McMaster University
Mr	Qazi	Ahmad	Analyste-programmeur	Université de Montréal
Mr	Robertson	Wes	Director of Administrative Computing	University of Toronto
Mr	Slade	Steve	VP, Research & Analysis	AFMC
Ms	Walker	Carol Ann	Executive Assistant to the Dean	Memorial University of Newfoundland
Ms	Weeden	Anne	Director of Administrative Services	Dalhousie University
Dr	Woloschuk	Wayne	Program Evaluator, UGME	University of Calgary
Ms	Zorn	Carla	Administrative Coordinator	University of Saskatchewan

Day One

1. Out-of-town participants arrive and check-in 3:00

2. Welcome 3:30

- Welcome and introductory remarks – Steve Slade

- "Roundtable" introductions

3. Objectives, Purpose & Process

- Agenda review – Ross Smith

4. Participant Survey Results Review 3:45

- A roll-up and "Roundtable" review

- A facilitated discussion and "Q&A"

5. AFMC Data Holdings 4:30

- An overview presentation of the data collected
  and the trends that are emerging – Steve Slade

- A facilitated discussion and "Q&A"

6. Possibility Thinking 5:15-

- We don't all see things the same way!

7. Reception 5:30

- A pre-dinner get together

8. Informal Dinner 6:00+

- An informal group dinner

Day Two

9. Group Convenes & "Continental Breakfast" 8:00

- "The Canadian Temperature Conversion Chart"

10. Any "Holdovers" from yesterday 8:30

- Observations, insights and a brief "Q&A" – Facilitator-lead

- Day Two process review
  - ❶ A mix of plenarys and concurrent subgroups
  - ❷ Three "Working Papers" exercises
  - ❸ Role reviews - facilitators, scribes, time keepers, presenters
  - ❹ "Report-Backs"

- "Coming to Consensus" – An in-session reading

11. Privacy and Data Sharing Agreements   8:45

- Process: Two concurrent subgroups
- Report-Back session: Two, 5 minute "Report-Backs"
- Compare, contrast and consolidate subgroup feedback
- "Coming to Consensus" – A facilitated discussion

"Health Break"   10:15

12. Tools, Timelines and Harmonization of Data Reports   10:30

- Process: Two concurrent subgroups
- Report-Back session: Two, 5 minute "Report-Backs"
- Compare, contrast and consolidate subgroup feedback
- "Coming to Consensus" – A facilitated discussion

"Working Lunch"   12:00
[Please check-out if have not already done so]

13. Building a Secure On-line Environment   12:45

- Process: Two concurrent subgroups
- Report-Back session: Two, 5 minute "Report-Backs"
- Compare, contrast and consolidate subgroup feedback
- "Coming to Consensus" – A facilitated discussion

"Health Break"   2:15

14. The Way Forward   2:30

- Your "Consensus" agreements – Any 'buyer's remorse'?
- Keeping the dialogue open and identifying emerging information needs
    - ❶ Should this be an ongoing discussion? Annually? Biannually
    - ❷ Is this a possible forum to identify new and emerging data requirements?
    - ❸ What support do you need from AFMC?
    - ❹ Moving forward, what 'action steps' must be taken?

15. Wrap-up   3:30

- A "Roundtable" discussion of any "Open" or "Parking Lot" items
- Closing comments, meeting evaluation and depart

Appendix C - Subgroup Make-up

Subgroup One	Subgroup Two
Melissa Knock	Kris Bowes
Carol Ann Walker	Anne Weeden
Ahmad Qazi	Ginette Arsenault
Marc Lauzière	Alan Neville
Murray Diduck	Marielle Lapointe
Wayne Woloschuk	Wes Robertson
Linda Chenard	Mady Hymowitz
Carla Zorn	Bruce Martin
Judy Irvine	Denis Hughes
Claire de Lucovich	Catherine Moffatt
Yannick Fortin	Steve Slade

APPENDIX D – DISCUSSION TOPICS

Three sets of "Working Papers" were used as discussion enablers.

1. Privacy and Data Sharing,
2. Tools, Timelines and Harmonization, and
3. Building a Secure On-line Environment.

The instructions for each were quite similar. For brevity, only one set of instructions has been included.

Introduction

"This subgroup exercise has been designed as a practical and focused way to crystallize your thinking on the important aspects of Tools, Timelines and Harmonization.

In the context of the Data Collection Process presentation and the pre-meeting survey results review yesterday afternoon, review, discuss and respond to the five Tools, Timelines and Harmonization-related questions on the pages that follow.

Hints & Suggestions . . . .

➤ Yesterday's presentation and our informal discussions last evening will be important discussion enablers.

➤ Don't limit your discussion to just the questions provided. They're only there as a guide.

➤ Leave yourself enough time to review and discuss all four questions.

➤ Because time is short [you have 75 minutes], it's probably a good idea to appoint a facilitator, timekeeper and a scribe.

➤ Each subgroup has an AFMC support person who has a laptop with the four "Report Back" questions already loaded. Your consolidated input can be moved to a memory stick and presented 'on screen' at our "Report Back" session.

➤ If you can, try to "Come to Consensus" on your input using the definition that was introduced this morning.

➤ Your table scribe should also keep a composite of your discussion points, and ideas. The meeting facilitator will collect, transcribe and summarize them.

➤ Good Luck!"

Subgroup Topic One - Privacy and Data Sharing

Each of the two subgroups was asked to consider each of the following questions:

1. What are the key issues and requirements surrounding privacy and confidentiality that are relevant in the context of your work?   Please consider things like Notification, Informed Consent and Research versus Administrative Uses.

2. Is it possible to develop a data collection process that adheres to all [provincial & federal] privacy legislation? If so, what steps would be necessary to develop such a process? For instance, would unique identification numbers aid our work?

3. Is a common 'Data Sharing Agreement' desirable? What are its key elements?

4. If an agreement is desirable, how do we move forward? What issues must be overcome?

Subgroup Topic Two - Tools, Timelines and Harmonization

Each of the two subgroups was asked to consider each of the following questions:

1. What are your current and emerging data collection and preparation priorities?

2. Are there any current data reports or requests that could be streamlined? If so, what are they?

3. What AFMC report/information do you find most useful? What other report/information might AFMC provide?

4. Are there more opportunities for data education? How can AFMC support your education requirements? Would a faculty 'resident expert' on AFMC data be useful?

5. Would an AFMC-sponsored 'Working Group' on Tools, Timelines and Harmonization be worthwhile? If so, would you be prepared to participate in such a group?

Subgroup Topic Three - Building a Secure On-line Environment

Each of the two subgroups was asked to consider each of the following questions:

1. Over 90% of meeting participants saw 'Secure Portal' as 'Somewhat' or 'Extremely' important. What features would you like to see in a secure on-line system?

2. What concerns do have about the access, retrieval and data input using such a portal, if any? How do we mitigate the risks?

3. Would a secure on-line portal be an effective and efficient way to exchange information and conduct analysis? What, if any, are the 'down sides' to an on-line portal?

4. Would an AFMC-sponsored 'Working Group' to study the issue be a worthwhile first step? If so, would you be prepared to participate in such a group?