Proposed change to Policy titled:

**Definition of Full Time Student/Student in Good Standing** (located on Geisel Student Handbook page 30 of 2016-17 edition)

Situation:

An increasing number of students are requesting to split or decompress their third year in order to have more time to prepare for Step 1 which has led to the need to more clearly define the curricular expectations of a split 3rd year. The financial and visa implications of having a student take a leave versus a split are significant. Split students are considered “full time” and therefore avoid the leave issues.

Background:

Traditionally students have been allowed to voluntarily split their 4th year with SADME approval. In any academic year, a student may be mandated or advised to split for academic reasons by the CSPC. There are written guidelines on splitting the 4th year but these are not in the student handbook. The current student handbook states that a student making “satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the CSPC, is considered to be full-time and in good standing. Typically, such a student who is enrolled in roughly 50% or more of the academic load during a given academic year, or splitting a year’s work evening over the course of 2 years is considered a full-time student in good standing. A matriculated student typically enrolled in less than half of the curriculum during a given academic year and who is making satisfactory progress as determined by the CSPC is considered part-time in good standing.” The handbook goes on to state that “Under very special circumstances, where the Director for Year 1, 2, 3 or 4 believes a reduced course load is important, or CSPC mandates this, a Geisel student may be permitted to extend the course work of a single academic year over a two year period.”

Assessment:

It would help students, administrators and advisors to have a more clearly defined Year 3 split policy.

Recommendation:

To edit the existing handbook section on “Definition of Full Time Student” to include the following:

“Students who request and are approved or are mandated to “split” an academic year must complete one quarter of that year’s academic typical load during each semester of the split year. For example, the current Year 3 has 42 required weeks of clerkship credit earning activity. A student splitting year 3 would need to complete 10-12 weeks of credit earning activity per semester. The vast majority of those activities need to be clerkship based rather than electives given that the majority of year 3 is clerkship based. Likewise, a student splitting year 4 would need to complete 8 weeks of credit earning activity per semester. In either year, a student will not be permitted to take more than 90 days off between credit earning activities.