

**Deans' Luncheon
September 6, 2019**

Dean Buckley

- Recruitments:
 - Dr. Patricia Sime - appointed as Chair of VCU Internal Medicine Department - first female chair!
 - Dr. Robert Findling - appointed as new Chair of the Department of Psychiatry - previously the Vice Chair of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins; also a 1987 graduate of MCV!
 - Currently searching for new Chair of Family Medicine Department - Dr. Kuzel, the current Chair to step down after nearly 17 years
 - Intent of Dr. Joe Ornato to step down as chair of Emergency Medicine Department after 25 years
- Retention: 5% turnover rate in faculty per year - 8-15% nationally
- 13.8% expansion in federal research funding!
- Wellness Conference (first inaugural) - occurring at the end of September - goal to examine the issue of burnout (from physicians to students) and how the environment can be optimized to prevent this
 - Unprofessional workplace actions - often both a consequence and contributor - worked hard over the past years to address these issues, especially over the past year, with multiple actions being taken - expectations are being set throughout the institution
 - Working hard to make this environment one people want to join and stay in; place of respect with good work and training environment
- Philanthropy
 - This past year, class of 2023 has received the most scholarship funding of any previous class (33% increase - from \$600,000 to nearly \$1 million)
 - Continuing to work to increase scholarship opportunities
 - This upcoming year, will offer more scholarships earlier in the application cycle to increase recruitment of excellent student candidates
 - Training Academy - 30 faculty members undergoing new training program to improve their fundraising skills
 - Increasing donor related activities that we are involved in
- American Heart Association Heart Walk - Saturday October 5th - Dr. Buckley is one of the co-chairs
 - Encourage everyone to get involved!
 - JOIN "School of Medicine Dean's Team"
- Tuition increases
 - Public institution - exist based on tax-payer money
 - Tend to be small incremental increases (though understand that long-term increases are much more)

- Bounded and supported by the legislature - the budget is reviewed by the BOV, including tuition - typically an institutional increase (across the board at VCU)
- Multifaceted reasons - challenge will be to continue to expand

Dr. DiGiovanni

- Mistreatment - any mistreatment concerns submitted are ALWAYS addressed - anything from educational discussion to reprimanding to even dismissal - unable to give specifics since it is a personnel issue

Concerns

1. Some students were concerned that because personal days are no longer an option, their chance of earning distinction or maintaining their grade would be adversely affected if they were to miss a mandatory class due to personal reasons, as they would receive a zero without any opportunity to make up the assignment.

Graded assignments are only ~1% of grade

Final grade is an average of ALL classes - missing one assignment would not make a significant change in your grade - risk you would take by taking a personal day

Can always submit an exception request - certain things are allowable under the rules (look at student manual)

Why were personal day taken away?

Students were taking personal days because they didn't want to go to class and just wanted to make the grade (not being used for real purpose) - abuse of system

Personal days are STILL IN PLACE for clinical years

Note on "Mental health days" - mental health days are considered 'sick days', therefore MUST be seen by mental health professional and/or student health. Mental health days are not to be used simply to rest/catch up on sleep.

2. Some proposed that the dates for remediation be earlier and/or more flexible, rather than to wait until after the end of a semester to retake the exam.

Since there is a week off for Thanksgiving, M2 students will be able to remediate after Thanksgiving break OR winter break.

Curriculum Office feels it is in the best interest of M1s to remediate after winter break (not Thanksgiving) - need the break and extra time to study

3. Many students are concerned that their exception requests do not receive a response in a timely manner, often for more than two weeks.

There is no single person who can review exception requests; often clerkship also needs to review request so extra time is needed.

We are doing the best we can - summer is especially hard because of vacations, etc.

If it is urgent and we have not responded - email someone in the curriculum office

4. Students are interested to know how well VCU can prepare them for boards: some feel that current exam questions and curriculum are not well tailored to Step exams; some suggested using NBME for preclinical exams.

- The student who got the highest step 1 score (273) strictly followed VCU curriculum and study program. It works!
 - Doing well in the preclinical curriculum correlates with doing well on the Step exam which has been shown at our institution and many others
- NBME subject exams - those questions are derived from retired USMLE questions (deleted because they are very old or bad questions) - they are not very well written exams/questions
 - Dr. Biskobing reviews these every year - they have just recently started writing NEW questions for these subject exams
- Previously we have tried using questions from the NBME question bank, however the questions were terrible
- Questions on the VCU exams are reviewed by Dr. D and Dr. Biskobing and are improved every year - overall MUCH better quality than NBME exams or NBME bank questions
- Several faculty members have written or continue to write USMLE Step 1 questions (Dr. Biskobing, Dr. D, Dr. Ishaac, etc.)

5. With rumors of Step 1 changing to a pass-fail system, there is an inquiry about the validity of such news and what changes VCU is planning to help students become competitive residency applicants.

- Dean Buckley recently attended meeting where this was discussed - discussion about the stress surrounding Step exams (especially step 1) and the *potential* of it going to pass-fail
 - A lot of different opinions
 - Program Directors adamantly against it (some of the only objective data they have to examine)
- Possible options discussed
 - Step 1 quartile or quintile system
 - All pass/fail
 - Keep as is
 - Other options
- Survey showed that a majority of medical students were against Pass/Fail system
 - Students from “top tier” medical schools (Harvard, Yale, UCSF, etc.) could go to P/F exam and still compete for competitive residency programs because of associated prestige
 - Students from other schools (like VCU) would not be able to compete in highly competitive specialties
- *As of right now, unsure where the future is - will NOT change to Pass/Fail in your lifetime as a medical student*
- *Step 2 CS here to stay - developing ways to give better feedback to students*

6. Questions about the new distinction system (for class of 2023) and how it was developed

- Looked over past classes and 92% was about the top 10% of classes in the past
- Exam passage grade increase from 60 to 65
 - Not sure at this time if this will change from the current M2 class -- awaiting pulmonary course grades to make more informed decision
 - STILL 70% needed to pass overall course

Reminders

- NO EATING in the studios and the theaters - NO FOOD, beverages must have a cover
 - Complaint made to the Office of Student Experience from a classmate - distracting from the study environment
 - Will start doing spot checks upstairs to enforce the rule
- 6th and 8th floors are study floors (SILENT) when there is no scheduled class going on
- Please make sure you have your Medical Student badge - everyone in hospital MUST have it (requirement by hospital) - come to curriculum office to get a new one (\$2 fee)
- Must work/sit in table groups for any group work - need to get to know each other in order to appropriately fill out peer evaluations

Other Matters

- The IT department as well as your class IT reps are collecting feedback on the new eCurriculum. Please contact them with specific concerns to improve the site!
- As discussed at the MSG meeting in August, university sponsored health insurance is an ongoing work in progress. Drs. Buckely and Rappley are exploring various options, including reaching out to local insurers.
- GRTC is currently working on a transition to a ticketless Pulse ride.