

Deans' Luncheon November 1st, 2019

Dean Buckley

- American Surgical Society Global Surgery Conference in San Francisco: had 5-6 medical students attend and give presentations about VCU's curriculum
- Recruitment Updates: official notice to be sent later
 - Cancer Center Director: Dr. Rob Winn will be joining us from University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC's) Cancer Center in December. He is a lung specialist with a background in cell signaling, cancer, and health disparities.
 - Family Medicine Chair: Search is now active; candidate interviews are being scheduled.
 - Emergency Room Chair: Search is launching this month.
 - Lead Development Officer: Important role for increasing student scholarships. Search is now active and open for candidates. Hopeful to complete search soon.
 - Dr. Rappley, the current VCU Senior President for Health Sciences and VCU Health System Chief Executive officer is retiring at the beginning of January. Dr. Rao will lead the search for a replacement. Dean Buckley will be serving partially in this role for the interim while continuing to serve as the dean of the medical school.
 - Chief Executive Officer of the Hospital: National search will beginning soon. Dr. Ron Clark will be serving as in the position for the interim.
- Changes in Communication: The Chief of Staff has been working over the last year to improve online communications and visibility. Specifically, there has been website improvements and increased publications concerning medical student and faculty achievements and accomplishments.
- Faculty Administration Changes: changes have been made to relieve the administrative burden on faculty members completing clinical trails so that they can have increased focus on teaching.
- Aware of concerns, especially M1 Concerns. Will be meeting with a group of students soon to work on addressing these concerns.
- Philanthropy: The Discovery series, based out of Williamsburg, is a program started six years ago that connects attendees from the public with leading VCU Health members to discuss their fields and experiences. This program has been very successful and has helped significantly in the effort to raise money for the campus and school. This last year there was a 1/3rd increase in scholarships for the 2023 class and the school was able to offer two full rides. Due to this success, the Discovery series was just recently launched in Richmond. Optimistic that this program will increase local support for our institution.
- Holiday Season: Going into the holiday season focus on expressing gratefulness and celebrations in a way that are culturally sensitive and with respect.

Concerns

- 1. Students were curious to know why so many students have failed the physiology exam this year.**
 - There were 15 students who failed physiology. All of the students have been met with and were referred to Academic Success.
 - Other than issues with pacing, all of the students had different issues with the exam and there were no other shared factors. Only a few questions were changed on the exam to be made easier. Physiology had the same faculty, exam, and self-assessments as last year; there were no changes on the side of the school.
 - When a student fails an exam, they are referred to M2/M4/Md-PhD lead tutoring which is coordinated via the curriculum office and is open to every one. Additionally, the Deans

discuss study strategies with the students and they are encouraged to go to counseling as for many this is the first time they are experiencing academic challenges and many times stress precedes these challenges.

2. There was a question on why peer evaluations are no longer available once the clinical years begin, and suggested that it would be a helpful tool to gauge our performance with those at our level as well as to provide feedback to each other as well.

- Logistically it would be very difficult to have evaluations during the clinical years because it difficult to determine who is working with who and where. Secondly, technologically it would be unfeasible to do with the current eCurriculum system, although there is potential it could be completed with a new eCurriculum system at some point in the future. Lastly, there are many times when students are the only ones in a particular rotation.
- Students are encouraged to submit a professionalism accommodation if they would like to recognize someone. Professionalism notes, both positive and negative, are always available on eCurriculum and can be submitted on any student at any time.
- Elaboration on the process that happens after a professionalism concern is submitted for a student: These concerns are submitted to Dr. Woleben and Dr. Deiorio who then meets with the student to get their side of the story. Following this meeting, the Deans can then either find the professionalism concern to be founded or unfounded. This process and decision is tracked in eCurriculum, but does not go into the student's Dean's letter or is reported in any way unless the concern is egregious or there is an ongoing pattern.
- If a student is going to have a professionalism concern reported to residencies, they will be informed beforehand. If a concern is found to be "founded," a committee determines the necessary remediations. All students can appeal any decisions made in this process.

3. Students want more transparency regarding policy changes and want the opportunity to provide their input before a final decision is made.

- All policy changes are made via curriculum counsel and each class has representation and a vote on curriculum council. Specifically, each class gets a single vote. Thus, all policies that are passed go through with student feedback already since there are no policies in which curriculum reps did not vote on. It is important that curriculum reps ask students their opinions before going to curriculum council.
- The faculty members do not want to vote on something without hearing the student opinion and they take all of the student feedback into account. Specifically, the chair asks before any vote is taken what the opinion of the students is to ensure that the student voice is heard. If the faculty members of the council feel strongly about a policy change, they can outvote the four student votes, but this has rarely happened. All four classes voted unanimously for the new distinction policy and it was actually brought to the council by a student. The policy can be revisited if that is what students want, but it was suggested in response to the other proposals on the table and all students voted unanimously for it. When these changes are made in the middle of the year, the change typically only applies to the year after that.
- Background for the new Distinction policy: the faculty felt that the pass/fail system was hurting students and keeping them from trying harder. As a result, students were woefully unprepared for Step 1; last year, 24 students had to delay because they were unable to take the test on time and this was unprecedented. Additionally, many of the

top students felt that the pass/fail system hurt their changes for residency applications. The faculty felt that an incentive in the pre-clinical curriculum would make students better prepared for Step.

- Regarding Distinction and AOA: AOA changes are made by AOA members and only AOA members have a say in any bylaw changes. In the upcoming meetings, the current members will be discussing/voting on how distinction will affect AOA.
- Distinction Calculation Clarification: Distinction will be weighted based on the length of the course. For example, an 80 in a two week course will weigh less than a 95 in a four week class. Classes like PCM, PopHealth, etc. will be counted per semester. The dean's are currently in the process of determining these weights and they will be outlined once determined. There was a weighting system in place prior to pass/fail implementation, but these weights need to be reevaluated to reflect the changes that have been made with the new curriculum. Distinction will not negatively affect students that do not achieve it.

Other Matters

- Please email MSG <medstudentgovernment@gmail.com> if interested in learning more about the budget breakdown for various events.
- Due to time constraints, not all concerns from the students can be addressed at the luncheon. Nevertheless, your class officers and MSG are actively looking into solutions for all matters brought by the students. As always, we appreciate your input and thoughts.