

**Dean's Luncheon**  
**Thursday, March 26th, 2020**

Dr. Buckley

- Thank you to Chris Woleben for your leadership during these times. We appreciate and are proud of the students who were able to adapt quickly and be resilient.
- Telehealth, which previously had not been utilized to its full extent, now comprises 70-80% of outpatient care during this crisis.
- We're also working on curricular changes, actively discussing with colleagues at UVA.
- We are in regular contact with AAMC as well; our priority is safety of the students and the patients.
- Governor on Wednesday approved the executive order to call on the students if needed. While students are out of clinical placement at the moment to ensure their safety, the school may ask the students to volunteer, without incentives or coercion but purely out of volunteerism.
- This is a very fluid situation and we understand the students' frustration with uncertainty.
- We are regularly checking in with NBME – exam cancellation is frustrating news for many, but a necessary decision. There will be flexibility with respect to curricular activities and changes and requirements to graduate the students while meeting the rigorous standards expected from the public.
- Thank you for your professionalism and patience.
- We welcome feedback on how we are doing and encourage you to communicate with us your concerns.

**Updates from Each Class**

Class of 2023:

- We have sent out the social isolation document that lists ideas of what people can do safely at home
- Peer advocates and curriculum reps to discuss with Dr. Biskobing about online transition
- Many students are anxious about the exam next week
- A wellness survey has been sent out; results will be shared with the deans

Class of 2022:

- Most have completed the Step 1 exam.
- Priority was to make sure people returned home safely if they were to go home.
- We are putting together a list of resources to be fresh and ready for M3 year
- Vice Presidents are organizing social events including Netflix party

Class of 2021:

- Students are finishing clerkship obligations for last M3 rotation
- Launched a Discord server to provide social support for each other

#### Class of 2020:

- Class handled everything well regarding the match, despite rapid and drastic changes things
- Students were happy with what has been done with virtual match
- Current concern for many is the graduation: what graduation ceremony is going to look like, if there will be one at all
- We are discussing with Dr. Woleben about what can be done; per Dr. Woleben they have few ideas they are working on and will be announced soon

#### Dr. Woleben

- We received some guidance from LCME and AAMC regarding volunteering to ensure that students do not feel coerced or incentivized to volunteer
- MSG and the Virginia Dept of Health are discussing volunteer opportunities that are safe and without direct patient contact, such as call center and contact tracing
  - E-mail instructing interested students to sign up for Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) has been sent out on Thursday
  - More details to follow
- Early graduation is an option brought up with LCME; we will discuss the possibilities.
- Non-clinical electives for transcript credits are going to be available; the curriculum council will review and approve them soon

#### Dr. Deiorio

- We are working with the student leaders and peer advocates regarding volunteer opportunities and morale boosters!
- If you have initiatives that you would like to discuss or need assistance, please contact me at <[Nicole.Deiorio@vcuhealth.org](mailto:Nicole.Deiorio@vcuhealth.org)>.

#### Dr. Ryan

- We originally had workshops planned for the capstone requirements for class of 2020.
- Some can be virtual but not everything can be, as most would have utilized the Sim Center which is now closed.
- Katedra and I are working on parts that can be done virtually, more to be announced.

#### Dr. Biskobing

- We've adjusted the time for exams because some are taking them from California. Most exams will be in the afternoon.
- We have also asked the endocrine course to schedule Zoom sessions later in the morning rather than 8am if possible.
- We have concerns about students staying engaged that we are working on.

#### Dr. Costanzo

- If any M1s would like to discuss their study schedule please email me at <[linda.costanzo@vcuhealth.org](mailto:linda.costanzo@vcuhealth.org)>!

- Currently developing a module on physiology in times of COVID, to learn why's and how's. We welcome ideas!

Dr. Jackson

- The Admissions Office is discussing communication plan for those who are accepted or waitlisted
- We are talking on the phone with students who have questions
- LMSA/SNMA second look weekend was supposed to be this weekend, but had to be canceled
- We are planning several Zoom info sessions for incoming M1s and welcome interested students to participate

Dr. Navarro

- Match Day list is up on the VCU School of Medicine site!

Pemra Cetin

- While Financial Aid Office is working from home, we are responding to emails as soon as possible.
- If you prefer a phone call, please send us an email with a phone number to reach you.
- We are still doing full exit counseling for the graduating M4s! Please contact us with available times and phone number.

### **Student Concerns**

When is the plan to have students return to campus?

- Dr. Buckley: No answer at this time when the students can physically return, but majority of the coursework is now virtual. Current focus is to optimize the online education.

What is the current plan for M4 schedule – will our schedule shift accordingly?

- Dr. Woleben: We are currently discussing the issues of M4 schedule as well as the issues of class rank being affected as the last rotation is now pass/fail.
  - \*Update: per Dr. Woleben's email sent 3/29, the current tentative plan to start M4 year will be May 4; the VCU leadership is determining ways to best modify everyone's schedule.

Is there a possibility that ERAS deadline will be delayed?

- Dr. Woleben: There will be a meeting soon to determine any change in ERAS timeline; the school will communicate once there is more information.

Will test reviews for M1s be available?

- Dr. Biskobing: They will not be held as it is not an option on Blackboard.

Are there any changes to the Dean's Summer Research Fellowship timeline?

- Dr. Woleben: We do not have an answer at this time – the current plan is to keep the schedule as is, but the school will have to abide by university guidelines about research and will communicate if it affects the students.

Are the fees for Boot Camp, ACLS, and BLS for graduating M4s covered?

- Dr. Brinegar: The school pays only for the first certification prior to M3 year. Those who have matched to VCU Health will receive guidelines from their program directors. Others have the option to take online classes from CTCCE; we have reached out to them for more updates.
- Dr. Woleben – We will address that in a future email.

What is the deadline for financial aid paperwork?

- Ms. Cetin: The deadline is April 15. While we encourage students to meet the deadline, as scholarships will be announced late May, we would accept paperwork until mid-May. Please contact me if this is not feasible.

A student asked if students who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have recovered would be allowed back into the hospital, with the knowledge of their immunity, rather than to have their AI's and rotations cancelled.

- Dr. Woleben: There is a task force at health system working on students and faculty diagnosed with COVID-19 and are defining the criteria which will be that the students/faculty must be symptom-free after the 14-day quarantine, as well as 2 negative tests that are 24 hours apart.

Some would like to know what resources would be available for rising M3 students, who feel they are in the bottom half of the class, to succeed on rotations.

- Dr. Ryan: The goal of transition to clerkship is to ensure everyone's success. Thasia Lewis and I are discussing online transition: we project that two-thirds of the materials can be provided online and have begun recording. We would likely have a week of recordings and Q&A sessions as well as a couple of live Zoom sessions with clerkship directors to provided expectations and answers to questions from students.

Students are interested in knowing what changes to the M3/M4 curriculum would be made, should the closure be delayed more than a month, and if there is any risk of having rotations cut off short and what the school is planning to make up for the 1 month delay.

- Dr. Ryan: We are working with the notion that the time in M4 year scheduled for electives will give us some leeway with respect to what is required for the curriculum and LCME guidelines, but working on changes that may need to occur should the delay last longer. Dr. Sarah Hobgood, who is the curriculum council chair on clinical education, and I have begun some talks.

Some expressed interest in incorporation of telemedicine into the curriculum.

- Dr. Ryan: The VCU Health's priority is to train physicians first in telemedicine, but eventually we hope to have students participate as well, just not at this time.