

## March 2020

Dear Preceptors,

Again, I'd like to reach out and thank you for your professionalism during this time. As you know, the landscape changes almost hourly, and I want to assure you that your leadership is actively engaged in every aspect of the downstream effects of these challenges and changes. I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on a variety of topics as follows:

### Preclinical Curriculum:

- All FOM1 and FOM2 curriculum is being delivered remotely via zoom. Many thanks to the DCS1 students who were our first cohort of participants in zoom small groups, which was set up with just about 24 hour's notice.
- Exams for these courses will be delivered at the Course Director's discretion, and the course directors are actively working on this. All will be delivered on schedule at this time.
- As you know, the LPP and PD sessions have been paused for two weeks. This will be reassessed at the end of two weeks.
- The Transitions Curriculum, while still a ways off, is under active consideration, and plans will be communicated if necessary
- Step 1 is still up in the air, and we will keep you up to date as to the reopening of the testing sites. Until then, please continue to prepare as you normally would.

### Third Year Clerkships:

- We have had a couple of sites decline students, as you know. In addition, over the weekend, our own clinical system has asked the physicians to reschedule elective operations and procedures, and to reschedule all non-urgent clinic visits. The hospital, however, is very much up and running.
- The clerkship directors are working with several models that will identify strategies to support students in meeting the program objectives, and to get the most helpful clinical experience possible **under a time of immense uncertainty and rapid change**. Please be patient with the clinical faculty and clerkship directors during this time. There is no doubt that, for a short time, your experiences will be different. However, we all feel that the clerkship directors can create alternative and modified experiences that will prepare you well, while also taking into consideration our current limitations.

### Advanced Studies:

- As you know, all ECPS clinical shifts have been paused at this time. The remainder of the curriculum **is being delivered**, with the addition of some supplementary experiences. You will receive communications about that from Dr. Carey and/or the Baystate faculty.
- As of today, the ABTS course will be delivered virtually via zoom **for the remainder of the academic year**. This course lends itself quite well to distance learning, so we are taking the opportunity to not only do our part in encouraging physical distancing (where appropriate) but to continue to innovate and learn from each other in alternatives to traditional course delivery.
- **The remainder of the 4<sup>th</sup> year electives curriculum is being delivered as scheduled. This includes all electives and required Subls.**
- I understand that word has not been widely disseminated to attendings outside of the UMass system or large affiliates with regard to your restrictions in patient care (high risk or documented COVID patients). I am rectifying that.

- Match Day is upon us, and I want to congratulate each of you! **And for a little levity: don't forget to fill out your GQ!** I was going to have the first raffle drawing this week, but other things got in the way.....so anyone who finishes your survey by **March 17 at midnight** will be eligible for the first drawing. Just make sure you screen shot your completion.

**Resources/Activities:**

- The Library remains open, although staff is not present. Carrels are available for your use, and tables have been spaced out. If you need assistance, there is a sign posted on the desk indicating how to reach a member of the library staff. A reminder that the Library is only to be utilized by UMMS students, faculty, and staff. DO NOT let others in through the doors please.
- We will be initiating a community zoom meeting three times per week in order to provide students and faculty the opportunity to ask questions and get additional information. That will go into effect this week and you will be invited accordingly.

This is such an incredibly stressful time, yet all of you are rising to the occasion. I thank students who have sent me feedback and questions – keep that coming. And I thank students who have sent me input about your clinical experiences in which you were able to help a patient by calming their anxiety, or help an intern by relieving their burden. These experiences are what being a physician is all about, and I could not be more proud of all of you. This is an opportunity for you to learn about the delivery of medical care in a time of crisis – you will likely never experience something like this again, and I urge you to reflect on your day to day experiences knowing that it will almost certainly shape the physician that you become.

Please also remember that all of the above is really subject to change **at any time**. We are evaluating each of these decisions on an almost daily basis and are making what we feel are the most appropriate decisions for your education, for the safe and appropriate care of patients, and for your welfare. Thank you!

ACL

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