

**From:** LCOM Office of the Dean <[COMOfficeOfTheDean@med.uvm.edu](mailto:COMOfficeOfTheDean@med.uvm.edu)>

**Sent:** Friday, March 27, 2020 5:24 PM

**Subject:** Message from Rick Page to Larner Community

Dear Larner Community:

I am writing to provide further updates on the Larner College of Medicine during these changing and challenging times. For the first time, this is being written at home, as I adhere to our Governor's order and good public health practice in this difficult time.

**Medical Education:** The education of the next generation of physicians, continues unabated. We just finished our third week of entirely remote classroom education, for which we were well prepared by our commitment to active learning. For the time being, and consistent with AAMC recommendations, all medical student participation in clinical care has been suspended. For our M1 students this means only that "Doctoring in Vermont" is on hold. The M2 class has a delay in initiating clerkships, made up for by the choice of a few non-clinical courses including Medical Spanish and a new public health project, "Pandemic Response: Understanding COVID 19". Our M3 students just finished a two-week non-clinical course "Prep 4 Practice", delivered with synchronous (Zoom) and asynchronous teaching methods. And our M4 students, coming off the heels of a successful virtual Match Day event and anticipating graduation in May, are completing non-clinical duties to fulfill their graduation requirements; any modifications of our curriculum will undergo review by our Medical Curriculum Committee, consistent with guidance from the AAMC and LCME.

We look forward to resumption of clinical education, although current issues with COVID-19 do not allow us to predict when this would occur. Kudos to everyone participating in medical education for their rapid adjustment to the current reality.

With concern for a surge in cases of COVID-19, I've received many questions about medical student participation. Our medical students have already started pitching in, organizing locally and even starting a group called, Medical Student COVID-19 Volunteer Network, coordinating med schools and students nationwide; to date, students from over one-third of medical schools have signed on. An LCOM Cares Service Corp Task Force has also been developed with student, faculty and staff participation to help coordinate volunteer opportunities. We are in active communication with the UVM Medical Center regarding further contingencies.

**Research and Graduate Education:** Graduate classroom education is entirely on line. For two weeks we had been preparing to change to telework except for essential research activities even before the Stay Home/Stay Safe order was issued. This transition is now complete, fewer than 20% of our scientists are considered essential for some on-campus activities, and approximately half of those are directly or indirectly involved in COVID-19 related research or testing.

**Clinical Care:** The front-line faculty, working closely with advance practice providers, nurses, technicians, staff and others, are the heroes of this current challenge. Likewise, their loved ones

are subjected to worry and other challenges that are unprecedented. We must all be thankful for their professionalism, compassion and dedication. I have two family friends with COVID-19 currently admitted, and hear nothing but appreciation for the outstanding care they are receiving.

This pandemic has brought out our best of us in many ways. Testing for corona virus is a challenge everywhere in the US, but here in Vermont, thanks to the efforts of many led by Debra Leonard (chair of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine), we are bringing together LCOM, the Medical Center and the Department of Health to address this challenge with hard work and innovation.

We aren't in there, but the Dean's Office remains (virtually) open, for the needs of our faculty, students and staff. Most meetings are with Zoom and Teams: I'm a recent convert to this technology, and am amazed by how they make us feel connected even when apart. I find an almost paradoxical intimacy from video technology, on full display with our space-themed Match Day celebration last week. While we all missed being physically together, many of us felt an almost magical closeness, as we were welcomed into the lives of our amazing Class of 2020, announcing their matches one-by-one; highlights included the direct engagement of family and friends at each "space station" — including a few canine companions. Take a look on [YouTube](#) to witness the event.

Even as this pandemic affects us in new ways daily, and even as we are unable to predict what will come next, I feel fortunate to be part of the Larner community. We are all connected, surrounded (now often virtually) by people who share a common bond. We are in this for the right reasons, and that will provide resilience in the days going forward. Let's all make sure we stay connected, one way or another, as we approach these challenges together.

Stay well,  
Rick

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