

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

**Sent:** Friday, April 10, 2020 4:51 PM

**Subject:** Graduation Ceremony Plans for the Class of 2020 and Option for Early Technical Graduation

Dear Class of 2020,

Our thanks to you for participating in yesterday's Town Hall. In the setting of such societal and financial disruption, it was good to see so many faces and connect, even at a distance. We want to follow-up with you on a couple of matters that need to be addressed more immediately.

**Graduation Ceremony 2020:** We will hold a virtual graduation on Sunday, May 17, the day originally planned. We know that you, like ourselves, are disappointed that we cannot do this together. These are difficult times and we are surrounded by disappointments that are out of our control. We considered other options, including your suggestion of a drive-through event. Given the circumstances and due to public health concerns, travel restrictions and local and national orders to stay home and stay safe a virtual graduation is our best option right now to celebrate all your tremendous accomplishments. We understand that you are still trying to find a way to physically gather together before you leave, although this is not possible in this current context where our priority is the wellbeing of the community. And again, we know this is a source of sadness and disappointment. As difficult as this is, we all have a professional responsibility to do our part to flatten the curve and protect the public by not gathering for events now, during senior week or for graduation. We have been in discussion with other schools across the country; some have chosen to cancel while others are putting this off to sometime in the future. Neither of these fulfills the goal of providing a ceremony at the completion of your final year, before you embark on your careers as physicians. As such, to offer the best opportunity for everybody to participate in a ceremony together (although remotely) on the day originally planned, with your deans, and your classmates, with conferral of degrees by the president, is to have a virtual graduation.

We hope you will choose to participate and celebrate with each other on May 17, 2020. Likewise, we hope that friends and family, from across the world, will be able to join us. Further particulars of graduation week will be sorted out in the coming days, with student input.

**Early Technical Graduation:** Every year, degree conferral is voted upon days before the graduation ceremony. In the setting of unknown workforce challenges in the coming weeks, several have asked about the possibility of receiving your degree early in order to potentially start residency or work in another capacity as a newly graduated physician before the onset of residency. In response, we have worked with AAMC, LCME, and UVM administration to provide this opportunity if you would like.

Degree conferral has minimal impact on Student Financial Services. Important things to be aware of are:

- 1) Loans will enter grace period and/or repayment (depends on loan type) based on what our Registrar's office reports as the degree conferral date. Regardless, loans can always be suspended if you work with your Servicer.
- 2) Fortunately, financial aid budgets and awards will NOT have to be reduced to reflect early graduation. The Department of Education has approved this due to COVID-19 impacts.

- 3) If you have lingering, voluntary loan change requests regarding any 2019-2020 amounts, you must submit adjustment requests to [medsfs@uvm.edu](mailto:medsfs@uvm.edu) prior to your conferral date. Leave several business days of a buffer to ensure your request can be processed.
- 4) If you are using military funding that includes a living stipend, please work with your recruiter/military contact to gauge any impacts. As always, Student Financial Services is *not* involved in military living stipends.

For those of you who already have enough credits, we need to know if you wish this to happen and it could occur after the Faculty Senate vote on April 20 (when many UVM nurses have also elected to be considered early). For those of you who have two weeks remaining, you have already fulfilled the minimal requirements for LCME, and we could provide exception from our curriculum for you to graduate with the credits you have. We will continue to offer and hope that you would take your final course if you can.

Any activities after completion of your degree are completely at your discretion and would not be part of the Larner College of Medicine.

To identify your degree conferral date (April 20, 2020 or May 17, 2020) preference, please complete the co2020 Graduation Survey. You will receive individual notifications from OASIS to log in and complete this brief survey. The survey will close at midnight on Monday, April 13 to allow us time to process the information. If you do not care to do this, your degree conferral will occur at the May Faculty Senate meeting prior to the graduation ceremony.

With appreciation, and please stay well,

Richard L. Page, M.D.  
Dean

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