

From: Zehle, Christa H <Christa.Zehle@med.uvm.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 10:16 PM
Cc: Page, Richard L (LCOM Dean) <richard.page@med.uvm.edu>
Subject: Wednesday Weekly Wonders

Dear Students,

Happy Wednesday! We are in the 6th week of distance learning and the 5th week of the Vermont Stay Home Stay Safe order. This week the news of allegations against and arrest of Dr. Blohm have impacted our LCOM community in countless ways. This report of criminal activity is currently under investigation with the Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations (CUSI) and by the UVM Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (AAEO). Our thoughts go out to potential victims and we are actively engaged in providing additional support resources to our students.

This week we have thankfully also noticed signs of hope, progress and yes, even signs of Spring!

Although I did not receive much feedback on the name of this weekly communication, I did receive some and have decided to change "What-Nots" to "Wonders" to reflect both the many questions still left unanswered, as well as an invitation to begin to explore how we, as a community, can ponder and discover the many lessons learned from navigating through this crisis together. So, here is today's "Weekly Wonders" edition:

What we know:

- **New Doctors!!** Yesterday, April 21, 2020 President Garimella conferred the medical degrees of 49 of our class of 2020 graduates. Congratulations Doctors! We are so proud of you and your many accomplishments!
- **Town Halls:** This past week we conducted town halls for the class of **2021** and **2022**. It was wonderful to see so many students, even if only virtually, and I hope the conversations provided necessary information and were helpful for students. On Friday we will be hosting a town hall for the Class of 2023.
- **Medical Neuroscience:** Students from the class of 2023 returned from spring break, hopefully well rested, relaxed and recharged, and began their final course of first year, Medical Neuroscience!
- **Clerkship Orientation:** Students from the class of 2022 officially began their clerkship curriculum on Monday with the launch of clerkship orientation remotely!
- **Medical Student Clinical Activities:** Clinical activities will be delayed until June 1st, at the earliest.
- **Curriculum Changes:** The Medical Curriculum Committee reviewed and approved the following curriculum changes:
 - o Early degree conferral for class of 2020 student's contingent upon approval from the Committee on Advancement.
 - The Committee on Advancement recommended 49 students to the UVM Faculty Senate and President Garimella for early degree conferral, which as mentioned above was approved.
 - o In-person (or telehealth) start of clinical activities for students in the class of 2021 on June 1, 2020, with the possibility of enrollment in 2 week courses beginning on May 18, 2020 depending on the clinical environment.
 - Co2021 students are encouraged to contact coordinators for rescheduling of May rotations.
 - Co2021 students are encouraged to contact Dr. Shaden Eldakar-Hein or Emma Faustner for non-clinical rotation ideas for May,
 - o Reduction in surgery subspecialty requirements in the Advanced Integration level for the class of 2021 from 4 weeks to 2 weeks.
 - o Requirement of a minimum of 16 weeks (previously 16 weeks of required coursework, now 16 weeks of required or elective coursework) of clinical coursework in the Advanced Integration level for the class of 2021.
 - Previously 16 weeks of required clinical coursework was necessary for graduation. Given that some of the required clinical coursework, such as the surgery subspecialty requirement will be reduced, this now allows students to complete 16 weeks of clinical coursework with either required or elective courses.

- **National Exams**
 - o Prometric test centers in the US and Canada will remain closed until May 1, 2020.
 - o USMLE Step 2 Clinical Skills(CS) testing suspension to continue through May 31, 2020.
- **Community Service:** Thank you to all of our students involved in community service and support. A special shout out to the LCOMcares Service Corps Task Force for their hard work coordinating [LCOM student and staff volunteer activities](#) and to the Public Health Coalition which received national recognition on two list serves this week for their [Medical Student COVID-19 Action Network \(MSCAN\)](#) website and efforts!
- **Stay Home Stay Safe:** On April 20th, 2020, Vermont began reopening ‘low contact’ businesses with two-person staff limit.
- **Clinical Environment:** The number of COVID-19 cases in the UVM Health Network is decreasing. Currently there are 10 COVID positive cases and 4 PUIs (Patients Under Investigation). Testing continues with plenty of collection kits on hand, a predictable supply chain and the ability to conduct 2200 tests per day (current run rate is 600-700 tests). A shout-out to our Laboratory Medicine and Pathology teams who have worked hard to make testing more available. Connecticut has approximately 80 cases at each hospital (Norwalk and Danbury), however is seeing the situation stabilize.

What we don't yet know:

- **Confirmed date of return to clinical activities:** We continue to work hard to determine the optimal time to return students to the clinical learning environment. Public health and safety considerations, clinical environments and educational quality are all being factored into that decision.
- **Confirmed date of return to Vermont:** We do not know when students need to return to Vermont, because this depends on when clinical activities will start. However, we anticipate and ask students to plan on a 14-day self-quarantine upon returning to Vermont, prior to starting clinical activities.
- **Housing:** Depending on when clinical activities re-start, we anticipate some student will have housing needs. We are working closely with UVM Real Estate to identify housing for any students displaced due to a change in their clinical placement.

What we recommend:

- **Stay engaged in your medical education:** Please know that all students remain enrolled in course work that provides credit necessary for graduation and meets the programmatic objectives of our program.
- **Stay engaged in your community and knowledgeable about the pandemic:** Visit the [Medical Student COVID-19 Information webpage](#) for additional information about service opportunities and COVID-19, including messages from the Dean, FAQs and curriculum resources.
- **Access Services when needed:** Please know that although the Stay Home Stay Safe order is in effect there are many resources available to you. This includes medical student services, counseling, health care services and financial aid support. Please contact [StudentCOMServices](#) if you need assistance.
- **If in need of food:** Rally Cat's Cupboard, located in 016 Hills (behind Marsh Life Sciences) remains open. It will be open on April 27th from 4 pm – 8 pm and May 1st from 10 am – 2 pm. Only a student ID is necessary to obtain food.

We remain grateful to you for your patience and understanding during this stressful and challenging time. Please remember to take care of yourselves, your families and each other. Stay safe and cozy.

With gratitude,

Christa Zehle and our amazing OMSE team!