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**Sent:** Thursday, December 17, 2020 12:08 PM

**Subject:** On Behalf of Dean Page ~ Warm Wishes for the Holidays

Dear Larner Community,

In this holiday season, and as 2020 comes to an end, I wanted to take a few moments to recognize the extraordinary work that has taken place this year at our College.

When the year began, we knew that, in addition to our ongoing efforts in our mission areas, we had other important work ahead of us. We needed to examine our institution in detail in preparation for our LCME accreditation visit in April 2021. We also knew that, in tandem with that accreditation work, we were continuing to engage our community to envision a strategic plan that would guide the College in the coming years. Of course, barely two months into 2020, an entirely new challenge presented itself with the rise of COVID-19.

Our response within this institution was swift, broad, and effective. Across the College, faculty, staff and students reengineered everyday life, and adapted to the pandemic. Our entire community took this crisis seriously, and has been rewarded by lower rates of infection than nearly anyplace else in the country and world. On the front lines, our clinicians have provided outstanding care, sometimes at personal risk, and even with the recent added challenge of the cyberattack. We stood in solidarity with our partners in the UVM Health Network, Medical Center and Medical Group as we worked in partnership. Our scientists have stepped-up, continuing essential research, developing projects directly related to COVID-19, and now even leading with vaccine development. Medical and graduate education have continued throughout, thanks to the resilience of faculty, staff and students. Never before have I felt a greater responsibility to keep the pipeline open in preparing the physicians and scientists of the future.

In the midst of this public health challenge, which threw many health care inequities into high relief, our society has been challenged to also face up to systematic racism. We have much to do in terms of social justice and in support of diversity, equity and inclusion. These issues are central to all we do, and our efforts will increase further in the year to come.

There is promise ahead as we anticipate the coming of the New Year. This week, the first COVID-19 vaccinations have begun. More will follow as we move through the winter, spring and summer. Even as we face national and worldwide numbers of hospitalizations and deaths that seem unimaginable, with limited contacts, physical distancing, hand hygiene and, of course, masks, we can all see a way out of this.

This year our Larner Community has shown resilience, creativity, commitment and professionalism. My thanks to all of you. Let us take comfort that we have taken on great challenges this year, and that there is promise for better days ahead.

Warmest wishes for our upcoming holiday break and the New Year,

Rick

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