



The University
of Vermont

LARNER COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

MEDICAL STUDENT EDUCATION

**ΑΩΑ - ALPHA OMEGA ALPHA (AOA) Honor Medical Society
The Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont**

MEMORANDUM

Via Electronic Communication

TO: Larner College of Medicine Medical Student Community
FROM: Marie Sandoval, M.D., Faculty Councilor, AOA
DATE: October 28th, 2020
RE: Election to Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society in a Pass-Fail Basic Sciences Curriculum in the year of the COVID outbreak

Hello Medical Student Community,

The Larner College of Medicine is honored to host an [Alpha Omega Alpha \(AOA\) Honor Medical Society](#) chapter. This honor distinguishes students from their peers and is *dedicated to the belief that in the profession of medicine we will improve care for all by recognizing high educational achievement, honoring gifted teaching, encouraging the development of leaders in academia and the community, supporting the ideals of humanism and promoting service to others.* AOA is composed of fourth-year medical students who have demonstrated excellence in leadership, research, professionalism, service to the school and community, and clinical acumen.

In the past, eligibility for AOA induction was determined based on the combined number of honors in the Foundations and Clerkship levels of the curriculum. Students identified as eligible were then invited to submit their latest Curriculum Vitae and an application asking for students to list engagement in leadership, service, and research along with a personal statement.

In 2018, with the LCOM move to a pass-fail curriculum in the Foundations Level, the AOA Selection committee needed to update the selection process and voted to have Clerkship level honors grades determine AOA eligibility. LCOM clerkship grades are based on clinical evaluations which include six core competencies including professionalism, a final exam and a clinical skills exam.

The top quartile of the class was invited to apply for membership in mid-May, the year prior to their graduation, and up to one-sixth of the graduating class was selected from the pool of applicants for nomination and induction using the following criteria:

- Academic performance during their medical education, specifically their academic performance in the clinical clerkship level.
- Successful research/scholarly activities as documented by formal presentations at national meetings or by publications or other scholarly work.
- Leadership in school activities and/or community service.
- Professionalism and humanism.

In October of 2020, the AOA Board of Directors voted to increase the percent per class of students selected to AOA up to 20%. [The adopted changes to the AOA society's constitution](#) were developed to support elections that are inclusive, diverse and equitable.

This year, due to the COVID19 pandemic, the LCOM Medical Curriculum Committee voted to eliminate honors as a designation for clerkships. In order to determine the top quartile of students eligible for AOA the following process will be implemented for the class of 2022 AOA selection:

Clerkship distinction points for each clerkship will be awarded by:

1. Top 50% of the Likert scale (ranking a student 1-5 based on clinical work in clerkship)
2. Nomination from clerkship director for distinction in clerkship-nomination will identify medical students who demonstrate characteristics of excellent physicianship – trustworthiness, character, caring, knowledge, scholarship, proficiency in the doctor-patient relationship, leadership, compassion, empathy, altruism and service leadership.
3. Application eligibility determined based on grades available at the time of selection (usually in May)

We will use rolled up scores of total number of points in category 1 clerkship points and category 2 clerkship points in the student's completed clerkships at the time of selection to generate a list of students in the top 25% and these students will be offered the opportunity to apply to AOA.

The AOA application asks AOA applicants to reflect on their medical school experiences in leadership, service and research. Applicants are asked to reflect on one experience in each category and write about how that experience serves to meet the tenants of AOA and what personal or professional development occurred as a result of the experience.

The selection committee did not support going back to using numerical grades, a cumulative GPA or USMLE scores to determine AOA eligibility. They deemed it in conflict with the goals and objectives of moving to a pass-fail basic science curriculum.

After a careful review of the applications, the LCOM AOA Selection Committee selects up to 20% of the class for AOA induction in late July/early August, and new members are informed early enough to include this information in their residency application.

Alpha Omega Alpha values and is committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion based on evidence that inclusion of talented individuals from different backgrounds benefits patient care, population health, education, and scientific discovery. The Larner College of Medicine is equally committed to promoting inclusive excellence and the selection of diverse members to AOA. The LCOM AOA committee developed the above eligibility criteria, in collaboration with the Office of Medical Student Education and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) leadership to provide a fair and equitable process for our students.

Please feel free to direct any questions you may have to myself, the Interim Associate Dean for Students Dr. Lee Rosen, or the Office of Medical Student Education.

Sincerely,



[Marie Sandoval, M.D.](#)

AOA Faculty Councilor

Associate Professor of Medicine

Personal Pronoun: she/her



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alphaomegaalpha.org

CC: [Lee Rosen, MD](#), Interim Associate Dean for Students
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