

March 11, 2020

Dear Larner College of Medicine Community,

As concern mounts regarding COVID-19, I am writing to provide an update specific to our College. We have been tracking this situation for many weeks now, with substantial planning at the University and College level.

Per [President Garimella's letter](#) today, we now have specific UVM guidance that is informing the policies listed below. All graduate and undergraduate courses follow the policies laid out in the President's communication: they will be cancelled March 16 and 17 and taught remotely after that. Resources in support of undergraduate and graduate faculty are provided in today's [message](#) from the Provost.

Please note that there are no class cancellations for medical students on March 16 and 17, as we are already moving to remote learning starting Monday, March 16. These restrictions are to be continued until further notice.

Medical Education (note that we are monitoring AAMC guidelines for education and safety considerations for medical students):

Non-clinical courses: We are following institutional expectations and moving to online curriculum delivery. Instead of cancelling classes on Monday and Tuesday, we plan to begin remote education on Monday, March 16th. Please look for communication from your course director for further details.

Introduction to clinical rotations: Unlike in clinical rotations, the primary focus in these courses is on learning, not patient care. Doctoring in Vermont will be suspended until further notice to allow health care providers to respond to patient care needs until the epidemiology of COVID-19 is better known and the burden on frontline care providers from COVID-19 patients has diminished.

Clinical rotations and interactions: Students in their clinical years (on their core clinical clerkships and clinical electives) are members of the health care team and can provide meaningful care. These students, after receiving appropriate training, are regularly involved in the care of patients with communicable diseases like influenza, measles, TB and HIV. In these situations, student level of involvement is determined by school policies that consider well-established transmissibility data and morbidity/mortality data. For COVID-19, we do not have these critical data about transmissibility, morbidity and mortality, even as we need to make important decisions. Therefore, in the interest of student safety, we plan to limit student direct care of known or suspected cases of COVID-19 infection until better epidemiologic data are available. Other than limiting direct care of COVID-19 patients, the plan is for clinical students to continue their roles as part of the care team.

Graduate Education: As noted above, graduate students should plan to abide by the UVM plan to have classes cancelled on March 16 and 17 and then attend class remotely beginning March 18. They will be expected to meet all deadlines for assignments and exams as originally scheduled unless they hear otherwise from their course directors. Further guidance regarding research commitments will be provided by Dean of the Graduate College, Dr. Cynthia Forehand. If any students become ill or are

delayed returning to campus after spring break, they should notify their instructors immediately so the proper academic support can be facilitated.

For Faculty, Staff and Students:

Clinical care: Please refer to guidance provided by the UVM Health Network Medical Group and the leadership of the specific clinical site. Note that today it was announced that a new UVM Health Network COVID-19 Coordination Center will be responsible for future communications.

Meetings: Move to on-line as much as possible via ZOOM. We are in active discussions with ZOOM for additional licenses through the end of the fiscal year. In-person meetings generally limited to eight people or less.

Large gatherings: Events and gatherings will be limited to 25 attendees or fewer. This means we must cancel the Match Day Eve Reception and modify our traditional Match Day Event. Within 24 hours we will provide a plan for the Match. We are postponing the ISA Ice Cream Celebration, with hope to reschedule for Graduation Week.

Travel: Please visit [this link](#) for the most recent information regarding travel and travel authorizations.

For members of the UVM Health Network Medical Group, please refer to the communication sent by the UVM Health Network COVID-19 Coordination Center and the UVM Health Network Medical Group.

Essential services: The University and College will remain open and employees are expected to report to work. Further guidance from UVM Human Resources will be forthcoming.

Please remember that there are [simple things](#) we can all do to protect ourselves and reduce the chance of spreading the novel coronavirus:

- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Wear a facemask if you are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What do I do if I am sick? Students should contact Student Health Services (phone consultation and office visit free to all enrolled UVM students regardless of insurance). All others should contact your primary care provider to discuss your symptoms.

Also, please stay informed by regularly checking the [UVM](#) COVID-19 site, the [CDC](#) and the Vermont Department of Health. The [Department of Health](#) has recommendations for general questions (dial 2-1-1), for returning travelers from affected countries, and for individuals who are ill.

As our state's only college of medicine, with faculty serving our state's only tertiary/quaternary medical center, we have a unique obligation to our students, faculty, staff and community. I am proud of the efforts that have already been undertaken and am confident that we can address this challenge based on science, public health expertise, professionalism and compassion.

As always, thank you for everything you do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard L. Page". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Richard L. Page, M.D.
Dean, The Robert Larner M.D. College of Medicine
The University of Vermont