

From the Office of the Dean

January 8, 2021

This week has been a busy week after the break. We greeted the new IS '23 class and the "returning" D24 class (virtually!), many were tested twice, we held staff and faculty development programs, ran virtual classes, and got the news about the vaccine plans for essential workers, students, and residents. Staff and faculty are planning for distribution of kits/loupes and the return of D23/D24 students to preclinical exercises at the end of the month. Other important wheels continue to roll in the background: admissions, billing, materials management, TDF operations, research, and more.

All of this is happening at a time when the virus continues to surge around us and we witness the sad and tragic political events that have affected many. On January 6, 2021 we witnessed armed and angry mobs driven to acts of violence, vandalism, and terror by the words and actions of leaders. Many in the crowds were identified as white supremacists. The assault on the very heart of our democracy and these acts will always be a stain in our history.

I know these scenes have opened up wounds that have not healed from the social, racial, and political divides we have experienced as a community and as individuals. I ask that we all take time to reflect on these events and to mourn the many lives that have been lost over this sad chapter in our history. Let us also remember the words expressed by President Monaco, "Our Tufts family must come together to recommit ourselves to public service and to keeping the light of truth, justice, and peace shining brightly on our own Hill, and within our communities."

As the pandemic continues to affect many in our community and many around us, I ask that we all continue to be extremely vigilant. Now is not the time to let our guard down. The advent and access to vaccines simply allows for another "layer" of protection to many of our current efforts: masks, social distancing, washing hands, and adhering to excellent clinical protocols. Remember that those that receive the vaccine can potentially still "spread" the disease to others while remaining asymptomatic themselves; this piece is still unknown. Our testing protocols and surveillance are still a critical part of this plan. Whether you are vaccinated or not we must continue to **"keep our guard up"**.

GENERAL REMINDERS

1. TESTING REQUIREMENT.

We assume that all faculty/staff/students/residents that are returning to One Kneeland St. after January 4th for resumption of educational and clinical activities have completed their 2 tests for COVID-19 this week. **D23/D24/IS23** students will be required to have 2 tests done 3-4 days apart during the week of January 11-15 before reverting to a single test per week schedule.

TUFTS UNIVERSITY TESTING CENTER HOURS.

Boston Site: 116 Harrison Avenue.

<https://coronavirus.tufts.edu/testing-at-tufts#january>

2. VACCINATION UPDATES

As mentioned, the FDA has authorized for emergency distribution two COVID-19 vaccines in the United States. We have been working with Tufts University and Tufts Medical Center (TMC) to coordinate vaccination for essential

workers/students/residents who are in phase one as defined by the Commonwealth and the Centers for Disease Control and who have been working at TUSDM in our preclinical and clinical settings. Due to the unique nature of our operations not all members of our community as outlined in the State/CDC guidelines will be vaccinated in phase one. We urge you to get vaccinated when you are eligible and if access is granted through other sources if you are not included in this initial program.

The following groups will receive the vaccines through this program:-

Pod 1-Those in direct patient care settings.

Pod 2-Those in in-direct patient care settings.

Pod 3-Those in preclinical education settings.

We are gathering general information, such as medical insurance details, on all of our personnel in order to facilitate vaccinations both for those who will be in phase one and those who will be in later phases as determined by the Commonwealth.

We will alert the rest of our community about resources (University or State) that will become available in the coming months.

VACCINATION REMINDERS FOR THOSE BEING VACCINATED

Faculty, students, residents, and staff are being notified on a rolling basis (at least one week ahead of time) of the date/time of their vaccine appointments.

For questions please reach out to:-

Drs. Ghaffari, Ramesh for DMD/IS DMD issues

Dr. Amato for AG issues

Dean Hanlon-general clinical/staff issues

Please email Dean Gonthier for overall concerns (mark.gonthier@tufts.edu).

TYPE OF VACCINE BEING ADMINSTERED:

We have learned that the dental community in this phase will all receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. **Please see the attached information sheets on this vaccine.** The second dose will be administered 21 days later; appointment times/dates to be confirmed.

CHECK-LIST FOR DAY OF APPOINTMENT:

Please see the attached checklist for details on place/protocols to be followed for the vaccine.

FOR THOSE MISSING CLINICS DUE TO VACCINE APPOINTMENTS:

If you are scheduled to receive a vaccine you will be asked to cancel any patients during the PM and PPM sessions on the day you receive the vaccine; note that this will have to be repeated on the date of the administration of the second vaccine dose. We will stagger clinical faculty and staff to maintain clinical operations for all others. However, for those in clinics on these days please recognize the logistical challenges presented by having some faculty/staff that support clinics also having to be vaccinated, and plan with you clinical leaders accordingly (Program Directors, lead PCs, etc.). Faculty and staff can return to work after the vaccines have been administered and you have complied with the wait times.

UNSUNG HEROES

We continue to honor individuals with our unsung heroes series:

Paula Callahan

In every organization, there is an individual who is the “glue”. This is the person who pulls it all together, addresses issues thrown their way without fanfare, rises to every occasion, and makes everyone around them better due to their efforts. There is no doubt that at TUSDM that person is Paula Callahan. Every aspect of our clinical operations has been impacted by Paula’s work ethic and more so during these horrific pandemic times. Her contributions may go unnoticed for they are the nuts and bolts of the work behind the scenes and the fact that she never brings attention to herself. Her work is not glamorous, but vital in addressing safety issues and assuring that our clinical mission can be fulfilled. If anyone could be named an unsung hero at TUSDM, it would be Paula Callahan. No matter the stress, the deadlines, or immediate needs, Paula manages to do it all with a smile and positive attitude that influences all of those around her. Whether addressing waterline issues or assuring that Board examinations for our students occur seamlessly during the pandemic, Paula is always there making it happen without drama and with quiet confidence and competence. There is a thought that in any organization, no one is indispensable, but there is little doubt that others may fill her role eventually but will quickly find how indispensable Paula was. She is someone who we all should emulate and appreciate what she has brought to TUSDM over these many years and it not surprising of her accepting so many additional responsibilities work during this pandemic is just part of being the “glue” of TUSDM.

All the best in 2021!

Dean Karimbux

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