

From the Office of the Dean

Dear Colleagues,

We continue to work on several key areas at the University level and the dental school level. These include financial considerations and resumption of services.

5.1.20 KEY UPDATES:**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS****ITEM 1 (as of 4/15/20).**

The leadership groups continue to look at the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The models are based on a variety of scenarios that still remain unpredictable. The models are thought of in best case versus worst case scenarios. On 4/15/20 we all received the communication from President Monaco regarding the “Impact of the pandemic on university finances and operations.”

Some of the highlights included:

Hiring

We will implement an immediate moratorium on new faculty and staff hiring including Tufts and agency temporary staff. Externally funded positions are exempt from this moratorium. Exceptions to this, which will be rare, must be approved by senior university leaders.

Salaries

We will enact a wage and salary freeze for all faculty and staff, except as provided for by contract. This includes a freeze on otherwise scheduled merit cycle increases and market adjustments. This does not include salary changes related to any approved faculty and staff promotions.

Discretionary Spending

Effective immediately, we will be suspending all new discretionary spending, including, for example, travel, food, conferences, furniture, and non-essential facilities spending. Spending to maintain essential university operations will continue.

Capital Projects

All planned capital projects will be put on hold indefinitely. Current projects in advanced stages of construction, such as the Cummings Center, will continue when permitted by government authorities.

ITEM 2 (as of 5/1/20).

All of the efforts above are considered Tier I efforts. Each unit at the university is now being asked to look at their FY 21 budgets. In our case we anticipate a phased/titrated clinical opening. The ability to become “fully operational” could take anywhere from 6 months up to a year. These scenarios will have a major impact on our budget and we will be meeting with university leadership to decide on how to manage/mitigate the budget shortfalls. This week our budget center colleagues are starting to play out all types of scenarios in order to see how we can balance our budget. As the details of impact and mitigation are worked out I will be sure to share the plans with our Deans/Chairs and the community.

RESUMPTION OF SERVICES (5.1.20)

PLEASE NOTE the Massachusetts Dental Society has asked that all dental practices continue to only see emergency patients through May 18. The State has extended the “Stay at home” advisory through May 18 2020. A detailed and phased plan of resumption of services in the State of MA is expected to be released on May 18, 2020. Due to the uncertainty of what type of services might be permitted to start after May 18, and to provide some clarity for planning services we have decided on a new clinical start date.

At this time we have SET OUR NEW CLINICAL START DATE FOR JUNE 1. It is very likely we will begin training staff/residents on new protocols/fitting of respirators etc. May 18, in order to meet this start date. We are hoping to allow DMD students to resume clinical practice two weeks after June 1-on June 15th. As in the model presented above training for DMD students would start two weeks prior to a clinical start date (i.e. June 1).

Please do assume for now we remain as is with our emergency clinic operation through at least June 1.

CLINICAL SERVICES

The “resumption” teams (Academic Continuity, Clinical Continuity, Operational Continuity, Research Continuity, Financial Continuity and Health and Safety) continue to meet at TUSDM to plan for resumption of services in our key mission areas-education, clinical care, research, community outreach and service. We will rest the start date based on the new Directive. As per in the past the new start date will be an aspiration that will be dictated by many factors (national and local guidelines, supply lines of PPE and infection control needs, health and safety protocols for all involved etc). Please recognize, as in the past, this date might well change-based on current modelling in MA we are potentially preparing for further delays through the month of May. This group has come up with a model that would allow for resumption of services on floors 2, 3 and 4. The model accounts for screening, social distancing, and best practices (PPE, protocols, health and safety, and infection control). I thank all the faculty, staff, residents and students that are on these teams. There is a realization that at any time that we resume services we could also have to resume “emergency only” services should there be another large “wave” and another “stay at home” mandate.

Details of these plans are being shared amongst school-wide committees, and at student/resident/faculty/staff town halls. The outline for the phases are (draft only):-

Phase 0-Current limited services (emergency clinic).

Phase 0 Development-Planning for phase 1

Phase 1a-Limited clinical service opening for AGE Programs (with a 2 week lead in for training, staff and faculty models for coverage).

Phase 1b-Limited clinical service opening for DMD Programs (with a 2 week lead in for training, staff and faculty models for coverage).

Phase 1c-Limited preclinical opening for D20/IS20 to complete requirements/competencies.

Phase 1 Development-Planning for phase 2.

Phase 2a-Limited opening on upper floors (elevators required)

Phase 2b-Increased operations for the DMD programs on lower floors

Phase 2c-Preclinical Space opening for regular exercises for D2 class and skill retention/competencies for D3

Phase 2 Development-Planning for phase 2.

Phase 3a-Opening on upper floors (assume social distancing relaxed)

Phase 3b-DMD clinical activity without social distancing

Phase 3 Development-Planning for Phase 4

Phase 4-Return to full activity

The timing for each phase is based on many variables that have been outlined/continue to develop.

Continuity of care-emergencies.

We will continue to keep the clinics open for emergency care provided by a clinical continuity team.

Please refer to the emergency call guidelines that have been circulated to all students/residents and faculty.

As of 4/30 344 patients have been seen in the emergency clinic. A record audit of the patients seen indicate that over 91% needed to be seen. Dr. McGarry, faculty, residents and staff have done an outstanding job running the emergency clinic. The phone system has received over 282 calls so far and has worked well due to the call center and faculty cooperation. This arrangement has reduced the burden on the hospital. Thank you to all who are taking care of these patients.

EXTERNAL CLINICAL ACTIVITIES

External rotations and externships etc., will be cancelled up to June 1, 2020. Our Academic Affairs Team/Dr. Nehring/Dr. Yered will inform site directors of this change. Please contact them for any issues that arise. This group is now starting to look at the impact of COVID-19 on these clinical activities during the remainder for May-September.

ACADEMIC PLANS

1. Didactic programming (DMD/AG). In person classes have stopped and online/distance education will continue. Where possible activities to engage students/residents in clinical cases/care will start to be implemented
2. Preclinical Programming. Classes will continue to be modified as possible (consolidation, focus on key points etc.). Time can be made up for lost exercises once we start up again by using “unscheduled” times-evenings, weekends, some “vacation” time over the summer/last week before winter break etc. Faculty and staff who have down time from these shutdowns right now will rally to help to make up lost time. Our fourth years will resume limited activities in our preclinical spaces on May 4, 2020.
3. Clinical Programming. As clinical operations are closed, the Clinical Progress Committee and the Advanced Graduate Education Committee and PG program directors are developing ways to continue some aspects of clinical learning through case discussion, reviews etc. These will be communicated with the student groups in the coming weeks.

Deans Kasberg, Ramesh and Thompson continue to hear from Class Leadership groups to obtain student feedback and modifications will continue to be made based on this feedback. In the past weeks several Town Hall Meetings have been held to address student concerns. A Residents Town Hall meeting was conducted to provide responses to queries and to share the Planning process

Program Directors will meet with residents to obtain their feedback.

RESEARCH OPERATIONS

The University continues to release new guidelines for researchers. These will continue to be distributed by Dean Kugel and his team. Any plans for resumption of activities will also be shared when appropriate.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Dr. Pastan continues to guide yoga and drop in meditation via Zoom on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She is available for student meetings through Zoom; email her to set up an appointment christina.pastan@tufts.edu. You can also follow her [@drpastanspaceofmind](https://www.instagram.com/drpastanspaceofmind) on Instagram for connection and offerings of grounding and self-care.

Boston Campus students in all programs can continue to access Counseling services now available remotely through [Talk One2One](#). The phone number to access this service is 1-800-756-3124. This is both a 24-hour emergency helpline as well as a way to access the mental health counselors assigned to the Boston campus for ongoing counseling.

The University has a resource pass that can help with questions you might have around “Public Health & Medical Issues FAQ” <https://coronavirus.tufts.edu/health-and-medical/>

If anyone has a concern about a COVID-19 Positive test/exposure please email: covid19@tufts.edu, or e-mail robert.kasberg@tufts.edu , Morton.Rosenberg@tufts.edu understanding that confidentiality will be maintained.

ACCESS TO ONE KNEELAND STREET

Recently members of our community have entered One Kneeland for a variety of reasons not realizing that access to all healthcare facilities has been limited. Access has been limited to allow only essential faculty, staff, students and residents into the building. This is mandated to maintain a safe environment. Please do not enter the building unless a direct supervisor, Chair or Dean has granted you permission. Guidelines and time for entry will be given to you at that time. Please note that your I.D.s may not grant you access as in the past.

TRAVEL GUIDELINES

Please stay up to date with the University travel guidelines <https://announcements.tufts.edu/announcement/travel-guidance-related-covid-19-coronavirus> including the Local and National restrictions on travel.

We encourage you (faculty, staff, residents and students) not to travel at this time due to the changing circumstances.

EXTERNAL ACTIONS/RESOURCES

1. This week I watched a webinar hosted by the ADA “COVID-19 Economic Impact on Dental Practices”. The recorded webinar should be posted at this site. <https://www.ada.org/en/science-research/health-policy-institute/covid-19-dentists-economic-impact>
2. (As mentioned last week). Many of you are participating in Zoom Meetings and are using creative “virtual backgrounds”. Please see the attached using our “We are jumbo strong, we are Boston Strong” saying. <https://tufts.box.com/s/gtrnjpi3qx4shit8iahogy9qedmr1xg5>. The ad-hoc “Design Team” for this project was compiled by: Dr. Alberto Almodovar (PG-Y3), Dr. Po Lee (PG-Y2) and Dr. Irina Dragan.

REFLECTION: Toast to Tufts Graduates

My days and the time of day are defined by recognizing what is on my calendar. I know it is a work week since I have Zoom Meetings Monday-Friday 9-10 with my Clinical Council of Deans leadership team. I know it is Wednesday since I have a weekly Chairs/Deans Zoom Meeting 12.00-1.30PM. I know it is 10.00 AM since I have Provosts Council Zoom Meetings at that time. I know two weeks have passed when I host Staff or Faculty Town Hall meetings. The days blur into weeks, the weeks into months. Time passes yet at times it feels like no time has passed at all.

Lo and behold last week there were a couple of events on my calendar that broke the usual routine. Write condolence cards for TUSDM alumni who have passed away was saved as a 30-minute task. “Record Senior Video” was blocked out for me. I made several appointments for “Record Commencement Speech.” How was I to record these videos without any help?

The Senior video was recorded through Zoom with the audio-visual technician walking me through what he thought was a “good shoot”-one with a virtual background, one with an office background. The virtual commencement video was another challenge. No technician help through Zoom this time. Where do I “shoot” the video? What do I wear? How do I record it by myself? In the end I went to the Board Room on the fifteenth floor. I wore my white coat. I played with the lighting, the audio, the set-up. Over two days I settled on the best settings that I could manage. The lamp from my office gave me the best light (off to my left with the shade off). I stood at the lectern with my speech notes in front of me. The laptop was set on a chair on the table-angled perfectly to capture my speech with some background-the angle looked right ([LINK TO VIDEO CLIP](#)). I know many faculty, staff and students have been recording their formal/informal clips-I look forward to viewing them all! I hope you will all join us as we celebrate the Class of 2020 during their virtual commencement. The Virtual Commencement will launch at 2:00pm on May 17th and we will share the landing page site as soon as it is complete. Also, be sure to “tune in” to the Senior video (release planned for Friday May 8th at 6 pm-landing page to be announced). Thank you to all (especially those in Student Affairs) for coordinating these virtual celebrations!

All of these events on my calendar are a break from the routinely scheduled meetings to deal with the current crisis. A welcome reminder to celebrate the accomplishments of our student, the efforts of our faculty and staff. It reminds me that we are not totally bound by the current crisis. It gives us all pause.

This Friday I noticed that between 6.30-8.00 PM on my calendar I had a reception invite for “Toast to Tufts Graduates.” This is an event that is sponsored by the alumni association (TUDAA) and the department of development and alumni relations to welcome the Class of 2020 as new members of TUDAA.

To the Class of 2020, I raise a glass to you this Friday as I toast all your accomplishments, and I ask that all in the TUSDM Community do the same!

This year will be something that you will always remember as well as something that will keep you all connected. I look forward to working with you as alumni.

Thank you to all in our community for your hard work and efforts to look forward!

Dean Karimbux

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