Dear UCSF Medical Education Community,

As the COVID-19 pandemic marches on, we write to outline our approach to sustaining the UCSF medical education program.

UCSF School of Medicine is a public institution committed to educating the physician workforce that our state and nation needs. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that in the midst of this pandemic we continue to educate our talented medical students to develop the competencies they need to become outstanding UCSF physicians and help them advance towards graduation from medical school on time. This commitment is shared by the Deans of the other UC Medical Schools.

The redesign of the School of Medicine undergraduate curriculum has been undertaken with several commitments to our community and our students:

1. We will ensure that all graduates are qualified and capable of becoming an intern in their chosen field: we will not compromise on our graduation requirements, though we may alter the way those requirements are met.

2. We will adhere to evidence-based infection control measures: we will not place students in clinical environments if there are not sufficient quantities of PPE or if their presence increases the risk to patients or to other healthcare professionals. We will find alternate strategies for progress for students who, by virtue of extenuating personal or medical circumstances, cannot be in the clinical environment.

3. We will support our clinical faculty in their teaching roles and work to streamline educational responsibilities that distract from direct patient care or direct student education.

With that background, here are the current plans for sustaining our educational programs and helping our students advance in their medical education.

1. In the setting of limited availability of clinical experiences (related to cancelled elective procedures, insufficient PPE, or unavailable physician supervision), we will prioritize currently available clinical workplace experiences for fourth year students: first, those about to graduate who have remaining required experiences and then those who are beginning their fourth year and are seeking sub-internships that can help them complete work towards the residency matching process.

2. For all students, if there are insufficient patients, PPE, or physician supervisors, we are working with educators in all departments to create alternative pathways for the near future while we wait for a return to more normal clinical experiences. The same applies to students with health conditions that increase their risk of complications from COVID-19.

3. Career Launch Logistical Information: There will be a mandatory remote Town Hall
meeting on Tuesday, March 31 at 6 p.m. **Zoom Link:** https://ucsf.zoom.us/j/923569612 / Phone: 16699006833, 923569612#

**Career Launch Logistical Information**

**Tues., March 31 Mandatory Virtual Town Hall**

4. **Foundations 2 Logistical Information:** There will be a mandatory remote Town Hall meeting on Monday, March 30 at 6 p.m. **Zoom Link:** https://ucsf.zoom.us/j/923569612 / Phone: 16699006833, 923569612#

**Foundations 2 Logistical Information**

**Mon., March 30 Mandatory Virtual Town Hall**

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**Early Graduation, Matching Program, and Other Questions**

**What about early graduation?**

1. We are aware that NYU students are graduating and being hired into a temporary position at NYU before they go into their matched positions as volunteers for EM and IM; the focus is on support of the surge.
2. It is feasible for students to graduate early from the UCSF perspective, but it may not be advisable unless the health systems in our midst are willing to hire them to do work — otherwise, they will be disadvantaged in housing, financial aid and health insurance if they are no longer students.
3. The current licensing rules do not allow recent graduates of medical school to practice outside of an accredited postgraduate residency program.
4. Points 2 and 3 could be circumvented if there were a surge that required the state of California to mobilize because of an overwhelming number of patients. If that occurs, we could work with our health systems to graduate students who have matched into UCSF residency programs to start their residencies early.

**Will there be changes to the National Residency Matching Program?**

We have been working with the AAMC to address a number of usual strategies that have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including the shortage of clinical rotations needed to complete preparation for residency applications, the regional quarantine issues that may impact students’ ability to travel for audition rotations and residency interviews and the lack of testing sites for USMLE Step 1, 2CK and 2CS. We will keep the UCSF community informed.

**What if?**

- The Pandemic curve bends quickly and the health systems are back to normal quickly?
  - This would be extraordinary news and we will first celebrate! We can quickly resume traditional senior rotations in the usual settings.
- The Pandemic curve continues to grow exponentially, and we have more challenges to deal with?
  - This would be really terrible news and we would continue to work with departments on creative solutions that enable students to meet graduation milestones AND prepare them to match into their desired specialties.
We are very grateful for the tremendous support we have received from students, staff, faculty and department leaders as we are working to sustain our educational programs during these difficult times. We hope all are staying healthy.

Warm gratitude and admiration,

Catherine R. Lucey, MD, MACP
Executive Vice Dean, UCSF School of Medicine
Vice Dean for Medical Education

Medical Education and Graduate Medical Education COVID-19 Website

UCSF COVID-19 Website