

## Townhall Questions

August 4, 2020

### COVID Questions

Several classmates, myself included, have received emails at 8:30 AM (the symptoms check is due every morning at 8:00 apparently) threatening to bar us from coming into clinic on the following day and report us to our preceptors if we do not complete the checks by noon. I understand the importance of the symptom checks and the inability of the symptoms checker to be aware of the intricacies of our schedules. However, if I am late completing the symptom check because I am simply sleeping in after an overnight ED shift, I do not feel that is improper and I should not be in danger of being reported to my preceptor and missing a subsequent day of clinic for that. A pattern of missing these symptom checks certainly should have consequences. But the current system seems unnecessarily strict in regards to our varied schedules. I feel as long as I submit the screening anytime during the day, once a day, that should suffice. What are your thoughts on this?

Would it be possible to have QR codes placed around the hospital for symptom check-ins? This would be easier for students to check in and may improve response rate.

Could we put up signs with the QRS barcode and a reminder for daily symptom checks up on the outer door to the Med student workroom, as you come in from the parking deck, and on the columns in Bondurant? I've noticed signs for the teammate wellness checks in some locations and they seem a helpful reminder to complete the survey first thing

We appreciate your feedback. We also realize that for many students (despite best intentions) the current process have been hard to adhere to. UNC Health is currently rolling out an electronic health check form for all staff. Because that system will be required for everyone, adherence by students may become easier. We are working with the developers to roll it out to students. Stay tuned!

Could you clarify expectations on PPE usage. How many days are we expected to reuse masks?

There is no specific day limit. Masks can be worn until visibly soiled or torn. If in doubt, please replace your mask.

I was just wondering if we could have a link to potential safety glasses that we could independently purchase if we find the school provided ones too flimsy. It would just be nice to know what is considered approved for the purposes of clinic from somewhere like amazon or something.

UNC Health has provided the following guidance re acceptable eye wear. Check with your campus directors if you are working at regional campuses. Self provided eye protection must be cleanable and have complete front coverage and side coverage (without vents).

Wanted to clarify on the opt in to seeing COVID patients- is the opting in just for our own extra-curricular activities or can we opt in for our rotations if our preceptors/team is seeing PUI's? Ex: If I'm doing ED shifts for my CCS and possible PUI's come in and they have sufficient PPE? Or is it strictly for outside of UNC SOM Curriculum opportunities?

The UNC SOM wants to ensure that students feel safe in their clinical settings. Therefore the SOM has a policy that participation in the care of COVID positive or suspected positive patients is not expected of any student. Recognizing that there are Individualization Phase students who will soon have to care for COVID positive patients as residents, some rotations (such as emergency medicine) will provide an option for Individualization Phase students to opt in to caring for COVID positive patients. Students will be made aware of these opportunities via email in advance, and will need to opt-in to be involved in these opportunities. Students will not be assigned to care for COVID positive patients or patients under investigation (PUI) if they have not expressed interest in advance.

Hello! Thank you all for continuing to do this. I was wondering if it would be possible for the SOM to facilitate COVID Antibody testing for medical students? While we know there are limitations to the antibody tests, I think it might provide some peace of mind to students when debating things like going home to their families for vacation/weekends. We could also possibly facilitate donation of convalescent plasma for COVID patients if we knew our status.

Our focus has been on ensuring that we have adequate supplies and well-defined protocols for acute COVID testing. But I agree that it would be ideal to add antibody testing as a tool for dealing with this pandemic. It is our understanding that the tests do not yet have sufficient specificity to provide the peace of mind you seek. But we will continue to work with our infectious disease experts to see what is possible.

Our covid agreement states that students must adhere to the NC gathering limits of 10 indoors/25 outdoors. How should we apply this guideline if we are in other states? Should we still follow NC's limits, or follow that state's limit? Thanks so much!

That is such a hard question as the limits are put into place according to the prevalence COVID in those local areas. Since you will be coming from an area which still has a relatively high prevalence of COVID I would recommend adhering to the NC gathering limits to protect others.

I have been disappointed by the sharpness and tone of some of my student colleagues' messages to the administration so I think continued reproduction of the entirety of the unedited question is appropriate to ensure some accountability for the thoughts anonymously expressed. Thank you for doing these town halls, I really appreciate them! They reassure me that the faculty and admin are maintaining transparency and working with us as a unit.

We added a vote on Qualtrics after the last townhall where this question was raised. The vote was heavily in favor of keeping the comments unedited. Thanks for your comment and I do hope that group accountability allows students to ask hard questions honestly but do so in a kind collegial way

#### **Foundation Phase Questions:**

UNC SOM did an excellent job (given the pandemic) with orientation. It was comforting to feel how organized everything was for our new class. As for white coat ceremony do you know if the class of 2024 will have one? thank you!

Will there be a virtual White Coat Ceremony for the incoming class?

We have decided not to do a virtual White Coat ceremony. Instead we will do an in person White Coat ceremony before your transition to the community week in which you will again be working in true clinical settings (we are hopeful this will be this coming spring but it may be next fall)

Will MS1s and MS2s be able to shadow in the hospital or at UNC clinics in the fall semester?

MS1 and MS2 will not have the shadowing experiences in the hospital and clinics this fall that were part of the first community week for some students. Some students who are working with faculty on projects may have some opportunities to work in these settings. For those of you who do not we will make sure that there are appropriate opportunities to prepare you before you enter Application Phase.

I'm concerned about being able to get to campus in the Fall for required in-person classes of Anatomy and PCC. Specifically, I have found out that Chapel Hill Transit is operating on a limited capacity currently (fewer buses, fewer routes running) and while they do plan to increase bus routes starting Aug 3, there are still many bus lines that will not be re-instated. There are certain parts of Chapel Hill and Carrboro that were served by CHT but now will not have public transport coverage to allow students a way to reach campus. Even for me where I do still have one operating bus line that can bring me to campus, there is the issue of limited capacity on buses. CHT buses are only allowing 10 individuals to ride a bus for safety reasons. I live north on MLK where even before COVID with multiple buses lines running this route every 5-7 minutes at full capacity, buses would become full before they reached my stop and they would not be able to bring me to campus. How can students who rely on public transport have a reliable method to reach campus for required courses? Are there any other options?

Specific to anatomy, the MS2s do not actually have in-person anatomy. Even in past years, there were only two MS2 anatomy days, and on those days, students did not actually dissect but rather viewed a faculty-performed dissection in groups of 8, demonstrated by the faculty. We decided that those demonstrations could be videoed.

But your question is important more broadly. What do we do about transportation to and from campus? This fall will require creativity and flexibility from all of us. We welcome your creative ideas. The University is working with the Town to find safe ways for students to get to campus and then home again. Ideas under consideration are more frequent buses running at half capacity and expansion of Point to Point Shuttles. Because all Application Phase students will require cars, we hope that more MS2 will now have cars and can help with car-pooling. Student Affairs is also available to work with you if you need financial assistance to help with transportation.

Do we need to fill out the UNC agreement Guskiewicz sent out?

We recognize that in some ways this agreement duplicates what Application Phase and Indy Phase students attested to earlier in the summer. But it is a requirement of all UNC students to attest to the Community Standards in Connect Carolina. Please do so if you have not already done so.

Could we perhaps suggest to M1 class to not type questions in the chat that they would not ask in-person? Unfortunately, it seems disruptive to me; almost like chatting loudly during lecture. Thank you for considering!

We are still learning best practices for these virtual visits. I agree that this is a worthwhile issue to consider

## App Phase and Indy Phase Questions

For students finishing application phase in August, can you clarify the expectations/requirements for SHS4? SHS4 restarts in August, will we have to continue beyond that or complete the SHS4 requirement when we finish application phase?

Students who started their last trimester of App Phase only need to complete SHS4 session on August 14. Course directors are deciding whether that session should be optional based on student feedback re competing demands such as start of MPH program for some. The work during the COVID electives in the May and June helped meet learning objectives of SHS4.

I took my AI course on Block 4. The grade and/or any of the evaluations are still not out yet. It's been 5+ weeks now. Aren't grades/results supposed to be out within 4 weeks?

When can we expect Block 4 AI grades back?

The LCME requires that grades be submitted within 42 days after the end of the block. We try to do it faster. For the 2020-21 Academic Year the average days to release a grade is 24.8. For block 4 the 42-day mark is on July 31. We have been checking in daily with those few teachers who have outstanding grades. As you can imagine this is in part due to the stress that attendings have felt because of COVID. We hope to have all grades released very soon.

The majority of student can now see their own grade in one45. Some may not yet see it on their formal transcript in Connect Carolina. We want to reassure you that they will be uploaded in time for the opening of ERAS.

I am an MD/PhD student starting 3 year. Since i had previously completed a rotation prior to the PhD, i am schedule to finish application phase at the end of November. What are my options for the next three months after that? When do I have to schedule electives by if these are available? I know there are at least 3 or 4 others in the same boat right now. Thanks.

We are working hard to individualize schedules and pay attention to specific circumstances. Please reach out to the Individualization Phase leaders (especially Mindy for specific questions [mindy\\_mckinney@med.unc.edu](mailto:mindy_mckinney@med.unc.edu). For block 10 electives (Nov/Dec, 2020) email [indivphaseschedules@med.unc.edu](mailto:indivphaseschedules@med.unc.edu) to examine possibilities of adding given your situation. If you are looking to schedule in blocks 11 or 12 (Jan/Feb, 2021) you will schedule with the Class of 2021 starting August 7 (please contact IP email above so we can make sure you have access to registration). Any courses next March 2021 on you will do with the class of 2022 scheduling period this fall starting October 9.

I have a question regarding the weight afforded to individual evaluations. This is especially relevant now that some third year rotations are truncated. We may only work with various preceptors for a few days, yet in my understanding, their evaluations count toward our grade as much as those from preceptors with whom we work for a much longer period of time. This can be quite stressful, considering that working with a preceptor for longer gives a student more time to respond to feedback and make a good impression. Has there been any thought to making a school-wide policy that evaluations should be weighted proportionally to time spent with a preceptor?

It is difficult in most courses to calculate exactly how much time each student spends with an evaluator. We use multiple strategies to still arrive at fair assessments. Evaluators often elicit team input. In courses where students get evaluations from multiple evaluators, the course directors carefully look at all evaluations. One or two outlier evaluations usually does not change a grade and when a student is close to a grade cut off, significant outliers are often discarded. In this COVID era, we will monitor closely to make sure that evaluations are fair and appropriate.

As a third-year medical student, I am getting very concerned about having to plan out our full 4th year this coming November when the majority of us will not have rotated through most specialties, and therefore may not even have decided between medicine vs surgery for our careers. I understand the decision was made off previous years, but due to COVID we had almost 4 less months of clinic. What suggestions do you have for making our schedules when we haven't yet decided on a specialty? How much wiggle room will there be to adjust our schedules past the submission in November?

We have tried multiple approaches and found little differences between one round of scheduling and multiple rounds of scheduling. What makes a difference is allowing students the flexibility to easily drop and add courses. It should be done 60 days in advance but can be done with less notice if course director and advisor approves. This provides maximal flexibility while still giving students a rough sense of what their schedule looks like at the beginning of the year

For MS4s: Is there knowledge of a google doc or list that has information on programs having open houses?

Career Day is Sept 18. The schedule will be posted shortly on Sakai SOM calendar

Is there a place to anonymously submit feedback regarding on our peers during clinical rotations? (feedback including professionalism, integrity, etc)

It is the goal of the School of Medicine to provide an environment for students that is conducive to learning and free of all forms of harassment. While directly confronting behaviors is ideal, fear of retaliation can sometimes make this difficult. For this reason, we have created several reporting mechanisms. The anonymous online reporting form is one such mechanism. We have recently added details to our online learning environment reporting form that specifically invites comments related to COVID and general learning environment concerns.

<https://www.med.unc.edu/md/forms/student-mistreatment-and-learning-environment-concern/> You can also find this form by googling "UNC SOM mistreatment". We do hope that in the majority of cases, we can give each other direct collegial feedback to change behaviors and not have to resort to the reporting form. The Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Alice Chuang, receives reports daily and follows up on all reports.

This is also a great place to leave positive feedback. When you see others do great things, please use the Praise Form (in addition to letting them know in person if possible!). This helps us build a positive respectful culture. <https://www.med.unc.edu/md/governance/learning-environment-praise/>

When is graduation 2021?

The University Commencement is on Sunday May 9. While we have not finalized our hooding ceremony plans, we expect the day to again the preceding Friday (May 7)