



Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

April 30, 2020

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

As we close out the month of April today, I am feeling cautiously optimistic that we are "flattening the curve" nationally and in the northern part of New Jersey. I believe we are also making progress in the development of therapeutics and vaccines. It's important to note, however, that there has been a slight uptick in cases in southern New Jersey this week. It's imperative that we continue with social distancing, wearing masks in public places, and sheltering in our homes.

Our virtual commencement celebration will be held two weeks from today, on **Thursday, May 14 at 1 p.m.** You will be able to watch the Class of 2020 Virtual Commencement on our [Facebook page](#) or [YouTube channel](#). Our virtual event will include several of the same elements as our in-person program, including my "*Message to the Graduates*"; a "*Class Farewell*" from Kristopher Hendershott, the class president; "*Recitation of the Hippocratic Oath*" with Dr. Bill Kocher; and the "*Presentation of the Graduates*." I encourage everyone in the CMSRU community - students, faculty and staff, alike - to log on to Facebook or YouTube on May 14, and support our graduating students by congratulating them in the comments section.

The Class of 2020 Awards, traditionally given out during our banquet the night before Commencement, will be presented virtually on **Wednesday, May 13 at 7 p.m.** on CMSRU's [Instagram](#) and [Facebook pages](#). The 30+ student awards are presented to graduates by our various departments to recognize them for excellence. Teaching faculty will also be recognized during this virtual event as the students present the **2020 Golden Apple Awards**. The student and Golden Apple awards will be posted every couple of minutes.

This week, many of our M2 and M3 students were impacted by rescheduling plans that were rolled out by the Prometric testing sites, which involved the cancellation of 15,000 testing appointments across the country. I assure you that our leadership team recognizes the challenges you are facing and the anxiety it is causing, and we are vigorously advocating on your behalf. We will continue to communicate with you as the situation evolves, and urge you to [check the USMLE website](#) frequently so you have the latest information.

One of our dedicated faculty members, **Dr. Emily Damuth**, published a powerful essay in the *Star-Ledger* on this week. The wonderful piece highlights her deep compassion for patients, and I'm so proud to have Dr. Damuth as a role model for our students. The article also mentions the student-run *CritiCall Connections* program that is giving our students an opportunity to be remotely involved in the ICU patient care team. [Click here to read Dr. Damuth's opinion piece in the Star-Ledger.](#)

On Tuesday, we were honored to have the U.S. Air Force *Thunderbirds* and U.S. Navy *Blue Angels* fly over Cooper Medical School of Rowan University and Cooper University Hospital. [Click here to view a few photos from that spectacular event from Drs. Phil Koren and Erin Pukenas, and a video from Dr. Darren Boehning.](#) I managed to see them from the deck of my home and it was quite thrilling.

While the majority of us have been focused on managing virtual learning and working, many of the "normal" activities in which our students, faculty and staff engage have continued. In fact, the CMSRU [Medical Humanities group published the fourth edition of their literary magazine, *The Asclepian*](#)! I urge you to go through this periodical to read the essays and poems and view the art by our talented students and faculty. Congratulations to all on another wonderful edition!

Many of us are trying to make good decisions during this prolonged state of uncertainty that we are in. Daniel Goleman, author of the best seller, *Emotional Intelligence*, gives us a framework that can help us navigate these uncharted seas by posing a question: *What matters most?* The answer to what matters most points us to our purpose, our values, and our identity-our mission. At CMSRU, we have always used our mission to guide all of our decisions. I believe that we should continue to use our mission to continue to guide us at this time.

As you may have noticed, I have recently scaled back the number of messages in the past week or so. I will continue to send messages periodically when I have information to share, but in the spirit of getting back to some "normal" activities, I happy to announce that next week, we will relaunch "*Weekly Update*" as a regular source of internal communication. I encourage you to send news that is appropriate to share with our community to Sharon Clark, director of marketing and PR, at clarks@rowan.edu. Be sure to put "**Weekly Update Submission**" in the subject line, and include an image if you have one.

Have a good weekend.

Sincerely,



Annette C. Reboli, MD
Dean and Professor of Medicine