



Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

June 10, 2020

Dear CMSRU Students,

We want to thank the various CMSRU student organizations for your sincere letters in response to the police brutality that caused the murder of George Floyd. We, the deans and leadership of CMSRU, stand with you in our condemnation of police brutality. The deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and others before them, are a stark reminder that racism and discrimination remain present and pervasive in our nation. This cannot continue. We, the deans and leadership of CMSRU, stand with you in denouncing institutionalized racism. While we all have great sadness and anguish over these recent actions, we recognize that the pain is deeper for the members of our Black communities, including our CMSRU students, faculty, and staff of color. We especially want to acknowledge the Student National Medical Association (SNMA), who has asked that the entire CMSRU community speak up against racial injustice and examine our own biases more closely. It is imperative that we stand up and show support for our SNMA students and other individuals of color who may be experiencing increased anxiety and burden at this time. We are committed to a learning environment where all of our learners feel safe and valued. Hate has no place at CMSRU and will never be tolerated. We, the Deans and leadership of CMSRU, stand with you in saying that Black Lives Matter. Racism has become a public health emergency. We must be agile in providing the education necessary to address this crisis so that both students and faculty have the skill sets necessary to serve the community in a humanistic manner. Expanding unconscious bias training to all students, faculty, and staff will be an important first step.

In your letters, you offered thoughtful suggestions to enhance our curriculum. We will form a committee of the faculty, with student representation, to discuss these suggestions and to address concerns expressed in your communications. Below we describe what the Office of Medical Education is doing/ will do concerning your recommendations for the curriculum, as well as what the Admissions Committee is doing to increase the diversity of the CMSRU student body.

As background, at all U. S. allopathic medical schools, like CMSRU, the LCME requires that the curriculum is developed by the faculty. The Office of Medical Education (OME) is responsible to implement the curriculum as designed by the faculty. The OME will create opportunities for faculty and students to meet and discuss curricular changes, and implement those changes approved by the Curriculum Committee.

The CMSRU Curriculum Committee and subcommittees have already been engaged in many of the suggestions that you have mentioned in your letters.

- The ALG Subcommittee has representatives from the Office of Diversity and Community Affairs reviewing all of our cases relative to racially charged or insensitive language. Those will be eliminated. Where possible, issues related to disparities and equity in medicine will be introduced.
- The FMP course director and individuals from our Clinical Skills and Simulation Center have been developing OSCEs and other simulation activities to accurately portray

racial and other differences in our community of patients. The Committee for Diversity in the Learning Environment, with student representatives from the Diversity Council, is actively involved in this work.

- Make necessary improvements to improve the overall educational climate:
 - The OME will request that the Curriculum Committee hold a discussion on the inclusion of topics related to practicing trauma-informed care, racism in medicine, and understanding racial inequality in medicine. The OME will support the implementation of these changes in courses and clerkships, and support faculty development in these areas to enhance the learning experience of our students.
 - The OME will work with our Ambulatory Clerkship team to continue to support citizens of the City of Camden and southern NJ through active student engagement in curricular-based service learning opportunities.

The admissions process at CMSRU, under the auspices of the Admissions Committee, is committed to recruiting a diverse student body. The importance of diversity is emphasized at all levels from screening of applications to invitations to interview and, ultimately, acceptance of students. Each year the Admissions Committee receives its charge from Dean Reboli, which always includes a discussion of the primacy of diversity as a component of the CMSRU mission.

The Admissions Committee, a standing committee of the faculty (as specified by LCME standards), itself undertakes a number of initiatives geared toward maximizing diversity. This includes yearly mandatory unconscious bias training for all members and participation in special affiliation pathways for applicants in CMSRU-sponsored pipeline programs (PULSE, post-baccalaureate program). This past year, the Diversity subcommittee recommended expansion of these special pathway affiliations and this proposal was approved by the full committee. For the upcoming year, to further reduce the possibility of bias, the Admissions Committee will discontinue use of candidate photographs during presentation and discussions of individual applicants.

As an institution, we remain committed to providing each and every one of our students with the best education possible. We look forward to expanding our collaboration with student organizations and diversity groups to move the mission of our institution forward. Together we can address social justice, overcome racism, and contribute to the reduction of health disparities.

Sincerely,

Drs. Reboli, Kocher, Mitchell-Williams, Perlis, Mazurek, Mazzarelli, Weisberg, Kim, Pukenas, Porter, Boehning, Bottaro, Patel, Hewlett, and Mr. Gentile