

Special COVID-19 Faculty Council & Town Hall Meeting March 31, 2020

Presentation Key Takeaways

VP-Dean Eidelman (Opening remarks)

A moment of silence for all those around the world who have died of this virus.

Heartfelt thanks:

- McGill's Emergency Operations Centre lead Fabrice Labeau, Robert Couvrette and team.
- The Faculty's students, residents, academics, staff. THANK YOU.

COVID cases in Canada and in Quebec rising, with Montreal the epicentre.

Critical that we do our part to help flatten the curve, on all fronts.

On a positive note:

- Happy Birthday to former Dean Maurice McGregor on his centennial birthday!

Congratulations to:

- Guy Rouleau on receiving the esteemed Gairdner Wightman award.

Student Speakers

Robin Grantner (Nursing graduate):

- Main concern is for Nursing students who are currently licenced and are called back to clinical duties. This has meant their study leaves have been cancelled.
- School has been very receptive to their asks.
- Outstanding question: entry-to-practice students' graduation.

Alanna Bouffard (Nursing undergraduate):

- A lot of student stress with workload, student nurses recalled to work full-time, adapting to online format or moving across country to be back with families.
- One mitigation strategy: S/U grading.
- The nursing faculty continues to find other ways to address student stress, with direct feedback from students.

Rami Habib (Medicine):

- Medical students included in conversation from day 1 has helped reduce stress.
 - MED 1 are glad to continue in the online format, though the increased screen time isn't easy to adapt to.
 - MED2, adapting to online format, some parts of TCP won't make the online transition; stress about summer vacation and clerkship.
 - MED3 have started a bit of online teaching programs. However, clinical duty which is at the core of clerkship will not resume until, earliest, the start of May and students are increasingly anxious.
 - MED4 fully transitioned to online learning and finished clinical rotations; they are feeling anxious about the pandemic but eager to contribute.

Gabe Brewer (Goodman Cancer Research Centre):

- Uncertainty around tuition, especially for students in final semesters of PhD; will there be tuition waivers.
- Students used to working in wet benches and labs are using this time to work on papers, which may be a silver lining.
- Most labs have online group meetings; as a student society, they are trying to stay connected, hosting online games and happy hours.

Mackenzie Marshall (Communication Sciences & Disorders):

- Instructors quickly transitioned to remote learning.
- Course loads for M1 & 2 have been reduced and faculty have been very understanding.
- Overall M2 students are very stressed due to graduation postponed indefinitely due to final internships being cancelled/postponed; the situation is very hard for students who had jobs lined up in fall that are now unable to graduate in time to start them.
- Additionally, internships are unpaid, students are feeling financially burdened at this time.
- No financial support plan for summer months and students are unable to get jobs in field until completion of unpaid 3-month internship + graduation.

Anish Arora (McGill Association for Students in Healthcare)

- Vast majority of students starting to adapt; some still struggling, especially students doing data collection for their research.
- Urges supervisors to touch base with students about how to be structuring their weeks.
- This time period also provides a great opportunity to speak and reflect with students about their career development.

François David (Residents):

- Initial confusion about redeployment, but getting more comfortable with the algorithm.
- Concerns about failure in the rotation and access to PPE.
- Appreciation for how PGME Office is positioning itself to protect residents.
- On behalf of residents, asks for some reflection about protected study time, as residents approach study days.

Alexander Yang (Physical and Occupational Therapy):

- Adjustments to learning online has been smooth; however, concerns over delayed examinations.
- Working on a document to provide to students with options for courses this semester.

Dean's Operations Committee (Vice-Deans, etc.)**Annette Majnemer:**

- Provost has been requesting input on academic processes in order to make decisions; thanks to the Associate Deans of each of the six schools for their input and responsiveness.
- Thanks to Aimee Ryan for the survey conducted on graduate programs.
- Teaching Learning Services have been scheduling webinars/town halls for instructors and learners; Faculty is creating a resource webpage specific to its needs.

- Clinical education – pressure from government to reintegrate students sooner, but challenging, different for each health profession school.
- Student wellness – a major concern; however, there is a fully functional WELL Office, thanks to the Assistant Deans. Encouragement to graduate program directors to ensure support of graduate students.
- Many students interested in volunteering in safe ways. Processes have been developed to assist.

Sam Benaroya:

- Important to maintain continuous communication with our hospital partners during this crisis.
- Royal College exams delayed, but restrictive permits being issued to residents completing their training.
- Faculty of Medicine appointments of physicians being recruited in McGill's affiliate hospitals are being fast-tracked, to help integrate them into the workforce as quickly as possible.

Aimee Ryan:

- Thanks to student representatives for sharing concerns and challenges
- Thanks to S. Baillet, S. Baum, A. Guarné and J. Nalbantoglu for their support, and all GPDs, GPCs.
- Student stipends should stay intact
- Grad courses will have satisfactory/unsatisfactory.
- All courses are on track, but students have final say on moving forward with online format; will not have an impact on their milestones.
- Student competitions will continue to run and dates have been extended until April 30 for applications; please continue to send applications.
- Communication regarding non-essential research: some students still feel pressured to conduct experiments in non-essential areas. This is not acceptable.
- She thanked graduate program directors for student drop-ins.
- Certain agencies may not be sending out cheques; message to supervisor to pay students.

Diana Colby:

- In addition to government directives, main communication sources are from hospitals and the University.
- In the Faculty, impact is local, different between schools, departments, units.
- Faculty Communication Office is supporting local efforts, while remaining low-profile in its Faculty-wide communications to the extent possible; links to local efforts can be found on the Faculty's COVID-19 page [here](#).
- With respect to any media requests, please loop in the University/Faculty Media Relations Office (be it at the hospital or on campus). In the Faculty: jason.clement@mcgill.ca
- All employees, including residents, must check in with their respective Media Relations offices.

Gilles Brousseau (Campus Outaouais) :

- Comme vous tous, l'équipe du Campus demeure active et nous sommes tous en télétravail.
- Certaines activités sont moins affectées par la pandémie, entre autres la francisation qui progresse très bien.
- Nos traducteurs et réviseurs étaient tous déjà en télétravail avant la pandémie.
- La traduction est complétée à 100 % pour l'année préparatoire et a été remise à la Faculté des sciences pour la révision académique.
- La traduction du programme MDCM respecte les échéances et le budget.

- Les postes administratifs du Campus sont pourvus à 75 % et la gouvernance académique est comblée à 80 %.
- Pour la formation fondamentale, nous avons tous nos directeurs de cours (100 %)
- Nous avons déjà atteint 96 % du recrutement des enseignants pour les activités d'enseignement de la première année.
- Je souhaite rassurer les étudiants, tant pour l'année préparatoire en médecine en cours d'implantation à l'UQO que pour les étudiants du programme Med-P qui débiteront en Outaouais à l'automne, nous allons nous assurer d'un plan B advenant un retard dans la construction. Déjà, plusieurs hypothèses sont envisagées et nous suivons de très près les différents dossiers pour planifier l'ouverture du Campus dans un contexte plutôt exceptionnel.

Demetra Kafantaris:

- Hoping everyone is staying safe and well.
- Thanks to the MedIT group for ensuring staff have access to software and hardware where needed.
- Building Services has developed a very rigorous schedule of controlled access to our buildings for a small number of people in order to collect office items/materials. Of note: this process will be adjusted as access to campus will be more restricted as per new government directives.
- Finance team and HR working hard to confirm answers to your questions, working with McGill's central teams to ensure accuracy.
- Clearly, this will have a financial impact and have asked Finance team to track impacts; please make sure you track in your respective units costs specifically related to adapting to the COVID-19 crisis.
- Our administrative community has stepped up with great tenacity, but we are also hearing that people are starting to feel the struggle of balancing work/life (kids, parents, health issues, feeling isolated, etc.)
- IMPORTANT: this is not business as usual; please take care of yourselves and your families so that we can get through this together.
- Flexibility is key, together with compassion and caring.
- When this is over, we can carry forward some of the lessons learned/new skills to build on our excellence and our community.

Lesley Fellows:

- Priority in Academic Affairs has been to keep core operations as usual and to be thoughtful and flexible in all processes to support faculty members, especially those with clinical roles.
- Ensuring clinical appointments can be made quickly, annual evaluation and reappointment processes for clinical faculty streamlined
- All key ongoing work is on track, including salary policy and spring promotions.
- Tenure Track (TT) searches currently in progress are being completed, if feasible.
- We are particularly mindful of the impact of the research interruption for junior faculty; an additional year can be added to the 'tenure clock' and peer reviewers will undoubtedly take this extreme disruption into account in considering longer-term productivity.
- We encourage faculty to reach out to students, to continue lab meetings and other group activities by virtual means, this is VERY IMPORTANT for students.
- ALSO IMPORTANT for faculty to support each other.
- Academic Affairs has begun a series of drop-in meetings via Zoom to allow faculty to ask questions, share ideas and provide peer support; more soon on this initiative.

Shari Baum:

- Thanks to everyone for their cooperation during this challenging time.
- A. Ryan, S Baillet, A Guarné in planning and managing ramp-down of research, in compliance with government directives and peer universities.
- We have ramped down research activities and limited access to buildings to monitoring equipment (liquid nitrogen) and essential services (animal care) with the exception of COVID research.
- CRITICAL to follow directives related to COVID research, to take precautions (PPE).
- With extremely high quality of researchers, we will find excellent ways to resume research.
- Several funding agencies have extended deadlines – expecting to hear more from federal government. CRITICAL to be very sensitive to needs of our students, to support them financially and in other areas of research where they do not need to be present in a lab; there should be no students who feel pressured to conduct non-essential research in labs.

Closing:

- Dean thanks all.
- F. Labeau confirmed that the ramp-down of research is hurting Medicine, noting that he has heard the same message from all Faculties, but that it is less severe for some as they are less lab-based. He also confirmed they are in constant discussions with the Ministry.

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See here for [FAQs discussed during the March 31 Special COVID-19 Faculty Council & Town Hall meeting](#).

IMPORTANT: Because the situation continues to evolve daily, information captured here may change; it is important you stay up-to-date by frequently consulting the sources available.

Important Faculty and University sources of information:

- [McGill Faculty of Medicine COVID-19 Updates](#), including links to schools' and unit updates.
- [McGill Coronavirus Updates](#), including University-wide [FAQs](#)

Other:

- [Santé Québec](#)
- [Info-Santé](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\) – COVID-19 for Health Professionals](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)