



# EMORY | SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

To: PA Classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022 Students

Thursday June 11

By now, you should have received the email from Emory University announcing plans for the fall semester. As all PA program (and all other programs in the School of Medicine) are different, we are writing to provide additional details for students.

## Calendar

As a reminder, the PA program and other degree programs in the School of Medicine follow a different calendar from Emory College and other graduate programs. Incoming first-year PA students will begin orientation on **July 27**. The PA class of 2020 are already back at work in our hospitals and clinics and the class of 2021 has continued with virtual modules.

We will soon share more information about your curriculum and calendar for the fall semester.

## Curriculum and Format

As you saw in the university email, undergraduate students will be offered a choice to attend courses in-person or remotely. However, given the nature of medical education, we strongly believe that a fully remote education will not allow our students to become competent clinicians. As the current epidemiology of COVID-19 changes in our community, we are confident that we can progressively construct educationally sound and reasonably safe experiences that will allow you to learn the knowledge and skills you will need.

Over the next few months, we expect to offer some lectures and classes remotely, while some activities will require in-person attendance. When in-person teaching is required, we will take all reasonable precautions to keep our students as safe as possible. (Please be aware that Emory physician assistant students are currently precluded from providing care to patients being evaluated or treated for COVID-19 infection). Current policies that address physician assistant student safety include:

- Distribution of appropriate PPE to students and training on how to use it
- Requirement to wear appropriate face masks in all public spaces
- Limit on the number of people gathering in person
- Enforcement of physical distancing requirements and reconfiguration of space to accommodate these requirements
- Adherence to protocols for sanitizing spaces in the School of Medicine

Our plans were developed in close collaboration with subject matter experts in the Emory Department of Medicine, Division of Infectious Disease, our hospital epidemiologists, and leaders across our medical school and the university. As the earlier email noted, the current pandemic reminds us that medical providers and scientists must be flexible, ready to thoughtfully adapt to global, national and regional changes. With that in mind, understand that at some point we may need to change curricular plans to preserve personal health, adapt to community needs while doing our institutional best to ensure academic continuity. We do have contingency plans, and we will keep students informed if changes are being considered.

Should any student feel that they are unable to continue their education because of personal health concerns—or any other reason--please speak with Dr. Lund. Requests for deferral or leave of absence are routinely granted.

### **Survey**

To support ongoing planning efforts, Emory University will send out a survey on Monday, June 15. Emory is a large and diverse university; keep in mind that the survey is designed to capture preferences and feedback from Emory's entire professional and graduate student community, so *some questions may not be applicable to School of Medicine students*. We ask you to complete the survey as best as you are able, and provide candid input, understanding that some questions may not be relevant to you.

### **Fall Semester**

We are working with the School of Medicine committees addressing schedule and space issues and will share more information in the next few weeks. We are also planning a virtual town hall meeting for the incoming PA class with several of our faculty to address your questions.

Finally, we echo the words of our university leaders in reminding you that while some things will be different this fall, core elements of the Emory experience will remain the same: our world-renowned clinical and scientific faculty will deliver learning opportunities that meet Emory's rigorous standards. You will have access to the tremendous resources of our hospitals and clinics and our greater research university, and you will be part of a supportive and compassionate community. Our patients and our community need the care that you, the next generation of clinicians, can provide.

For our class of 2020, we are proud of the good work that you are doing on your clinical rotations and we look forward to your graduation.

For our class of 2021, we thank you for your flexibility in adapting to online learning and appreciate your positive attitude as we have all adapted to Covid-related challenges.

For our incoming class of 2022, we are excited to welcome you to Emory late July. We are excited to have you join our program and look forward to getting to know you better.

Best,

Maha Lund, Program Director