

Many of you wrote in with questions about how our program was responding to COVID-19 and Step 1 changes. We posed your questions to **Dr. Joseph Fantone, Senior Associate Dean for Educational Affairs** at UF College of Medicine. Here are his responses:

Q: Will the change in grading of Step 1 to Pass/Fail affect UF COM's current curriculum or grading structure for the incoming Class of 2024 and onward?

A: We do not anticipate any major change in our curriculum or grading system. The required clinical clerkships will remain graded to ensure that residency program directors have adequate information to evaluate our students especially for the most competitive residency programs.

Q: What changes might we expect, if any, to the timing to take the Step 1 exam or amount of dedicated study time?

A: We will be reviewing the amount of study time required for preparation for USMLE Step 1 recognizing that students require varying amounts of time to prepare for the exam.

Q: How are current UF COM students being affected by COVID-19, especially when it comes to clinical/hands-on experience?

A: There are significant changes in the scheduling of the clinical clerkships as we provide care to patients, protect our health care providers, staff and students and preserve resources such as PPEs for the peak infection periods.

Q: Does UF COM expect the Class of 2024 to experience any changes to the program or curriculum due to COVID-19?

A: As noted, it is hard to predict and we will have a better idea in June of any changes in the first year curriculum. Our current first year class has had their spring classes (respiratory, cardiovascular, kidney-urinary, and Introduction to Clinical Skills) modified to more on-line delivery and Zoom-based interactive sessions with faculty as well as standardized patient interactions. We are also expanding our simulation activities to meet learning objectives in the clinical skills area. The current first year students are adapting and progressing well. If necessary we will adapt what we have learned this spring to the curriculum for the entering class. The major changes that could impact the Class of 2024 would be continued on-line delivery of the curriculum, limited direct patient interactions (depending on the severity of the pandemic) and reduced group sizes for activities. However, we remain optimistic that by summer we will be into the recovery phase of the pandemic and will return to our "regular" educational program.



Joseph Fantone, MD

Senior Associate Dean for Educational Affairs