

12/6/2020 – MS1 Spring Semester Updates

Hello MS1 students,

I hope that you had a safe, relaxing Thanksgiving break and that you are doing well with the final weeks of the last unit of your fall semester. I have heard that the transition of FRM and POM small group sessions to a remote format was fairly smooth and that faculty were excited to see your faces! Drs. Chin, Poole, and I, along with course faculty sincerely appreciate your understanding and flexibility in dealing with the changes we need to make in order to adapt to challenges raised by the pandemic.

We have been continually monitoring the situation in our community and the surrounding areas and consulting regularly with our colleagues in public health and infectious disease. We also are following guidelines from SUNY, though we do have some latitude with our return to campus in spring semester because we have learning experiences that require physical presence.

In light of the surge in coronavirus cases in our community, state, and country, as well as the expected overlay of influenza season, we have decided to keep all instruction remote during the first two weeks of the semester (January 4-15). This is consistent with SUNY guidelines and other expert advice to minimize on-campus density during this peak time of coronavirus and influenza cases. Scheduled individual or small group in-person experiences will resume on Tuesday January 19, 2021; large lectures will continue to be offered remotely as they have been during the fall semester. Note that our faculty are prepared to continue fully remote instruction beyond January 15, if needed or mandated to do so, but we are hopeful that we will be able to stick with our plan to return for scheduled individual or small group in-person sessions starting on January 19.

You will receive information from each course about the status of any in-person experiences that were supposed to happen between January 4 and 15. They will either be converted to a remote version, rescheduled, or cancelled.

You already heard from your class officers that first year students will not have a spring break this year. The academic schedule is being adjusted so that you now will have lectures and in-person activities during the week of March 8-12, and you will have vacation days scattered throughout the second half of the semester (during units 7 and 8). Course faculty are working on moving their sessions to free up those vacation days. We will give you that schedule as soon as we have it.

We know that some of you need to make travel plans. If there is any discussion of the possibility of extending our in-person return date beyond January 19, 2021, we will let you know.

Plans have not yet been finalized about testing or quarantine requirements for returning to campus. We will let you know as soon as we have that information. I recommend that you read the Upstate Announcements email that comes out most weekdays. That is where I learn about many coronavirus-related updates!

Thank you again for all that you are doing to stay safe! Your good choices not only help you – they also are exemplars for those around you! And we really, really need that role-modeling!

Dr. Lesperance