Hey Tanukis!

We’ve had a few questions over the morning about electives (not surprising!). I’m going to try to deal with the ones that are most pertinent here for everyone.

1. Don’t worry about the eight week cancellation issue. There has been communication out to the elective coordinators in the clinical departments about what is happening this year. They are aware that we have intentionally compressed the timeline for booking the first block of electives so there will be some later cancellations as students find out what electives that they have gotten.

2. There are some clinical areas that aren’t able to offer electives right now. Yuan has been madly updating the electives calendar as she is informed. This is not ideal, but not something we can immediately ‘fix’. There are going to be variable restrictions like this in different clinical areas at each medical school across the country. With COVID, many clinical services are doing less or different clinical work and therefore have fewer educational opportunities for students. In some cases, these areas also have to provide core rotations for everyone, and that has to be prioritized. One of the potential benefits of reorganizing the clerkship to have the majority of electives later in the calendar year is that in addition to opening up the opportunity for visiting electives (if they reopen) it also increases the chances that the COVID situation will change such that students will have the opportunity to do local electives in a broader range of specialties. The UME program only operates in the clinical environment with the support of the clinical departments. Each department has to meet the needs for safe and effective patient care and making sure that the faculty are kept well in order to do that. This doesn’t mean that education isn’t a priority, but it does have to be provided within that clinical context. Dr. Louis and Yuan are keeping the lines of communication open with the coordinators of the areas that are currently restricted in this way.

3. We are currently doing updated N95 mask fittings for students who are doing Anesthesia or ICU (regardless of whether these are being done as mandatory or elective rotations). Students who are going to be working in these clinical areas are contacted prior to the start of their rotation and come in to UME for a refit on whatever mask is most currently available.

4. We are still contemplating how we will deal with the local electives cap. I don’t have a final answer for you right now, but we are aware that if there are no visiting electives that we will need to change our rules around how many local electives can be done in any clinical area. As per my prior email, capacity will likely trump any rules we make.

Good luck with your bookings!

Take care
KB