



**GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL (GSC) MEETING AGENDA**

**DATE:** Thursday, December 3, 2020

**TIME:** 5-7pm

**PLACE:** Zoom

**Join Zoom Meeting:**

<https://uic.zoom.us/j/89430734247?pwd=SzVNU3h2LzVLUkZHZzIjMlNyUWpjZz09>

**Meeting ID:** 894 3073 4247

**Password:** GradSC2020

**1. Welcome**

**2. Guest Speaker – Office of the Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs**

a. Dr. Robert Barish, Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs

- i. Provided an overview of the clinical testing and trials that UI Health has been involved in for mitigating risk, treating, and preventing COVID-19
- ii. UI Health has seen a significant increase in COVID-19 cases over the past 9 weeks; again UI Health is operating two separate hospital operations (one for COVID patients and one for all other healthcare needs)
- iii. Two vaccine trials have been promising; one will hopefully be FDA approved in the coming weeks and would allow UI Health to vaccinate 250 healthcare workers at the hospital
- iv. Monoclonal antibody trials are being conducted by UI Health; this is a promising new treatment for COVID-19
- v. Asymptomatic testing is available using saliva testing

b. Dr. Susan, Director of Infectious Disease Control

- i. Contact tracing has been extremely effective and continues at UIC
- ii. Registry of healthcare workers to understand pushing out the vaccine (its benefits and efficacy)



- iii. Air sampling in the hospital; respiratory treatments; personal air samplers
- c. Questions/Comments
  - i. Exploration of saliva testing for dependents of students on campus care
  - ii. Vaccines for faculty/students – it’s a dual dose, hopefully will continue to get more and more supply; likely won’t have capacity to vaccinate most students until April, May, or June 2021
  - iii. Mid to late 2021 expectation is to have most of the population vaccinated
  - iv. We need to be diligent now about mitigation measures – SOCIAL DISTANCING AND MASKS!
  - v. All healthcare workers in the healthcare environment are being prioritized for vaccines, this includes non-medical personnel who work in healthcare settings
  - vi. UI Health is engaged in efforts for community awareness and getting everyone vaccinated
  - vii. Vaccine side effects – minimal side effects but seem to be focused on the first couple days after the vaccination; discussion of given people time off to rest during those side effects and hopefully encourage people to return for their second round of the vaccination

### **3. Guest Speaker – Administrative Services**

- a. John Coronado, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
  - i. We can expect the spring semester to look very similar to this fall semester on campus; around 13k people a day/20k throughout September-



November; 10-15% of sections were on campus – we can expect pretty much the same or somewhat less as far as on campus offerings

- ii. Depending on COVID-19 positivity rate/spread, we may start with less on campus than we will have at the end of the semester
- iii. A negative COVID-19 test only means you're negative for that day you were tested – you could have been exposed and not have enough viral load for detection therefore, frequent testing is valuable, particularly for those who are on campus or who are in the community regularly

**b. Questions**

- i. Communications about COVID-19 mitigation measures and vaccination efforts
- ii. How often should people be getting tested? Recommendation will be weekly testing of those who are coming to campus
- iii. Is UIC prepared in case another pandemic or emergencies happen in future? We have learned a lot more this time (2<sup>nd</sup> wave) and I think that is there's another pandemic in the future, we will be better prepared.
- iv. Are there plans to include rapid antigen testing of the student population in addition to the currently available saliva testing? This is a new point of care test; the hospital has been using a different one (IDNow), we are now moving to the rapid antigen test, but it will likely not replace the saliva testing for asymptomatic people. Doesn't have the same sensitivity or specificity of the saliva test

**4. Guest Speaker – Student Affairs**



## Graduate Student Council

- a. J. Rex Tolliver, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
  - i. jrex@uic.edu
- b. Extended Campus Care benefits for all Campus Care recipients who need care out of network to be billed at the in network rate
- c. Expanding counseling services; hiring additional mental health counselors, expanding services outside of counseling center, making services available at student center west and east; and embed MH counselors within the colleges to help students who are juggling all the different aspects of their lives
- d. Grading policies for graduate students – the policy change for undergrads came from advocacy from the undergraduate student body; there was some discussion about grad students, but it was indicated that there hadn't been much discussion about this for graduate students, but if graduate students feel this needs to be extended, please reach out to Dean Colley and make your voices heard.
- e. Tuition and fees – this is a difficult time and not what was expected and what we want to give students; there will not be an increase in tuition/fees but no intention of refunding any tuition/fees at this time
- f. Free services for students? If there are things that are normally fee for service for students, if those could move to a free access, that would be appreciated by students. – We want students to stay engaged
- g. “I am going to commit to a review of all our campus services and see where we have gaps in how we meet needs of graduate/professional students”; bring on people who understand and appreciate the challenges that students are facing



- h. Expanding services/space at the student centers for graduate/professional students
  - already working on those plans, but I will ensure that graduate students are included in these considerations and renovations to meet the needs of graduate students specifically.
- i. Rec centers will remain open with limited capacity based on the state/city guidelines
- j. Lower the cost of higher ed, and make higher education more efficient
- k. Chancellor Tolliver committed to making recreation services available to students during the winter break
- l. Supporting students who are parents – looking into expanding PTO and restructuring policy that would allow for flex work even beyond the pandemic
  - i. Opportunities for free tutoring services for the kids of students?  
Something that can be looked into and explored
- m. Support for TAs? This is not something that has been discussed yet, but could be if graduate students would like this. Issues/concerns can be brought to the Office of Dean Colley

**5. Guest Speaker – Office of International Services**

- a. Megan Ward, Director of International Student and Outreach Services
- b. Jim Hammerschmidt, Executive Director and Associate Vice Provost for Global Engagement
- c. We are working to advocate for our students and have been successful on a lot of fronts



- d. **Coursework in the graduate college** – have been working since day 1 with all the colleges/departments to make sure that international students needs are met for what they have to complete – if you are a continuing graduate student, all online classes are okay; if you are a new graduate student, then you have to have at least 1 hybrid course; both have to have full time course load, no changes for practical training requirements
- e. Every term F-1 and J-1 students are enrolled for the required credit hours; there is typically a requirement for on campus classes but that has been suspended due to COVID-19, so all classes can be online. If you are under enrolled, you will hear from Megan Ward and how she can assist you to enroll full time and get the courses they need; for new students who need one on campus or hybrid course, we are working with the colleges to make sure that those needs are being met
- f. Travel – from an immigration standpoint, nothing has changed but you have to be prepared for the event that a US embassy won't be open; there may be a delay for visas to be renewed (strongly recommend paying attention to OIS website and CDC website)
- g. I-20 Signatures during COVID-19: Best practice is to have signature every 6 months, make sure you have a valid visa and passport to return to the US; if you do need a travel signature, all OIS services are being done remotely and we can update signatures (reprint of document) or issue a virtual I-20 (as a PDF). Email [OIS@uic.edu](mailto:OIS@uic.edu) – monitored daily
- h. Monitor the OIS website, constantly updating FAQs and town hall meetings



- i. As an F1 or J1 student, you can under enroll in your final term and still maintain your visa status, as it applies to your internship – that would be a question for your department
- j. OIS has been and continues to work with departments and colleges to assure course offering for students to meet the requirements of the visas and for students to have access to courses in alternate formats for students who are not currently in the United States

## **6. GSC Updates**

### **a. Awards**

- i. Updated note to department; eligibility determination is made by GSC and requesting that DGS only are attesting to the validity of the application
- ii. If you apply for an award after the quarter deadline, you may still be able to receive the award, however it will not be processed until the end of the academic year
- iii. Quarters
  1. Quarter 1: May 1 – July 31
  2. Quarter 2: August 1 – October 31
  3. Quarter 3: November 1 – January 31
  4. Quarter 4: February 1 – April 30

### **b. Attendance**

- i. Each department is permitted one absence a year with no strings attached.
- ii. For absences beyond the first, according to the GSC Constitution: “It may be possible for a departmental representative to make up for a monthly



meeting absence by participating in the GSC activities for an equivalent amount of hours, up to the discretion of the GSC officers. This cannot occur for more than three absences per year.”

- iii.** For students in your department to be eligible for awards from GSC, the department must be in good standing with GSC (no more than 3 absences during the academic year, all absences beyond the first must be made up)

## **7. Representative Sign-In and Adjournment**