Roughly seven-months into our 2019-2020 academic year, we left campus, relieved to enjoy some respite during spring break; the end of semester on the horizon. Summer plans were percolating, many were anticipating graduation or opening the next chapter in their academic careers, when suddenly, our seemingly certain futures began to erode away. The COVID-19 pandemic suddenly upended our rhythm, and thrust us into an unfamiliar teaching and learning environment.

The dynamic nature of this new normal can make us feel unsettled and disappointed, because this is not what any of us sign on for. This was not the experience we anticipated. Our current situation is not only putting additional stressors on our academic performance, but can also take a toll on our emotional wellbeing. Make sure you are prioritizing your mental health along with your other obligations, and make space for the various emotions that come with this uncharted territory. Consider taking advantage of these resources provided by The University of Utah:

1. The University Counseling Center: can provide advice for managing mental well-being during this stressful time.
2. University Neuropsychiatric Institute (UNI) crisis: Intervention, and Warm Line Services. They have certified peer specialists who are available by phone 801-587-1055 to offer support.
3. University of Utah Health: Will help you stay informed about the facts from credible sources

We recognize this may be a difficult and confusing time. There are many things all of us can do. Stay in touch with others: either through social media or via apps like Zoom and FaceTime. Slow down and breath: try meditation, go for a walk, walk your dog.

Please refer to https://coronavirus.utah.edu for more information about protecting your health, clear doubts regarding what to do or what not to do regarding COVID-19.

We are resilient. The spirit with which our students, faculty, and staff have come together to salvage spring and summer semesters is a testament to the caliber of people in our programs. However, that doesn’t mean that this is easy for any of us. We are in this together, and here for each other. Don’t hesitate to reach out if you or someone you know is in some kind of need.

MLSPC

We would like to make a correction and re-congratulate Joseph Everitt as the MLSPC’s Vice President, whose name was misspelled in the previous newsletter publication.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the MLSPC, access the application here.
**Student Resources**

ASUU Student Child Care
Program: Drop-in child care program: Call or email for more information!
801-585-7393 / ascuchildcare@sa.utah.edu

Get the most out of you U Card Benefits: Go to ucard.utah.edu

**Upcoming Events**

APR 10: Last day to withdraw from classes and elect CR/NC
APR 17: Last day to reverse CR/NC option
APR 13-17th: Lab Week Challenge
APR 21: Classes end
APR 23-29: Final Exam Period

**Important Reminders**

1. Make sure you are checking your Umail account. It is the official means of communication between faculty and students that meets FERPA requirements.
2. Adjust your notifications in Canvas to make sure you are receiving updates and announcements for each of your classes.

**Lab Week Challenge**

Medical Laboratory Professionals Week is an annual celebration of the vital role laboratories and pathologists play in patient centered healthcare.

This year’s participation will be virtual and remote, so be on the lookout for email instructions for how you can be involved!
We will have online games and prizes from 4/13 through 4/17, including:

**Monday** - MLS Meme Contest: create a science/academic/MLS themed meme
**Tuesday** - Haiku or Poem: compose a science/academic/MLS themed ballad
**Wednesday** - Get artistic: submit a science/academic/MLS themed painting, sketch, sculpture, or whatever type of medium you work with. Send us a picture of your creation. We will even distribute a coloring page for those of us that require a little more than inspiration.
**Thursday** - MLS Trivia: We will send out a list of MLS related trivia questions that can all be found with a simple internet search
**Friday** - Raffle: for each activity you participate in, you will receive a virtual “ticket” with your name that gets entered into a hat. On Friday we will raffle off a bunch of prizes: a BOC study guide, Pandemic board game, plush microbes, lab week themed bags, notebooks, and more! The more activities you participate in, the better your chances of scoring some sweet prizes.

Instructions for how to submit your work will be included in the instructions emailed each day of lab week. We intend to share the submissions with everyone unless otherwise specified. Or, let us know if we can share them anonymously.

**University Resources**

The University of Utah is working to make sure helpful resources are available to those in need, while keeping in mind the importance of maintaining health and physical distancing. therefore, in response to the expanding pandemic:

* The University of Utah Libraries have closed with plans to reopen May 9th (although this date may be extended if needs be).
* Many library resources are still available to current U students, faculty, and staff. Login with your uNID To look for items remotely.
* As of now, the computer lab in Gardner Commons will remain open.
* The Union building is currently closed until further notice. Additional information regarding the building hours will be posted when available.
* The Feed U Pantry is located on the basement level of the union building. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic they are doing curbside pick-up of too-go bags Mondays and Thursdays from 12-3pm beginning April 9th. To place an order for to-go bags, go here.
* The campus shuttles are now operating on the “Break” schedule. USafeRide will operate normally. For more details, refer to the Commuter Services website.
* Child Care facilities are still operating with their regular hours. For more information and changes visit their website.

**Last Minute: Summer 2020 Semester**

The University of Utah is continuously adapting to the ever-changing environment due to the global pandemic. We will continue to maintain a safe distance and slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in order to protect our front-line healthcare workers and local community by moving ALL summer courses, including first session, second session, and semester-long summer courses, to an online or remote learning platform.

If you have already registered for your courses and have any questions, check in with your professor and/or Canvas for each class to make sure you have all the pertinent information regarding the conduct of the course.
Social Distancing

Remember that “social distancing does not require “social disengagement”. Avoiding close contact can flatten the curve to protect our front-line healthcare workers (including laboratories!). Keep yourself mentally and emotionally healthy during this time by taking opportunities to slow down and be present. Try meditation, or go for a walk with your dog while chatting on the phone. Stay in touch with other through social media, Zoom, or FaceTime. Some additional ideas for you to stay connected include:

1. **Wear a white ribbon** to show support for our front-line workers
2. Get together for virtual morning cup of coffee/tea before logging online for the day, or a virtual happy hour in the evening.
3. Stream shows while on the phone, Zoom, or Netflix Party (via Chrome)
4. Play some online games together (such as Drawful from Jackbox Games)
5. Donate blood! If you are feeling cooped up and need to get out of the house, consider donating blood. Our hospitals here in the valley are currently well stocked, but the need for blood is continuous. Consider putting a reminder in your phone to donate after the semester ends, or a few weeks into summer. Give locally by scheduling an appointment with ARUP Blood Services or the American Red Cross Blood Services. Blood donation is an essential service and does not violate any “stay at home” orders.

MLS faculty pictured here, meeting remotely to plan the remainder of Spring and Summer semester. Pictured top to bottom, left to right:

Diana G Wilkins
Mallory Leetham
Wales Nematollahi
Takara Blamires
Karen Brown
Jenny Johnson
Kristina Pierce
Omar Muñoz
Lacey Murphy
Rebecca Buxton
Robert Durrant

Changes in Grading Due to COVID-19

The University is offering an extended deadline (April 10th) to change Spring 2020 grades to credit/no- credit. If you choose the credit/no-credit option, you will receive a “pass” or “fail” mark for the class instead of a letter grade. If you do not wish to change your traditional letter grade, no action is needed.

Be advised: it is unclear if professional schools and programs (medical, dental, nurse practitioner, and physician assistant), will accept CR/NC for their prerequisites in the future. Ultimately the decision is up to the student, but it is recommended that letter grades be issued for prerequisites courses.

For pre-MLS students: There are no issues as far as completing MLS Program prerequisites if course grades are switched to CR/NC.

For further questions, you can access the Registrar’s Office under Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), contact Pre-MLS Academic Advisor, Lauren Bustamante, and Recruitment and Retention Specialist, Adriana Callahan.

Last day to withdraw from classes has been extended to April 10th.