



CPRC News

A Cytotechnology Programs Review Committee Publication for Cytotechnology Programs

July 2020

Welcome to the delayed issue of the CPRC News for Cytology Programs!

As we all know, there have been many challenges in the past 4 months for all of us, but it is truly remarkable to see how Programs and faculty have become so adaptable. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, very few Cytotechnology Programs had distance learning; however, with the pandemic many were forced to move to online learning via Zoom or numerous other online platforms. Karen Atkison, MPA, CT(ASCP), CPRC Chair, has written an article for this issue, addressing how Programs have “stepped up to the plate” during this extraordinary time. Read it on page 2 of this newsletter.

A few “housekeeping” items for Program Directors and Education Coordinators for this time of year follow:

Annual Reports:

They are due to be submitted by **August 5, 2020**. CAAHEP has informed Debby Sheldon that there is a “glitch” in the current Annual Report Management System (ARMS) and when you submit your Annual Report, it is not delivered; therefore, thanks for your patience in receiving feedback from her. The very good news, CAAHEP is in the final stages of providing a new platform, which will be used for the CPRC Annual Reports in 2021 – finally!

CPRC Annual Accreditation Fees:

Invoices for this annual fee were emailed to all Program Directors in late June; if you don’t remember receiving the email, please contact Debby Sheldon. Please do not confuse this fee with CAAHEP’s Annual Fee for all CAAHEP accredited Programs, which is \$650.

Geraldine Colby Zeiler Award:

This year, many students applied for this Award, which is granted to five cytotechnology students each year. Like many other areas this year, there is a slight delay in the selection process, which should be finalized in late July or early August.

Follow-up to CPRC Standards & Guidelines Webinar:

Many communities of interest (COI) participated in the CPRC webinar on May 14th - Program Directors, Education Coordinators, Medical Directors, Administrators, Graduates, and Employers. The presentation served as the optimal platform to consider additional questions and concerns shared by many of the 63 participants.

The CPRC has gathered all questions and comments and is in the process of developing a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document that will be compatible with the new Standards and Guidelines.

If you are interested in viewing this webinar, it can be accessed via this link:

[CPRC Standards & Guidelines Webinar, May 14, 2020](#)

Managing through a Pandemic: How Our Cytology Programs are Coping

Karen M. Atkison, MPA, CT(ASCP)CMIAC

Covid-19 is and has been daily news since March 2020. For our Cytology Programs, the pandemic's impact started to heat up right when most of the students were finishing up their classroom semesters and heading into their clinical rotations. The clinical rotations are where they finally get to put theory into practice making this experience one of the critical highpoints of the learning process.



The Cytotechnology Programs Review Committee (CPRC) reached out to all Cytology Programs early in the pandemic to get a feel for how the Programs were managing through the challenges of stay-at-home recommendations, masks, social distancing and constant disinfecting high touch surface areas. Particularly, how were the students going to complete their clinical rotations and how and when would they graduate. Distance education and online training were not widely used by many of the Programs when the pandemic hit; therefore, how were they going to ramp up virtual training? And finally, what about the ASCP Board of Certification Exam, are the testing centers going to be open?

Here are some of the Programs' responses to addressing routine training plans disrupted by Covid-19 with little time to respond and no additional funding readily available. I think you will find that necessity truly is the mother of invention, and I am proud to acknowledge the innovations, fortitude and dedication shown by our Program Faculty in navigating these challenges to minimize any gap in the students education. We will do a follow-up query in the fall to continue to assess the Covid-19 impact.

Questions to Schools

1. Did you extend the 2019-2020 class schedule for the students to complete required courses and/or clinical rotations?

- a. No, we kept to the same schedule.
- b. We were lucky and did not have to extend the class schedule. We did bring the students to campus at the beginning of the summer semester to get some more slide time under their belts before going on clinical rotations.
- c. Students are being allowed to return to campus in the fall, but we have been encouraged to teach all lectures (didactic portion) online.
- d. Currently we are trying to accommodate graduation by the original date on August 31st. State regulation permitting we will not need such extension.
- e. Yes, the current class training has been extended to the end of October 2020 (normally finished in late July/early August).
- f. Yes, clinical rotations were extended until September to complete clinical hours.

2. Have you altered beginning of the 2020-2021 class?

- a. No, dates are the same; however, all gatherings, including graduation ceremonies, are prohibited.
- b. No
- c. So far, we have not.
- d. Yes, the next class will begin in January and end in December 2021 (normally begins in mid-August).
- e. No, 2020-21 class will start as usual and according to schedule (August 5) and should not be affected by the clinical extension.

3. Do you plan to teach onsite in your classrooms and labs?

- a. Still teaching onsite using all CDC recommended protocols - masks, social distancing and constant hand hygiene and facility sanitation.
- b. Yes, we plan to be on campus with the students when class begins in August.
- c. Students will return for microscopic and sit 6 feet apart, wear masks, and have their temperatures checked before entering the building. I have managed to place all 7 students in a rotation beginning late July for 4 weeks. Fall rotations are being scheduled now and we hope they can complete them.
- d. The current plan is to provide the microscopy and other lab sessions on campus until Thanksgiving break.
- e. No, for the beginning of the first semester, we will offer lectures through Black Board Ultra system and provide labs according to protocols previously approved by the Medical Sciences Campus Dean for Academic Affairs, ensuring that students are not at risk. Changes to plan will be implemented according to the situation related to COVID-19 and guidelines issued by the governor.

4. Are you doing a combo of face-to-face and online/distance learning?

- a. No, because of the amount of resources and state-of-the art facilities that we have all of our training is done face to face. We continued training our students face to face through simulated clinical rotations. We have created an extensive library of pre-screened slides which are issued to our students along with their clinical data. This is very similar to what the students would have done at their clinical sites, except that our slides are not from current patients. These cases were de-identified and sanitized of any PHI/PII. The grading algorithms, curriculum hours, minimum slide count, and minimum passing grade remained the same. We are greatly confident that these mitigations will meet the CPRC and CAAHEP guidelines and our students are achieving all entry level competencies.
- b. We hope to conduct mostly face-to-face instruction but will incorporate online if needed.
- c. We will have a combination of online/onsite teaching for the first 6 weeks.
- d. The on-campus class are not approved yet, but this is our plan once allowed.
- e. Currently, our students are back on campus fulltime. However, depending on the COVID situation, it may change later.
- f. Yes, online distance learning through Black Board Ultra and face-to-face for some labs that cannot be replaced by another strategy.

5. How are you managing the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) exam?

Early on in the pandemic the Pearson VUE testing centers were closed. Program Directors were concerned about when the students could register to sit for the exams and if backlogs would become an issue when they re-opened.

Another question addressed was, **can I get a job without my certification?**

One Program Director offered this advice: I've told students they can still apply electronically for the BOC, but to warn the employers that have already extended offers to students that certification examinations may be delayed. I told my students it would be a good idea to check the HR policies at their future employment to determine if they are allowed to start working as long as they acquire the certificate in a certain amount of time or if they need it "in hand" to start their first day (I've seen both of these scenarios play out in the past).

The link <https://home.pearsonvue.com/coronavirus-update#face-masks> provides current testing center requirements for testing.

6. How are you managing clinical rotations, teaching ROSE/ FNAs?

- a. We are still training face to face; our students are screening slides in our simulated laboratory (observing social distance and wearing facemasks!). Those slides are, of course, pre-screened and we provide them with all clinical histories.

- b. We were hoping to bring our students back on campus to screen NonGyn slides on May 4th, but our stay at home order has just been pushed back until May 8th. Our goal is to get them back on campus before they go out to clinical rotations this summer. We still have some clinical sites willing to take our students for their summer rotations.
- c. We have transitioned to all virtual learning and we completed our didactic portions by pulling up all projects and curriculum to finish by end of April. As of today, May 4th, the students are rotating to their microscopes on site to begin screening and finishing slide tests. They are staggered times and are not participating in any clinical aspects to accommodate social distancing restrictions and are following all safeguards put in place for caregivers and patients that come into the Clinic. Our clinical rotations were completed before we made the switch to virtual learning. We have May and June to finish slide tests, study/review and screen.
- d. Lectures, virtual slide sessions and journal clubs are administered via Zoom and students come in (in smaller groups) to complete screening at least 1 day a week.
- e. Our students start with Gyn and Cytoprep in the spring. Since we are not a "hospital based" Program, the school will remain closed through summer. We have been met with the challenge of how to teach the lab portion of non-Gyn's this summer. The students are now using the Hologic Gyn slides for their Gyn lab. They mark each case and take screen shots. Then, review every module one-on-one using zoom. This summer, we plan to continue using all the online resources available. Their first clinical rotation is not until late July. We are hoping that by then, the hospitals and labs will allow students to rotate and apply what they have learned. They really need the "hands on" experience.
- f. Our students have all experienced some FNAs before the shutdown, but usually get more experience (and hands-on) during their clinical rotations. I'm not worried about the slide screening aspect – but more of the hands-on, communication, preparation (cart, slides,...) how to handle the needles... Thoughts?
- g. In addition to the ROSE training our students receive while on clinical rotation, we usually do a mock FNA exercise in the classroom at the end of our FNA section to let the students practice making/staining slides and choosing which collection fluid is the best choice based on the mock specimen they are told they are receiving. We use chicken livers to aspirate, but you could just as easily use fruits. To make it easy, I label our "collection" fluid containers as formalin, RPMI, MAP, but just put water in them (with food coloring for RPMI). Can you put together kits with blank slides and small containers that could serve as mock stains and collection fluids with water and food coloring and mail them to the students? You could practice the mechanics of staining and DQ slide making with them through a one on one zoom meeting or something. I gave my students several blank glass slides to take home with them on their last day before going online so that they could use a drop of lotion to practice their slide making technique at home. We plan to bring our students back to our classroom two

at a time in a morning and evening shift starting May 1 so that they can keep up on their screening skills until graduation in June.

- h. Our students have been getting experience in the FNA/EBUS/EUS/ROSE aspect this past semester before clinical rotations (Our 6-week rotations started on March 23 and will end on May 1st). My students at the hospital rotation were told they needed to go home after the 3rd day of rotation. The student at the private lab was able to complete 3 weeks of rotation and was told she had to go home. So there is no way for me to get additional clinical experience for them before graduation next month. I personally feel their experience before rotations is sufficient, and I do not want to delay graduation for them in anticipation of an experience that may/may not happen in light of what's going on right now.



Cytotechnology Programs Review Committee

Committee on Accreditation

Strategies in Cytotechnology Education 2020

Traditionally, the Strategies session takes place prior to the opening of the ASC Annual Scientific Meeting; however, with all the changes this year, the session will be virtual but not part of the ASC Annual Scientific Meeting.

The session will be done in sections, with some one hour webinars in the month prior to the actual Meeting time. The last session will be a live CPRC presentation and be scheduled before the actual ASC Virtual Meeting so that the session does not conflict with other Meeting sessions. There will be no cost for participants, most of whom are Program Directors and faculty. *[More on these webinars in the coming months...](#)*

CAAHEP News

Like many other organizations, CAAHEP moved its April Annual Meeting to an online format, sharing all presentations via Zoom. During the Annual Business Meeting of Commissioners, the American Red Cross was approved as a sponsoring organization of two Committees on Accreditation (CoAs), Exercise Science and Anesthesia Technology Education. The Summer Workshop will also be virtual with presentations every Friday in August.



CAAHEP is providing monthly Zoom meetings for CoA staff, in an effort to answer questions and provide support and guidance during the pandemic.

Virtual Site Visits are being explored again, more intensely now with the pandemic. Several CoAs have shared presentations on how to develop virtual site visits. The CPRC is exploring virtual site visits, with the possibility of having partial virtual site visits in the future.

In an effort to assist all higher education institutions, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) has been working with Tuscan Strategy Consulting and the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security (JHCHS) to create tools designed to assist higher education institutions with operations while the COVID-19 pandemic persists. Their goal is to assure that institutions offer a high-quality education in a safe environment for all stakeholders, whether faculty, staff, or students

This website, OpenSmartEDU.org, offers free access to:



PLANNING TOOLS

*** COVID-19 Planning Guide and Self-Assessment for Higher Education**

- A robust set of operational activities organized by function. Institutional leaders can assign departmental heads activity sets easily from the Guide.
- More than 500 statements for evaluation, from health and safety steps to equity-oriented elements for staff, faculty, and students.

*** COVID-19 Self-Assessment Calculator for Higher Education**

- Much like the highly successful Business Risk Assessment Calculator developed by JHCHS, a tool designed to quickly assess the stage of risk mitigation an institution has currently attained.

*** Coming Soon -- COVID-19 Project Planning Template (Smartsheet®)**

- An online project management planning template to assist with evaluation and implementation across an institution.

CURATED RESOURCES

*** Official Guidelines**

- Major official guidelines issued by more than 60 health authorities and professional associations. New material is being added on an ongoing basis.

*** College and University Announcements Database**

- Opening and instructional plans for more than 1,000 U.S. colleges and universities, sortable by type, geographic location, and size of institution.

*** Media Reports and Surveys**

- Media reports and various surveys are included in this section, updated regularly.

Institutions, accrediting organizations and all involved in higher education are encouraged to visit OpenSmartEDU.org, to download and use the Guide and Self-Assessment Calculator, and to peruse the resources. The COVID-19 Smartsheet® Project Planner is expected to be available soon.

Annual Meetings in Our Upside Down World.....



The in-person 68th Annual Scientific Meeting scheduled to take place November 5-8, 2020 at Omni ChampionsGate, Orlando, Florida has been modified to the ASC Virtual Scientific Meeting on the same dates. The Virtual Meeting will have much of

the same content and opportunities to connect that were planned for Orlando.

Registration is NOW OPEN: <https://cytopathology.org/page/Registration>



STRONGERTOGETHER

The ASCP 2020 Annual Meeting will be offered exclusively as a virtual experience. You will have the opportunity to easily attend, participate and experience the same unique, timely

education while connecting with a truly global community. The live portion of the annual originally scheduled for Austin, Texas, has been cancelled.

Join us for a brand new way to experience it all, September 9-11, 2020.

<https://www.ascp.org/content/2020>



**COLLEGE of AMERICAN
PATHOLOGISTS**

Every year pathologists come together as friends and colleagues at the CAP Annual Meeting in the pursuit of *Knowledge, Relationships and Expertise*. However, COVID-19 forced seismic

changes in our lives, practices and institutions. After thoughtful deliberation, we have decided to transition CAP20 from our in-person gathering Las Vegas, to a virtual meeting starting October 10.

Specifics are forthcoming....<https://www.capannualmeeting.org/>



**AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR
CYTOTECHNOLOGY**

The ASCT Annual Conference, originally scheduled for April 2020 was moved to September 2020; however, the ASCT host hotel, the Riviera Palm Springs, is undergoing renovation this summer, as COVID-19 has given

the hotel the opportunity to transform the property. ***As a result, the Conference has been cancelled.***

We look forward to seeing you in 2021 at the Annual Conference at The Westin Denver Downtown, April 30 to May 2, 2021.

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