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To: bme-major@virginia.edu
Cc: bme-fac@virginia.edu
Subject: Important Information for BME Majors about Return to Grounds
Date: Friday, July 31, 2020 2:32:27 PM

Sent on behalf of Dr. Shannon Barker, BME Undergraduate Program Director.

Dear BME Undergraduate Students,

I hope you've had a restful and safe summer. It has certainly been an unusual one. We in the BME department have been working hard planning for Fall 2020, and are so excited to welcome you back, whether virtually or in-person. I want to go over a few things to keep in mind as you start preparing for the semester.

Courses:

Be sure and check SIS to find out how your BME courses are being delivered for Fall 2020. As you'll notice, a vast majority will be online only for a variety of reasons. Instructors will be reaching out soon to communicate expectations and course design. Each instructor has worked very hard to redesign their courses for online delivery, creating exciting new approaches that fully maximize the benefits of remote learning. While Spring 2020 was an emergency transition that occurred in the middle of a semester, Fall 2020 courses have been thoughtfully planned and structured with online delivery in mind. Please feel free to reach out to your individual instructors or to me with any questions about Fall courses. If you are enrolled in an Independent Study, please contact your mentor soon to set expectations.

Undergraduate Research:

Undergraduate research is a very important part of BME's culture, and the research contributions made by our undergraduate students are highly valued by our faculty and graduate students. We also understand the educational and experiential value of undergraduate research opportunities, and the importance of such experiences on future applications for jobs, and graduate and professional school. The University is currently in Phase I of its Research Ramp-Up; and in this phase, undergraduate students are not permitted in laboratory spaces. While we are hoping that undergraduates will be allowed to work in the lab this academic year, there is no guarantee that will happen, or for how long. We are all working together to come up with creative alternatives to in-person research experiences, so that we can continue our commitment to undergraduate research excellence. If you are enrolled in Research-for-Credit or had plans to work in a BME lab, please contact your PI soon to set expectations and discuss options.

Community:

As you all know, the BME department has a strong sense of community, where we can all lean on each other for support. A strong community will be as important as ever this semester, as

we continue to deal with a pandemic and profound issues of racial injustice and political polarization. And while we may not be able to physically see each other as much as we'd like to have meaningful conversations around these topics and others, we hope to continue providing virtual opportunities to come together as a community through the Fall semester. We will start with a Welcome to BME Orientation for rising 2nd year students on August 20th at 6:00 PM (stay tuned for an email), and a Town Hall open to 3rd and 4th years a few weeks into the Fall semester. Faculty and students alike are working on ways to engage with each other, so look out for more information.

Fall 2020 BME Undergraduate Student Forum

In the meantime, please utilize the **Fall 2020 BME Undergraduate Student Forum** [here](#). This dynamic document is meant to serve as a central location for information regarding Fall 2020. If after reviewing the document, you still have questions, please add them to the forum and we will answer as soon as we can. You can also email me.

Student Support Services You Can Use Now

Please don't forget that there are a host of University student support resources you can use now over the summer if you need them. These are listed in the above [Fall 2020 BME Undergraduate Student Forum](#) under Student Support Resources Updates.

Thank you and I am looking forward to seeing you all in some capacity this Fall.

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