



June 21, 2021

There has been much discussion in the past few months regarding best practices in the upcoming fellow recruitment season. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has led to many changes. In the previous recruitment cycle, programs nationwide shifted to a virtual interview model. This was done due to concerns regarding safety of travel, institutional mandates, the recommendations of national organizations, as well as concern for creating a level playing field for applicants. This transition was embraced by the community of programs and program directors who directed much energy and ingenuity into the process.

In alignment with recommendations from other major organizations, the American College of Cardiology Program Directors and Graduate Medical Educators (ACC PD&GME) Leadership Council supports virtual interviews for all programs during the upcoming recruitment season. We do this out of a commitment to our applicants and our training programs. We believe that the guiding principle must be to maintain a process that is fair to the applicants and provides them the best opportunity to select a program to achieve their career goals. A level playing field and a certainty around the process are critical to achieve these goals.

We acknowledge that unlike last year, there is a variation of opinion around this recommendation. We fully recognize the limitations of virtual recruitment. Applicants and programs are asked to make significant decisions with long term implications without the advantages that in person visits bring. We also realize that the environment in the fall of 2021 may look significantly different than the current status, with rapidly evolving national, local and institutional guidelines and standards. Additionally, predictions as to the status of travel and the ability to gather in large groups is uncertain. None the less, we believe that the advantages of creating certainty for applicants as well as a uniform process for recruitment will benefit programs and applicants alike.

It is also important to note that while acknowledging the limitations of the virtual recruitment platform, we recognize there are advantages to virtual recruitment that will benefit applicants broadly. Programs can build on lessons learned from last year and can use best practices to showcase the unique elements of the institution as well as allow applicants to showcase their unique qualities.

While we know that there is not uniformity of opinion in the cardiovascular program director community nor in the ACC PD&GME Leadership Council on this important issue, we believe that as a community we can and should create a recruitment environment that will benefit applicants and programs alike.

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Related Links:

1. Preliminary Recommendations of the Undergraduate Medical Education to Graduate Medical Education Review Committee (UGRC), recommendation 26. [online] Accessed 6/17/2021, <https://physicianaccountability.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/UGRC-Recommendations-Public-Comment-Period-April-26-May26-1.pdf>
2. AAIM Guidance for 2021-2022 Fellowship Application Season [online] Accessed 6/17/2021. <https://www.im.org/resources/ume-gme-program-resources/resources-fellowship-application>

Sincerely,

Gaby Weissman, MD, FACC

Chair, Program Directors and Graduate Medical Educators Section Leadership Council

Lisa Rose-Jones, MD, FACC

Chair-Elect, Program Directors and Graduate Medical Educators Section Leadership Council

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