

# Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Thursday, April 2, 2020

## Scientific presentations move online for students

Most Wednesdays, the Cell and Molecular Biology Journal Club meets in a second-floor conference room at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. The club gives graduate students studying basic sciences an opportunity to present research they've had a hand in conducting.

Typically, students stand at a podium with a large screen behind them, as they introduce and explain the topic. More than a dozen other students and faculty attend the meetings. At the end, the audience has an opportunity to ask questions of the students.

Because all of USA's classes have been moved online following the COVID-19 outbreak, the journal club is holding lectures virtually through the Zoom platform.

"Journal club presentations help students prepare for future public presentations of research or any other scientific topic during their careers in academia or industry-related fields," said Lyudmila Rachev, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmacology at the USA College of Medicine.

"It helps students to keep up with current findings, increase their scientific literacy, exercise critical thinking skills, and improve their presentation and debate abilities. All of this will be imperative in their transition to future careers."

The first Zoom presenter was Yelitza Rodriguez, a Ph.D. student based in the medical school's biochemistry and molecular biology department.

While the questions and answers portion of the presentation has moved online, it remains a valuable part of the presentation: "It increases student confidence and debate abilities," Rachev said. "Also, as I always say to students, it develops and improves their abilities to start and maintain a scientific discussion."



Yelitza Rodriguez, a Ph.D. student in biochemistry and molecular biology, was the first to present her research on the Zoom platform.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at 1:46 PM No comments:

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

## Virtual dance party uplifts medical students and faculty

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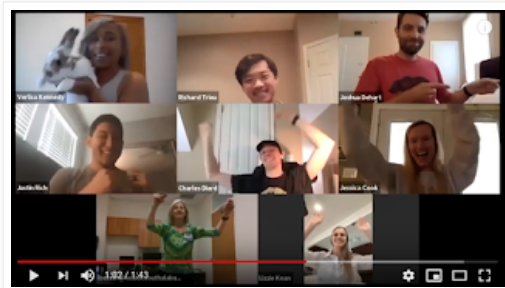
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## Dr Fun's House Party



Dr. Fun hosted a dance party to boost the heart rates and spirits of medical students.

"Being active isn't only good for your heart – it's a mood-lifter, too," said Lynn Batten, M.D., aka Dr. Fun. "It's important to get away from the computer or social media for a while every day (unless you're Zoom-dancing with friends!) and do something that gets that heart rate up and makes you sweat."



Inspired by Zoom's gallery view, Batten, associate professor of pediatrics, internal medicine, and physiology and cell biology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, used the video conferencing platform to host the online dance party. Dancing to Sam Hunt's "House Party," medical students, deans, faculty and

staff joined the party with their families, housemates and pets.

While maintaining physical distance, Batten encourages students to stay connected to one another in other ways.

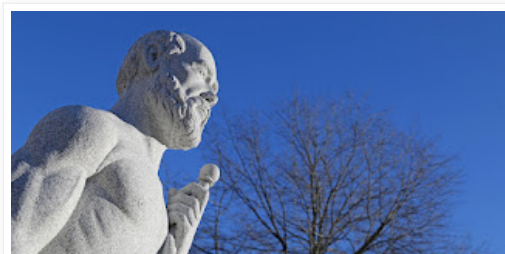
"I think it can be very lonely to be isolated at home without that everyday connection to others we've been used to," she said. "It actually took me by surprise how happy it made ME to see all the students' faces the first time we did a Zoom class with 68 first-year medical students attending!"

[Watch Dr. Fun's House Party on YouTube.](#)

Posted by [Med School Watercooler](#) at [11:55 AM](#) No comments:

**Tuesday, March 31, 2020**

## Maintaining mental health and wellness during quarantine



Students at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine are adjusting to online learning, coming to terms with canceled events and plans, and dealing with the overall state of uncertainty surrounding the

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COVID-19 pandemic. During this time of social distancing, it's especially important to take care of one's mental health and well-being.

With that goal in mind, Marjorie Scaffa, Ph.D., health and wellness counselor at the USA College of Medicine, is providing virtual counseling online in 15-, 30-, or 60-minute time blocks. Call (251) 460-7051 or email [mscaffa@southalabama.edu](mailto:mscaffa@southalabama.edu) to make an appointment.

In addition, Scaffa will be hosting weekly virtual Wellness Chats on Thursdays at 4 p.m. The format will be a brief presentation and then time for discussion and questions. Medical students will receive a Zoom invitation no later than the morning of the event.

The first chat is scheduled for April 2. Timothy Gilbert, Ed.D., assistant dean of accreditation and planning at the USA College of Medicine, will talk about how to get the most out of online learning. During the second chat on April 9, Scaffa will talk about maintaining well-being during quarantine.

Scaffa provided the following tips for mental health during quarantine.

**What to do every day:**

- Get some sunlight. Go outside from time to time. When inside your home, be sure to open shades, curtains, etc.
- Play upbeat music during the day and dance like no one is watching.
- Shower and wear clean clothes. You will feel more awake and ready for the day.
- Drink lots of water. Use a fancy glass to make it more fun.
- Stay connected. Contact at least one friend or family member each day.
- Get moving. Take a walk or a bike ride.
- Seek a higher purpose through yoga, meditation, prayer, and/or reading religious texts or inspirational material.

The USA Counseling and Testing Center has a webpage on mental health services and resources for students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit <https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/counseling/coronavirus.html>.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [2:51 PM](#) No comments:

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