Systems Bio Message to Community

Several people have expressed concern about the effects of shutdown and reduced social contact on graduate students. These are likely to include anxiety about their health and that of their friends and family, inability to continue their work, and loss (especially for experimental scientists) of the social setting that anchors a good part of their existence.

For SysBio we’re setting up a number of things:

1) Suggesting that each Gyear set up a weekly Zoom meeting to stay in touch w each other, giving them the option to recruit our program coordinator (Liz), one of the two program codirectors or any other fac they want to sit in on the mtg.

2) For G1s, in addition, set up a G1 + G2 group to Zoom meet weekly to provide PQE1 support and guidance, again w option of adding Liz/fac.

3) For G2s, in addition, set up a G2 + G3 group to Zoom meet weekly to provide PQE2 support and guidance, again w option of adding Liz/fac.

4) Extend rotation deadline and email all rotation mentors to tell them to include current rotons in virtual lab mtgs and have Zoom mtg w the individual student biweekly.

5) Appointing a pair of representatives from each class, who Liz can check in with and enquire, discreetly, if anyone looks like they may need help coping.

There are similar issues for postdocs, but for them the functional unit is their lab, since they arrive individually and asynchronously, and it would be good to encourage each faculty who runs a lab to have a weekly virtual lab meeting and to meet on Zoom with each member of their lab, individually, at least once each fortnight.