



Montefiore

From the OFFICE OF THE DEAN



Dear Einstein Community:

One of the most thrilling and nerve-wracking milestones in an M.D. student's career is Match Day, when graduating fourth years learn where they will spend the next three to seven years of their life for residency.

This year, our class of 2021 enjoyed tremendous success in [the Match](#), which was all the more rewarding because of the many challenges and increased uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. But even the novel coronavirus could not dampen the excitement and fanfare of the day.

I'm therefore pleased to share [our Match Day video](#), which captures our students' joy as they open their envelopes and learn where they matched, and celebrate with their fellow students, faculty, and family. I also invite you to listen to my [last dean's chat](#), when I spoke with four of our graduating medical students—Steven Henick, Elise Mike, Melissa (Talia) Plummer, and Farid (Freddy) Tadros—about their respective matches and their experiences at Einstein.

Recent Good News

In addition to Match Day, we are fortunate to have other good news to share. We received word earlier this week that **Dr. David Kessler**—former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, former member of the Einstein faculty, and current chief science officer of the White House COVID-19 Response Team—has accepted our invitation to be this year's commencement speaker. We're excited to have Dr. Kessler return to Einstein—albeit virtually—to speak to our graduates about all he has experienced and learned while serving our nation.

In addition to this positive news, a number of notable accolades and honors have recently been bestowed on members of the Einstein community.

- Einstein faculty member and alum [Juan Robles, M.D.](#) '11, assistant professor of family and social medicine and co-founder of the Bronx Community Health Leaders, received the **2021 LMSA National Mentor of the Year Award** from the **Latino Medical Student Association** in recognition of his efforts to support Bronx students pursuing healthcare careers and to create a more inclusive workforce dedicated to underserved communities.
- Einstein medical and graduate students teamed with students from Cardozo and the CUNY M.P.H. program to take part in the annual **Emory Global Health Case Competition**. They took second place—our highest finish in the competition to date—finishing one place higher than Einstein's 2020 team. You'll be able to read about their accomplishments in a story to be posted later this month on our intranet.
- The **Einstein-Montefiore Presidential Lecture**, the annual event that honors two faculty members for their basic science and clinical research excellence, did not take place last year due to the pandemic. We are pleased that we will host the event this fall. Our 2020 recipients, [Liise-anne Pirofski, M.D.](#), and [Kartik Chandran, Ph.D.](#), will describe their respective efforts to address SAR-Cov-2 infection early in the pandemic.
- Our office of alumni relations deserves thanks and congratulations for its recent **Pi Day festivities**, held from March 12 to 14. In addition to offering several fun virtual challenges, the office sought to raise funds to provide scholarships to Einstein students in need. They exceeded their goal of raising \$31,400—more than doubling that amount.
- Einstein's [Leo M. Davidoff Society](#) recently welcomed 35 new inductees. These individuals will join the ranks of faculty members who are recognized for teaching excellence in medical education at the College of Medicine.

Please join me in congratulating everyone on their well-earned awards and honors.

Remembering and Never Forgetting

Our institution is young enough, at 66 years, to still have faculty members who were here when Einstein was established, or who arrived soon after. We've been fortunate to have titans in their fields among us from our very inception and

some of them are still with us and contributing today.

Sadly, over the past three months, we lost three such individuals—[Robin Briehl, M.D.](#), [Jack Peisach, Ph.D.](#), and [Murray Wittner, M.D., Ph.D.](#) I invite you to read about each of these longstanding faculty members, whose research informed science and helped advance medicine—in sickle cell anemia, in electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) spectroscopy and metals in chemistry, and in parasitology, respectively—and whose presence helped make Einstein such a special place. Through a link in each memoriam you also can [leave a remembrance](#), if you wish.

While not a member of our faculty I also want to pay respect to **Tabaré Vazquez, M.D.**, who visited Einstein in 2009 during his first term as president of Uruguay and gave a standing-room-only speech on "[Science, Medicine, and Social Commitment](#)." President Vazquez passed away on December 6, 2020. He was a passionate champion of social justice whose policies and social programs dramatically improved the health of his nation. Our [The Doctor's Tablet blog](#) features an entry from Drs. Pablo Castillo, José Luis Peña, and Alberto Pereda, professors of neuroscience who are natives of Uruguay, who describe the influence that Dr. Vazquez had on their lives and careers.

In remembering those who have died, it is also fitting that last week was Yom HaShoah, the central focus of Holocaust Remembrance Week, when we recall the murder of six million Jews and millions more for being "other" in the eyes of the Nazis due to their race, ethnicity, country of origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. We must never forget what happened to them, or to others since, in our ongoing efforts to fight the systemic racism that is deeply embedded in our society, as well as all existing health inequities.

Vaccination Survey

In conclusion, I ask that everyone carefully read an e-blast regarding a **vaccination survey**, sent from the dean's office yesterday. To accommodate those of you who did not receive the notice informing you about the survey, I've included a link [here](#). I encourage everyone to complete the survey, which was sent separately, as it will be an important resource for helping us to determine the best means for ramping up our campus activities. If you accidentally deleted the email with the survey link or have not yet responded, you will receive an

automatic reminder about the survey tomorrow, with the link included.

As you know, it is our top priority to keep everyone safe, and we want to ensure that's the case as more people return to campus. As always, I urge you to maintain your efforts to stay healthy and to take advantage of the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Battling COVID-19 is like an endurance race. While we're approaching "Heartbreak Hill"—which represents the last, painful stretch of the Boston Marathon—we must continue our vigilant efforts to make it safely across the finish line.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Tomaselli', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D.

The Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer