Good News
Dean Brown announced that Saad Omer, MD has been selected for a National Academy of Medicine committee on vaccine development.

Feedback on NIH proposal submissions post-COVID
The group provided feedback on the outstanding efforts of the grants and contracting process, especially given the increase in activity due to COVID-19.

Input on bridge funding
The group discussed each department’s criteria and processes for decision-making in granting bridge funding. They reached general agreement that more favorable applications tend to address key points, demonstrate acute need, and contain a clear plan to reach a sustainable position, rather than mitigate a recurring problem or issue. Most departments have a committee that reviews and approves applications, providing critique, feedback and recommendations to the PI.

On a related note, the group discussed junior investigators’ concerns over the impact of COVID-19 on the burn rate of their start up packages. Young faculty devoted time to taking care of COVID-19 patients, at the expense of writing grant proposals and manuscripts. The one-year extension in their terms does not address funding issues as grants and start-up packages dwindle. The impacts of limited availability of childcare disproportionately impacted female faculty over male faculty.

The group discussed leveraging the reduced FY21 recruitment budget to attract stellar people from institutions who cannot afford to retain them.