

The Viking

GRAYSON COLLEGE

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New Academic Year Adjusts to Pandemic Reality

- Sydney Boddie, Student

The year of 2020 has been nothing but full of surprises, tragedy, and change. The deadly Coronavirus has affected our entire world and changed our everyday lives, and it will probably be forever changed due to the circumstances. Although it has been a difficult adjustment to our lives, school boards worldwide have been doing everything in their power to make sure all students are getting the education they deserve. By schools making sure they follow the COVID-19 guidelines, sanitizing regularly,



Above: Student Benjamin Lopez prepares for a day of online learning. (Photo provided by Lopez.)

Cheek explains that while attending their once-a-week in-person classes, students are required to sit at least one chair apart from each other to practice social distancing. At the end of class, Dr. Cheek expects her in-person classes to wipe down their entire desk and class computer (if used) and chair the student sat in with disinfectant wipes and spray to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.

She knows how important spending in class time with her students is and will take any

and continuing on with school, whether it be virtually or in person, we will slowly begin to move forward with life while accepting the hardships that we have been faced with.

Sanitary precautions around campus

According to *Community College Review*, Grayson College is home to about 4,636 students with a student:teacher ratio of 28:1, a reasonable amount of students to be in class together. Math Professor Dr. Billy

further precautions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

COVID-19 precautions are also evident in workforce classes. Gracie McDorman, Cosmetology major and resident of Jones Hall at Grayson College, relates that every single Cosmetology student, including herself, is expected to arrive on time Monday-Thursday at 7:30 in the morning to get their temperature checked before they are allowed to enter into the salon/classroom.

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Wildfires devastate Oregon

- Korey Medart, Student

When Oregon residents closed their eyes the night of Monday, September 7, they did not know what the world had in store for them. The morning of September 8, residents of Talent, Phoenix, Medford, and numerous other surrounding cities awoke to fires threatening the safety of them and their loved ones.

By 11 that morning the evacuation order was at a Level One in Ashland, Oregon, according to 63-year-old Carolyn Hald, a lifelong resident of Ashland. Hald explains that a fire at a Level One was a

suggested evacuation, whereas a Level 3 is a mandatory evacuation.

Rapid exit

Hald had the bare minimum of plans in place to prepare for a wildfire. Realizing the sudden risk to her and her grandchildren's lives, Hald decided it was best to "quickly get out of [the] one-road town--ahead of everyone else." In the chance that authorities might shut down the only road that goes through the town, she quickly grabbed the children, her dog, and her medicine and loaded them in the car.

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Below: Talent, Oregon left unrecognizable by fire. (Photo by Carrie Brown)



How about some COVID fun?

- Azia Lokeni, Student

Imagine living in a bubble, but when your bubble gets too close to another bubble, they both pop. Since you know that you could pop your own bubble or someone else's bubble, you are careful not to get too close to them. That is how many students feel living on campus. Many days it feels as though there is nothing to do other than homework. With the restrictions due to the pandemic, they feel as though they are not allowed to have a social life or friends outside of their dorm building. The biggest question is how do we have fun on campus and make others feel less isolated while still being Coronavirus safe?



Viking Facebook page

Many students feel as though there is nothing to do on campus besides study although the reality is that they just do not know what there is to do. Jayce Randolph, a dorm monitor for Viking and Jones Hall who helps put on many of the activities for Grayson students, says that one place many students do not know about is the Viking Facebook page, where many events, online and in person, are posted to let all students know what is going on.

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A new normal? The mental health impact of COVID-19 on Students

- Francisco Lobato, Student



Above: Student Francisco Lobato feels the stress of 2020. (Photo by author)

Early spring of 2020, a new virus affected the lives of many students around the world. Millions have died, and many experience persisting symptoms even after recovery, not only physical but also mental. Due to social distancing guidelines set by the Center of Disease Control, colleges throughout the United States have been forced to shut down.

New norm/Changing plans

Like a number of students, Nancy Francisco, a graphic design major at Grayson College, struggled adjusting to this new normal. Not only was she not able to see her friends while quarantining, but this pandemic greatly impacted her mental health. Francisco states, "I wasn't in the best place before, [and] I lost many social skills because they weren't put

into practice." The lack of socializing due to social distancing has left many students confined to their homes. Although necessary to stop the spread of COVID-19, social distancing can take a toll on the mental health of students.

Francisco, like many students at Grayson College, has struggled monetarily during the pandemic, greatly affecting her mental health. Early spring, as Covid-19 spread throughout the world, many restaurants, shopping centers, and entertainment centers were forced to close in order to "flatten the curve" of the spread. Francisco, who works at Cotton Patch in Denison, Texas, was worried. She states, "I lacked the resources and had to adjust.

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Success in Anatomy & Physiology? It's Possible!

- Micaela Chumley, Student

With success comes many challenges, for example passing courses in college in order to pursue one's desired career like a doctor, nurse, dentist, etc., courses that can become roadblocks to someone's course of action. For some Grayson College students, Anatomy and Physiology can be that one course that they need in order to continue their pursuit of a career in healthcare.

Situational challenges

Dr. Patrice Parsons, Biology Professor at Grayson College, has spent over 20 years within the medical field. She contends that Anatomy and Physiology is a challenging course due to "the situational challenges that students face and almost never from intellectual capabilities." Situational challenges refer to a student's personal life, for instance, having children, financial

burdens (not having the money or stability to pay for books), transportation, household rent, etc.

Lack of educational strategies

Dr. Parsons adds that the "educational system" can also play a part in the challenges of the Anatomy and Physiology course's success rate. This challenge is due to a lack of focus on "imagination, creativity and application of concepts" during the growth period of K-12, focusing all students' time on the preparation for standardized tests and not on the learning styles for "long-term retention." Due to having to use new tactics that were not taught in grades K-12 needed to retain all the information in such a short amount of time, A&P students either "sink or swim" within the Anatomy and Physiology courses 1 and 2.

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EDITORIAL

Turning tests into testimony

-Angie Rodriguez, Student

This year has brought a great deal of tests, for all of us. We have been quarantined and masked. We have lost loved ones, missed school, lost jobs, and have been unable to travel to see loved ones. The list continues endlessly. How do we accomplish what seems like such a herculean task? A good start might be: "Find the silver lining in all situations." But how do we get from the proverbial here to there?

My testimony involves the devastating experience of being the first person to find a family member after he had lost his battle with PTSD and had taken his own life.

The horror of that day revisited me on an hourly basis and continued to haunt me for what seemed like forever. Planning the funeral and memorial services filled my waking hours, and nightmares took away any peaceful slumber I could hope for.

My grades and attendance suffered, and I was in danger of losing scholarships. I felt like a zombie, walking through life on auto-pilot. I was doing things, but nothing was getting done, and depression seeped in like a psychological poison.

I reached out to the Veterans Service Office for local resources to seek counseling and they assisted me by directing me to Barbara Malone for the counseling I needed. Our local chapter of Phi Theta Kappa adopted me into their organization, taking me with them to the Phi Theta Kappa Texas Regional Conference in Abilene.

I found a rare and loving camaraderie amongst both organizations. I have also found support with our Student Support Services, who have fantastic tutors and helped me to maintain my GPA and be named to the 2020 All-Texas Academic Team.

Decide what your goal is for the next day, week, month, year, etc., and block out the extraneous to focus on the next step of your path. Remember this: the personal tests you encounter in achieving your goals are simply a path to your testimony, your well-deserved reward.

Most importantly, to keep focus, you must keep your eyes on your path. Your eyes are the most important tool

on this journey. Take into consideration that a horse will always walk in the direction that its eyes are looking. A distracted horse will turn his head and look away when stopping along his path to graze and see what scrumptious treats he may find and then travel further afield...and eventually his path is out of sight. In the same way, we also continue to focus by keeping our eyes on our chosen prizes.

If we allow ourselves to become distracted while we are on our chosen path, we might make a different decision that changes the course from what we have chosen. Before we know it, we are so far from our path it seems as though there is no easy way back and we have just complicated our lives that much more. Amid the pandemonium of this pandemic, we have the tools we need, right here at Grayson College, to become our own rock in the stormy seas.

Contrary to popular belief, asking for help does not show weakness. Rather, I have learned that it takes a stronger person to ask for help when it is needed. We have some of the best resources here at Grayson that I have ever encountered, and Grayson is not my first college.

The staff and resource programs here are directly responsible for helping me not only to survive the 2020 Spring semester, but to continue to be strong enough to stay in school and continue my education.

I am so very grateful for everything Grayson College has done for me, but the hardest step was that first one. The decision to reach out and ask for help was the most difficult, and after that, I became amazed at how the cogs began to turn in this wonderful organization.

Presently, I have maintained my status as a student at Grayson and I am due to graduate summa cum laude in the spring with my Associates Degree in Business Administration. I am also a work study in the Veteran's Service Office, and I am president of the Student Veterans of America club. Thanks to the wonderful people at Grayson College, I didn't just survive, I thrived. This is my testimony; now create yours.

(Continued from "New Normal" pg 1)

Though Grayson wasn't my first choice, it was the better choice [of college] financially." The lack of resources due to restaurants closing left many students like Francisco hesitating about whether to pursue a secondary education at all. "I was hesitating on going to college because I knew classes would be online," she explains.

Miguel Lobato, a graphic design major who graduated from Grayson College in 2018, also found this fall to differ from what he had originally expected. Lobato had originally planned to graduate, take some time off, and save up enough money to continue his education at the University of North Texas. But because of unprecedented times, Lobato will no longer be attending classes on campus but all of his classes will instead be online. Like many students, this small change has had an

enormous effect on his mental health. "I didn't think much would change [as a result of the pandemic]," he says, "but not being able to go places and see people made me anxious at times."

Counseling resources available but online

Although Grayson College provides help to students like Lobato and Francisco, it's not always easy to reach out and ask for help. When asked if the resources on campus were helpful, Francisco says, "Personally, I haven't had the opportunity to reach out and ask for help. I'd love to but they're online."

Lobato agrees: "Commuting made [reaching out] difficult since I'm an out-of-state student and never had the time." Even though the help is provided, social distancing guidelines make it hard for the student to feel comfortable talking to a computer screen. According to Francisco, the divide between a computer

screen and a professional counselor makes the session not as personal and can sometimes be intimidating.

Time to reflect

However not all effects of the pandemic have been negative. Because students have had so much free time, many have used this time to reflect on their original decisions regarding college. Francisco says, "I questioned my decision [regarding college] in the first place, but this pandemic gave me the chance to think about my choice [graphic design]. In a way, it reinforced my plan."

Lobato also experienced a few positive effects in the financial realm because of this pandemic. Because my classes are all online now, I'm able to save up the money I would've otherwise spent on housing," he says.

Fast Facts
About
Suicide

- Suicide is the **10th leading cause of death** in the US.
- On average, there are **132 suicides** per day.
- In 2018, **firearms accounted for 50.57%** of all suicide deaths.
- Suicide is the **2nd leading cause of death** for ages 10–34.
- **10.3%** of Americans have **thought about suicide**.
- **54%** of Americans have been **affected by suicide**.
- **90%** of those who died by suicide had a diagnosable **mental health condition** at the time of their death.
- Suicide **attempts rose 73%** between 1991 and 2017 among Black high school students. (source)
- White youth still die by suicide at a higher rate, but the rate of **black youth suicide is increasing faster** than any other racial or ethnic group. (source)
- Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a crisis mental health **hotline has seen an 891% spike** in calls. (source)



Source:
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

WANT TO SEE YOUR WORK IN
The Viking?

Send your work to our editor:
Email us at:
stnanderson@vikings.grayson.edu

NEXT DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 6TH

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS STRUGGLING
WITH THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE, REACH OUT:

Crisis Text Line: 741741
Available 24/7

AND

Grayson College Counseling Services:
Email perezcl@grayson.edu
Counseling is 100% FREE to Students
and 100% Confidential!

VIKINGS, WE ARE HERE TO HELP!



Above: GC Staff assists a student during dorm check-in on August 11. (photo provided by GC Marketing)

Virtual v. face-to-face education

- Benjamin Lopez, Student

Of the approximately 1,000 students who attend Sam Rayburn High School, 106 opted to stay home and remain online for the school year, which added a different branch to the ever-growing tree that is educators' tasks.

Mark Gibbs, both an administrator and history teacher at Sam Rayburn High School, states that there are certain benefits to both in-person and online learning. "At the end of the day, a degree holds the same weight. It doesn't matter the method in which someone gets it," he says. Gibbs believes students who have chosen to remain online have much more personal freedom and time to themselves. In contrast, those who decided to return to school have more room to develop relationships.

"While I don't know if I consider this a good thing," Gibbs chuckled, "my online kids certainly have more time to themselves, but let it be known that being in a physical classroom allows me to understand my kids better based upon their personality. Tone can't always be read right through taps on a keyboard." Gibbs believes that more students will eventually migrate back over to a physical classroom because the opportunity to forge new relationships outweighs staring at a screen for most of the day.

New education set-up

While the novel Coronavirus pandemic has forced teachers to extend their reach into the online realm, the students (especially incoming seniors) have had to make tough

decisions regarding their education plan. David Salazar, a high school senior currently attending Midlothian High School located in Midlothian, Texas, has inside his room, an advanced computer setup, multiple monitors, and a comfortable chair for what he thought would be used for "extended schooling sessions." Midlothian High had informed Salazar that he would have the option of learning online or returning to the classroom.

"Almost immediately after [being informed that he would have a choice], I found a part-time job and applied for a bunch of hours and acquired a better [computer] set up so that I would be more enticed to sit down and do schoolwork," Salazar explains. He opened his backpack to reveal new supplies and a laptop.

"I hated it [online education] after the first two weeks. My life became a daily routine of doing the same thing. Wake up, do school work, go to work, get home and relax for a bit before bed, and then wake up and do the same thing over again," he reveals. Salazar's routine became boring for him because he was used to the spontaneous day-to-day life that going to school brought. "I lost many friends, and I missed seeing people every day and being social in general," he reflects. Salazar states that he is much happier going to a physical school because his day becomes more dynamic.

Teamwork and leadership through online schooling

Learning in-person has its benefits, such as busier days

and relationships. Still, newly certified homeschool teacher and mother of nine Lori Parrott claims that online schooling isn't any different from homeschooling. "There are still groups that somebody can find to study together or just hang out with," she states.

After the pandemic hit, approximately 3.4% of students are now homeschooled, according to the Center for Disease Control, a percentage consisting mostly of elementary and middle school-aged students, with parents deciding to teach them on their own.

"Online schooling," Parrott claims, "doesn't necessarily mean somebody should stay in their room all day and stare at a screen." She emphasizes that since she began homeschooling, her children have grown much closer as a team and have learned essential skills outside of education, such as teamwork and leadership.

There are many factors to consider when weighing the benefits of online schooling vs. in-person learning, such as mental health and important electives such as speech and physical education. Being in a physical classroom setting offers the chance to build friendships and relationships with fellow students and teachers.

However, remaining at home or online offers more flexibility and the opportunity to create a set routine. There are benefits to both of the choices, but it's ultimately the students' decision.

(Continued from "New Academic Year" pg 1)

Not only that, McDorman voices that she and others are to completely sanitize their station with many different disinfectant items any time that they use any of the equipment, regardless of whether they practice on a mannequin or others in the salon.

In-person and virtual learning environments

In order to succeed when taking classes--regardless of whether they are learning in person or virtually-- students have to put forth the effort. Although this 2020-2021 school year hasn't been ideal, Grayson is accommodating everyone and doing its best to keep students in college to further their education.

McDorman expresses that she is "only having to complete 6 hours of online schooling while the rest is more hands-on in person, which I enjoy because online schooling is difficult for me... ." Dr. Cheek concurs that "the majority of students learn best in person, especially those who struggle, but I do believe that virtual learning can be incorporated in ways that benefit students of all skill levels."

Challenging teaching style

Although our world has been affected by the global pandemic for about 6-7 months now, we are all still sacrificing our everyday lives to live as normally as possible in the midst of this disease and its spread. Masks, face shields, hand sanitizer, disinfectant, and so many more items are such a huge part of our world today that have changed all of our lives and forced us to adapt to completely new standards as a way to live safely and healthily.

Dr. Cheek expresses her concerns about teaching with precautions by mentioning that "the most challenging part has been having to teach my larger face-to-face classes on a split schedule in order to observe proper distancing guidelines. As a result, I am teaching virtually and in-person simultaneously during the same lecture."

This teaching approach can be difficult for students because of the disconnect between the teachers and students. Especially with Dr. Cheek's teaching an advanced math class, this could cause great concern for students who really struggle with math and need more face-to-face or pen/paper interaction, she notes.

Editorial Information

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Submissions and corrections may be sent our editor, Storm Anderson, by email at stnanderson@vikings.grayson.edu

COVID struggles in the community

- Kendall Sluder, Student

All schools and colleges around the world are having to take specific precautions due to COVID-19, including Grayson College. Though the college offers many opportunities for students to learn, expand growth, and achieve their goals, unfortunately, due to the ongoing pandemic, most students at Grayson College have not been able to fulfill those objectives.

Learning challenges

Haylee Hill, a new student at Grayson College, comments, "I hate not being able to see my professors face to face or not being around other classmates." She learned more easily in high school with the physical presence of her teachers and the ability to ask questions face to face. As an online student, though, "it is easier for [her] to procrastinate" with the longer deadlines. "I always say, 'It is not due until tomorrow, so I will just do it tomorrow.'"

Students who are taking on-campus classes are also having to take extra

precautions. Hill states that students must arrive early for temperature checks and remain six feet apart. "Social distancing makes it hard to do any group work or labs," she reports.

Hill definitely feels COVID-19 has decreased her learning abilities: "If this pandemic were over, all students would be able to experience all the great things Grayson College has to offer. Right now, we all have to believe in ourselves and hope this blows over soon."

Parent's perspective

Crystal Bahle, a parent of a Grayson College student, sees the struggles her child is facing both at home and at school. Bahle explains, "Due to the ongoing pandemic, a lot of people have lost their jobs. My husband and I are included." She fears her child is concerned that the income loss will affect her ability to continue attending college.

"This also puts a strain on parents. All parents want their children to succeed, and without the income it has

been tough for my child to succeed," she elaborates.

Teacher's perspective

Not only has COVID-19 affected college professors, but it affects K-12 teachers just as much. Kacy Garner, a Grayson College alumnae and dyslexia therapist, teaches in a program that is "multi-sensory with direct immediate feedback," making it difficult for students who are online to "se[e] things that are happening inside the lesson/class and . . . get immediate feedback." Garner worries "because I feel like I can't meet their needs as effectively doing virtual, whereas in class I could be there physically to help with their academic growth." She notes that "time management and balancing instruction between synchronized learners and face-to-face learners" are a daily struggle. "Teaching both types of learners simultaneously is like teaching two classes at once. Often, I feel that this takes time away from the face-to-face learners," she explains.



Fear and loathing in a time of COVID-19

“Social distancing” is a phrase now ingrained in our minds, but is COVID-19 creating more distances than just social?

Social distancing and masks

Social distancing became a phrase we all got used to hearing and slowly learned to adhere to. Masks started flying off the shelf, at a rate that it was nearly impossible for manufacturers to keep up with, both for the public, but especially for the medical frontline personnel caring for victims of COVID-19. For a while, there was mass panic. Everything in the stores started clearing off the shelves as people were worried whether they’d be able to get the items they’d need. Even in the midst of the beginning of the pandemic, the country seemed unified in trying to flatten the curve and knock out COVID-19 so life could resume as normal.

Differing views

After a few weeks of enthusiasm, though, many people started getting antsy, seeming to have a hard time adjusting to the new way of life COVID-19 had created for us. Tensions started rising, and people wanted answers as to why “flattening the curve” was taking so long. Blame started to be assigned, turning this pandemic into a political hot topic. Misinformation was spread, arguments were starting over whether the new way of life was a rights violation, and blame was being assigned everywhere. On one side, there is the group that firmly supports the scientific side of the virus--how to deal with it and that by doing so, we could get back to normal life. On the other side are people who believe that COVID-19 was politically driven

and is not as serious as the media has made it out to be.

With such varying viewpoints on this subject, it’s bound to cause tension in normal day-to-day relationships. Dennis F., a 72-year-old retired United States Air Force veteran and insurance salesman from Yakima, Washington, stands firmly on the side that this virus is not nearly as terrible as it’s been made out to be. “I believe that the media has been making this to be an even bigger deal than it really is. It’s nothing more than a flu virus, and I think everything we have been required to do is overkill,” he states.

Elaine R., a 56-year-old homemaker from The Colony, Texas, disagrees, “This virus is dangerous, and it breaks my heart that people don’t seem to care about the welfare of their fellow humans.” Elaine has a long history of volunteering and helping in any place she can, but especially with animals. She volunteers at her local homeless shelter twice a month and has been helping out with food distribution as well since the pandemic started. “We see everyone coming through the food distribution line, people on both sides of this virus, and we do try to keep things neutral. But when I see people without their masks, or others just out and about with no regard to social distancing, I want to scream. I want them to know that this is a real thing, and it’s impacting real families,” she adds.

Relationships affected

Rachel Sumrall, a psychology professor at Grayson College in Denison, Texas, states poignantly regarding COVID-19, “Relationships are a crucial part of

humans, and the fear of being around others is not healthy.” Professor Sumrall believes that COVID is a serious problem but also that the media is “making it worse.” Like many others, she is concerned about the health and wellbeing of her family and friends, so she chooses to stay home, which can be frustrating to some people in her life who want her to join them out and about. “I want to do my part to protect my loved ones. I’m worried my parents, family, my son, or older friends will catch it and not be able to recover,” she adds.

When asked if he feels like aspects have changed in his relationships, Dennis F. laughingly replies, “Probably so. I’m a Republican, and I think that this virus has been partly a ploy to undermine the election coming up. My son, he’s more liberal than I am, and we’ve had to learn to not discuss this subject anymore after my wife made us call a truce. Same thing with my nieces and nephews. They believe the ‘dire’ level of this thing and buy into the mask wearing and social distancing. There’s been an unspoken agree-to-disagree invoked,” he says.

One of Elaine’s close friends contracted the virus early on and is still facing health issues because of it including to likely be on oxygen for the unforeseeable future. When asked about the impact of the pandemic on her relationships, she just sighed, shook her head, and one could see tears starting. “I’ve walked away from a few long-time friendships because of this, people that I have known fifteen plus years. I couldn’t handle the

blasé attitude about something so deadly,” she reveals.

Controlling fear

Professor Sumrall herself got caught up in the panic that COVID-19 has created. “In the beginning, I checked the CDC [Center for Disease Control] website religiously. I read everything multiple times a day. I would follow the map of how many new cases there was daily,” she comments. Fear sat with her, preventing her from going out in public either by herself or with her son. “I started realizing how unhealthy it was. I decided I had to stop watching the news all the time,” she adds. By not allowing herself to constantly check the internet for COVID-19 updates, that change allowed her stress level to go lower, and also allowed her to become less paranoid and cautious. “My husband is a nurse who works in the COVID unit at Texoma Medical Center. I get my info from him and life is much better. I know it’s dangerous, but I’m not living in fear anymore nor am I pessimistic about everyone getting it,” she adds.

Trying to understand how the world could be so split on such a hot topic that is running rampant in our country is not easy. This virus has undoubtedly stirred up fears that people have never experienced before and may not know how to process. Where at one time, friendships were great, it has now destroyed them. Family members are arguing where there was not a problem before. Judgement is running wild all over the place, from both sides. Yet, Americans have a long history of banding together during times of crisis.

EDITORIAL

Essential: The new class of citizen

- Professor William Leo, Criminal Justice

Government bureaucrats have created by decree, rather than through legislation, what jobs, businesses, and activities in society are essential or non-essential. I believe that most, if not all people correctly believe that their job is essential and is necessary to provide a living for themselves and their families. No one in government has the right to pick and choose whose employment, businesses, or activities are necessary or essential. In essence, what these non-elected bureaucrats have done is create two new classes of citizens: the essential and the non-essential. The saddest part of this injustice is that our elected officials at all levels of government never questioned this, but like sheep followed and even embraced the concept.

These new classes of citizens were created by what has become a ruling class--a class that disregards the Constitution because their agenda is more important than the people’s rights. As very well stated by Benjamin Franklin, “Those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

Perhaps one of the problems that allowed this situation to develop without public outcry is the lack of teaching and reinforcing the meaning of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in our schools.

For a little refresher here is the wording of the First Amendment, which was disregarded outright during this pandemic, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” Nowhere in this document is there a waiver for a pandemic.

We have had dangerous pandemics, epidemics, and other serious contagious illnesses before, but never have parts of the Constitution been suspended because of it. There is no provision for the suspension of our Bill of Rights because of illness. We have --when needed-- quarantined the contagiously ill. Yet never in our history have we selectively suspended Constitutionally protected activities and closed our society to “protect us” from ourselves. History will judge this sad event in our times.

The mask debate

- Stacy Reagan, Student

The year 2020 has brought unsettling times, with more diverse opinions than ever before. Black Lives Matter, the election, and social distancing have added extra tension to this year. The debate over masks seems to be especially divided, with people either fully for or against masking up.

Medical Perspectives

“This is a situation no one wants to be in,” Vanessa Byron, a nurse from Red River Emergency Room, in Sherman, Texas, states. Byron has heard many complaints from the patients about the requirement of having to wear masks, but the only adverse effects she has seen of wearing a mask, as a healthcare professional, are acne and some indentations on their face. Being around COVID-positive patients while wearing a mask, but not catching it herself, leads her to believe that mask wearing does help stop the spread of the virus.

While not positive if the masks fully protect people if they are not medical grade, Byron does believe some protection comes from wearing any type of mask. No increase in breathing issues has been seen in her facility, but patients have complained of not being able to get a deep breath or breathe normally.

Melissa Smith, a Registered Nurse from Southwest Medical Center in Houston, Texas, states, “The COVID numbers have dropped [in our facility], but it would be hard to say if it has anything to do with wearing a mask.” The hospital has seen patients complain of difficulty breathing when being forced to wear a mask for longer than thirty minutes at a time. The hospital has employees who have asthma. If they wear the masks for long periods of time, they do develop breathing issues.

Smith adds, “From my observation most people don’t wear the masks correctly” but thinks that medical grade and cloth masks work about the same. In order for a mask to be properly worn, she explains, the nose and mouth must be completely covered.

On the Education Front

Being a teacher would likely be a challenge for anyone who is not in the

education field, but teaching with a mask on during the pandemic makes that challenge more difficult. Lisa Johnson, a science teacher from Mountain Valley Middle School has gotten used to wearing a mask while teaching, but it wasn’t easy at first. She wears a hearing aid, and most masks would rub on the device, causing a great deal of interference.

“Students are required to wear a mask, but I have a very large science room, and we sit farther apart than required and we have one class [that is small enough] to be mask free,” explains. The only issues she has seen with required mask wearing was some masks breaking, and the students having to wear school-issued disposable masks. Getting winded after a lot of moving around in her class is one of the biggest challenges for Johnson.

Add in the struggles of being a special education teacher during the pandemic, and mask wearing becomes even a greater challenge. “How do you force a student who is non-verbal and doesn’t understand why [we have] to wear a mask?” Tonya Waller, a special education teacher at Mountain Valley Middle School, wonders. Teaching children who have a hard time reading or understanding when unable to see a speaker’s mouth for pronunciation is difficult, she explains. The protocol for any mask-wearing issue is to break down into the simplest terms why the students must wear a mask. Waller emphasizes that enforcement becomes an issue when the students constantly rip the mask off with their hands and throw it on the ground.

Masks in Businesses

Businesses are not excluded from this “madness.” Pamela Russell, a dental office employee in McKinney, Texas, states, “I have had a client storm out screaming at me when I told her she was required to wear a mask.” Signs are on the office front door stating one is required to wear a mask upon entering until they reach the dental chair. The employees haven’t had any problems wearing the masks, but some clients refuse, so they are not allowed to enter the premises. Clients walking out could potentially be detrimental to a small business.

Could online training hurt career chances?

-Kandice Carlson, Student

Sami Thompson, a sophomore nursing student, is still adjusting to the recent changes Grayson College is undergoing. In the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester, nursing students like Thompson were meeting on campus for their lectures, but are now strictly online. "Nursing students cannot learn about their career and how to care for patients in their future. [Having to be online] has made my college courses, in particular Microbiology, harder to learn," voices Thompson.

Although class structures may be making it harder for students to learn, Jen Bridges, History professor at Grayson College, expresses, "Grayson College has done a wonderful job responding to the needs of both students and faculty. These are unprecedented times, and as a faculty member, I feel that Grayson takes my health and safety seriously."

Bridges, who already taught online before the pandemic, was prepared for the online switch-over. Bridges states, "I appreciated the college's willingness to allow our courses to be primarily online in order to promote health and safety."

Pros and Cons

Feelings toward in-person vs. online education around campus seem to be clear for some disciplines. Thompson feels nursing students need in-class courses to experience labs, so they can effectively learn to care for patients in their future. Online courses also have a disadvantage as students do not get to engage and develop relationships with other students or educators. Bridges agrees, "It is more intimate and easier to relate the importance of certain issues when students are able to see me lecture and feel the energy." However, according to Bridges, online teaching is a valid method of instruction that imparts the same information to students and allows more flexibility.

Hidden Benefits of Online

Bobbie Hill, employee at Richdale Apartments in the property management department, has experienced both online and in-class courses before joining the workforce. She took online courses due to their convenience while working full time and raising a family. However, she believes the in-class environment improved her work communication. Hill states, "During in-class courses, I learned how to communicate with students and professors by experiencing group projects and presenting speeches."

Hill believes whether students get their education online or in class is irrelevant. The workforce is already virtual. Hill conducts interviews at her current job completely virtually through Skype, Zoom, or phone. "Even before the pandemic, interviews and meetings were conducted over Skype," explains Hill.

Further, many jobs require a significant portion of remote or online work. Bridges agrees with Hill that online work prepares students for the workforce. Bridges expresses, "Grayson students will be flexible and ready to face whatever challenges the workforce provides them...[as]...the ability to work in a largely virtual format is completely relevant to today's world."

Earn more with a HVAC certification - Jared Vanderzwart, Student

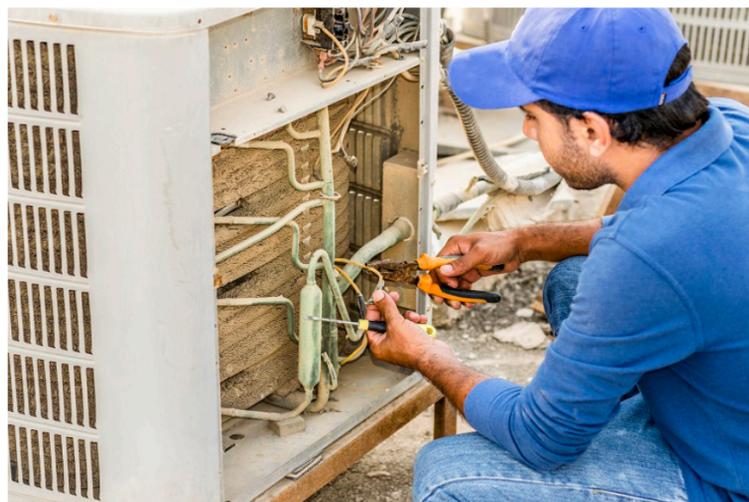
Going to trade school or going straight into the job? That is a question many Grayson workforce students may ask themselves at the start of their journey into a Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning career.

Most HVAC companies around the Texoma area are considered small businesses that will bid certain jobs by the hour. If their employees are well trained, they are able to problem solve and install equipment quicker, which means more money for the business. "If I get a new hire right out of Grayson's HVAC program, I could have them out in the field, making the company money within thirty days," says small business owner Rachel Willingham.

In regards to starting wages, Willingham said she would start new hires with no training at \$10 to \$12 an hour. However, if the employee attended Grayson College's HVAC Program they could expect a much higher starting wage. Someone with an Apprentice Certification would receive an offer of about \$15 per hour. If one went further and earned the Technician Certification, starting wages would jump up to \$15-\$20 an hour for residential work or \$50-\$100 for commercial work. With these certificates only requiring a few semesters to complete, they could be very beneficial, especially if one is able to use grants to help pay for schooling.

Is the training one would receive at Grayson actually relevant to the work done in the field? "YES! When it comes to the trouble-shooting aspect especially," exclaims Chris*, a Grayson HVAC graduate. The more knowledge one has in this field, the quicker they are at fixing problems. "Our calls have a base charge of one hour. So if we are able to get out [of the job] before an hour is up, we are making more money," he explains.

Additionally, employers prefer to hire someone with prior knowledge. Then the business doesn't have to pay new hires to learn the trade in the field.



Above: An HVAC technician at work. (Photo provided by Getty Images.)

"Having been in the trades for anywhere from \$50-\$125. At over thirty years; I can tell a massive difference between someone who has attended a trade school and one who hasn't. I'll always take the one who has!" states Master Electrician and small business owner Matthew Vanderzwart. Vanderzwart himself explains he never attended a trade school because he needed to immediately start earning.

"The only downside I can see to a trade school for any trade is that you will most likely accrue some debt, and that time spent in the classroom could be in the field, earning money." Vanderzwart continues, "Getting higher wages and landing better job offers after trade school should often offset that earning time lost."

Beyond the direct knowledge learned in the HVAC program, there are also other benefits to attending Grayson's program as well. When in the field, every HVAC Technician must possess a certification from the Environmental Protection Agency in order to handle refrigerants. Two of the professors at Grayson's HVAC program are certified to proctor the EPA's tests. "Earning these certificates will make you more appealing to potential employers. These certifications also let whoever is reviewing your application know that you are capable of completing any aspect of the job safely and legally," explains Willingham.

These tests can normally cost

anywhere from \$50-\$125. At Grayson, however, they can be administered for \$25. The professors giving the tests will also review the subject matter of each test before giving it. When taken outside of Grayson, the tests will be given back to back and in a testing center with other students taking different tests for other professions.

"Grayson College has an awesome program. I would prefer to hire someone with training over one who hasn't. It is easier to train someone with schooling than with no experience," Willingham says about hiring students right out of the course. She pays HVAC trade school graduates more because she is paying for their knowledge. "The smarter they are, the more money they can earn for themselves and the company," she adds.

WANT TO SEE YOUR WORK IN The Viking?

Send your work to our editor:
Email us at:
stnanderson@vikings.grayson.edu

NEXT DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 6TH

(Continued from "Anatomy" pg 1)

The course A&P 2 covers terminology, structures, and functions of the human body inside and out. But some are able to understand the specifics rather than the larger context. For example, some may understand joints better than the digestive system. Rick Chumley, Registered Nurse at Nacogdoches Hospital, is currently a Registered Nurse in the NewBorn Intensive Care Unit at Nacogdoches Hospital in Nacogdoches, Texas and worked in the Emergency Department for two years prior. He contends that when he took Anatomy and Physiology in college, before becoming a nurse, his strongest subject was "the muscles and how they function and grow."

In contrast, Dr. Parsons' strongest subject during all of her years in Anatomy and Physiology was her "greater understanding of the processes involved in the discoveries." The "textbook" was really her easy entrance to the course because it gave her the information needed to be successful and expand her knowledge further.

Success strategies

To succeed in Anatomy and Physiology, one has to be attentive. Going to class, taking notes, fully understanding what one's own notes are saying, finding a study group, using services offered to one's

advantage are just some strategies one can use to succeed in these challenging courses. One really has to interpret what is happening in the lab and lecture and try one's hardest. They must dedicate themselves to the class as best they can.

Laci Bandy, a sophomore at Grayson College, is currently majoring in Radiology and recently started the Phlebotomy program. Bandy completed Anatomy and Physiology 1 and 2 last year and notes what led to her success was "using the resources that were available to me, such as the library, study hall, tutoring sessions, and open labs." The keys to her accomplishment were "total concentration on the task at hand, repetition of re-reading, and looking at the criteria that I was studying, [and] keeping up and not falling behind in the course," a list echoed by Chumley.

Overcoming discouragement

For Dr. Parsons, discouragement in her academic journey came from "disillusionment" and a realization "that there were other people smarter, more mature, and with much better study skills" than what she had at the time. But she overcame this feeling by "some maturing and an honest examination of my situation," realizing that what had worked in high school (meaning procrastination and

not studying) wouldn't work in college. A lot of ignorance had to be shut out, and a new beginning of "asking questions and looking at information in a completely different manner" was the only strategy that could extinguish the feeling of discouragement. "It was the understanding of the information and identification of the limitations in that understanding that motivated me more," she recalls.

Chumley also experienced some feelings of discouragement within his time of taking Anatomy and Physiology. In particular, he notes, "Not understanding how a system works or remembering the name of a bone, muscle, nerve group while in the middle of a test." However, "taking a break from everything Anatomy and Physiology related, going to study groups and trying not to stress about the situation and learning how to cope with the problem at hand" displaced that terrible feeling of unreadiness.

Bandy has also experienced a sense of giving up/becoming discouraged within the course but agrees that "the best advice I have ever gotten, that can apply to almost any situation, is to feel it and deal with it as you see fit," meaning to accept the challenge. Giving up definitely wasn't an option in her eyes. All she could do was learn from her past mistakes and grow in knowledge.

Grayson County bike trails provide much-needed relaxation



Above: Binkley Trail offers something for riders with varying degrees of skill (Photo by author)

One of the best ways to relax is to enter a mountain bike trail head and disappear from the world under and around a shaded canopy of trees. Accelerating down a dirt and rock trail that has been carefully planned and carved into the earth, avoiding or maneuvering tree roots, covered rocks, and avoiding the tree trunks is a relaxing activity.

However, in our area, that's not so easy. Jason Griffin, a former Pro Mountain biker living in Sherman, Texas,

believes Grayson County could use more bike trails.

Binkley Trail creation

Griffin designed, built, and received funds for the popular trail near Sory Elementary School, Binkley Trail. This trail was funded by Austin College and took him just over 3 years to build, by himself. He poured his time, blood, and sweat into a trail for fans of trail bicycle riding. The trail offers something for riders with varying degrees of skill from beginners to advanced so that all ages can

enjoy their ride.

So, how much was invested in the building the trail and how was the trail planned? Griffin explains, "Austin College bought the chain saw, shovels and rake to clear the trail path. That was the only money put into the project, other than my personal time." The process was arduous. "It took me just over 3 years, by myself, walking the trail, finding the best way to bypass a tree, where to make a turn to switch back the direction, how to either avoid or traverse a creek with active water flow," he recalls.

As he walked the trail, Griffin would mark the trees that would need to be removed, clear a path with rakes, and trim branches as he moved on. The finished 8-mile loop runs along Center Street in Sherman, trailing behind Sory Elementary then finally connecting to a trail that leads under Center Street and connects with Herman Baker Trails.

DORBA connection in Grayson County and Bike Mart support

DORBA.org (Dallas Off Road Bicycle Association) is a Dallas organization founded in 1988. Since then, the organization has put in over 9,000-10,000 hours into building and maintaining over 30 trails throughout North Texas, including trails at Eisenhower State Park and Binkley Park. DORBA membership numbers total about 85 in the Grayson area, a small number compared to the almost 1,800 listed on the DORBA website.

- Brian Welch, Student

Richardson Bike Mart, located in Richardson, Texas, located at the corner of Campbell and Coit Road, provides bike sales, repairs, rentals and community planning and events. They have been serving the biking community since 1962 and have 3 stores in the DFW Area. Bike Mart provides community support, planning and sponsorship of many planned events from road rides, mountain bike trail maps and information.

Grayson County has few bike stores with no real online support for sales or community involvement, an aspect that would need to change in the Grayson area to really boost the biking community and public involvement. Bike stores provide an environment for sales, repairs, knowledge of mechanical issues, trails in the area and riding events planned and community support. In most cases, bike shops are the meeting and starting points for planned rides, group meets for training, classes on how to care for bicycles, and sometimes just a fun location to hang out.

The community of Grayson County should try riding, whether it be in your neighborhood, trails, BMX parks or any other location that would allow everyone to get those pedals moving and heart pumping so the community can breathe some fresh air and see our beautiful slice of North Texas in a way you haven't seen.

(Continued from "COVID Fun" pg 1)

The Viking Facebook page allows students to meet virtually and find the new places where they can also meet physically. Many students such as Zoe Lott, a sophomore on the softball team who lives in Viking Hall, enjoy the online events that the Viking Facebook page holds.

Previous events included virtual bingo as well as SLICE, a weekly workshop focused on professional development. SLICE is hosted every Monday night at 7pm and topics change every week. Lott says that it is most fun when one is playing with the people one knows from school.

In-person activities

As far as activities in person go, many of our staff are trying their hardest to ensure that we are not only in a safe learning and living environment, but also a safe environment that we can have fun in. For in-person activities, our staff is asking that we students take responsibility and wear our masks and stand 6 feet apart when we can.

We should also be honest and notify them when we are showing symptoms of COVID and not come out to activities when we are feeling sick. Different events call for different measures against the virus, so they are asking all students to follow the rules that are explained at the event.

Randolph puts on many different types of activities and wants students to know that there is a planned activity for every week, whether it be in person or online. Our Student Life team is working hard to make every activity free for students so

we can all participate. Many of our planned activities can also end with many students walking away with different prizes such as TV's, Keurig Coffee machines, and even money. Freshman Ella Laurence enjoys the many different activities that the school organizes specifically because she likes to hear about the cool prizes, whether she wins them or not.

Relaxing dorm spaces

Many students find themselves wanting to spend time together but do not know what spaces are available and what they could do in these spaces. Each dorm building has different places available for students to hang out in and study in as well.

Viking Hall has the main lobby, which is on the first floor, that have tables, chairs, couches, and a TV for students to use. The second floor of Viking Hall has the game room, which is equipped with two ping pong tables, chairs, and a TV, as well as an Xbox.

Jones Hall is equipped with study rooms on every floor, as well as game rooms that have TV on all three floors. Dorms, game rooms and study rooms are open every day at all hours.

One place students are not aware of is the Recreation Center in the Student Life Center, which is above the bookstore. The Recreation Center is equipped with pool tables, TV, ping pong tables, and a video game lounge and is open on weekdays from 8 am to 3 pm.

Although college life seems to be less than what many had thought it would be, there are still multiple activities that students can discover and do together.

INTERESTED IN ATHLETIC TRAINING?



BENEFITS

- Room Scholarship
- \$250 Stipend per Semester
- Travel with assigned team(s)

IDEAL CANDIDATES

- Students in a Health Sciences Pathway majoring in massage therapy, nursing/pre-nursing, physical therapy, kinesiology etc.
- Students who want to be athletic coaches
- Athletic Training Majors

PROGRAM SIZE

- 12 students will be accepted into the program

DOCUMENTS NEEDED

- Completed Application
- Two Completed Recommendation Forms

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- 2.5 GPA on 4.0 Scale
- On-campus housing preferred
- If selected, students will need to receive a Hepatitis B vaccination and complete CPR and AED certifications
- Interest in sports
- Communication Skills

CONTACT

Melaney Card, MS, LAT, ATC
Athletic Trainer
cardm@grayson.edu or 903-415-2618



Phi Theta Kappa

Virtual Meetings
Wednesdays @ 12:30pm

Student Support Services now accepting applications for Fall 2020!

- Kenzie Randolph, Student Support Services



Use this QR code to go straight to the application!

Student Support Services (SSS) is now accepting applications for Fall 2020! SSS, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is a TRIO program dedicated to increasing the retention and graduation rates for low-income, first-generation, and/or current students with documented disabilities at Grayson College. Resources we provide include: advising students on which classes to take to complete their degree plan, assisting with exploring 4-year universities and the transfer process as well as applying for financial aid, helpful life-skill workshops, scholarship opportunities, one-

on-one tutoring, and providing a supportive climate for student success. Students have the opportunity to work directly with our staff to explore current academic needs and the resources available to develop an individualized system of support.

If you're interested in joining our program, email us at sss@grayson.edu.

8 Great tips for Mastering your financial aid

- Noah Scheibmeir, Financial Aid

1. Have your tax information ready.

The Department of Education will frequently select students who submitted a FAFSA for verification to prevent fraud. If this happens, you will need to have your signed taxes ready to submit for verification. The taxes in question must be from two years before the current school year you are applying for. So for 20-21, you will want taxes from 2018. For dependent students, this also means having a signed copy of your parents' taxes.

2. Understand the difference between a dependent student and an independent student.

Many think that because they do not live with their parents they can be counted as an independent student. However, this is not how the Department of Education defines dependency. To be considered an independent student you must be over the age of 24, married, have children or other dependents you support by more than 50%, or be a veteran or active duty in the military. If none of these qualifications are met then you are considered dependent.

Please note: there are special circumstances where the dependency reasons above do not apply. If you are in a position where you do not have access to parents or guardians please let the financial aid office know and we will look into your particular circumstances.

3. Look up the deadlines for any documents you need to submit and schedule those deadlines in your calendar for 1-2 weeks earlier.

Typically, most schools have a priority deadline many months prior to school starting. You would want to make sure you confirm with the school's Financial Aid Office as to what their date is. Also, keep in mind that need-based aid such as Pell Grant and FSEOG are usually awarded on a first-come-first-served basis, so the earlier you submit your FAFSA, the higher chance you have of receiving that additional aid. The early bird gets the worm.

Please remember: The FAFSA application opens up almost a full year in advance for students to complete. For example for the 2021-2022 academic year, the FAFSA will be available October 1, 2020, and will have a final deadline of June 30, 2022.

4. Make sure you are registered for classes.

You will need to register for classes so your financial aid can be applied to your account.

You will also need to meet with your Success Coach to outline a plan of action on completing your degree plan. Financial Aid will only pay for classes that are part of your degree plan and required for degree completion/graduation.

5. Be aware of your GPA and Pace.

GPA is your grade point average. It has to be a 2.0 or higher in order for you to qualify for financial aid.

Pace is the number of hours you complete or pass vs. the number of hours you attempted. So, if you signed up for 12 hours, but drop, withdraw, or fail six of them, your pace would be 50%. The Department of Education requires that you maintain at least a 67% pace for your entire college career to maintain Financial Aid.

Keep in mind: this also includes developmental, dual credit, and transfer hours.

6. If you are needing to drop a class for any reason always check with financial aid first to make sure it does not risk you losing your aid.

Normally there is not an issue so long as you pass one of the other classes that you signed up for, but dropping classes can affect your GPA and pace. resulting in loss of aid, or if you drop too many hours it can result in you needing to pay your aid back, even your grants. When in doubt, please reach out to financial aid at financialaid@grayson.edu and we will be happy to help you.

Dropping or withdrawing from classes can also affect your maximum time frame allowed to complete your degree. Once students have reached 150% of their degree in attempted hours, they are placed on financial aid suspension. For example, a 60 credit hour degree program, once students have attempted 90 or more hours, they are automatically placed on financial aid suspension and will be required to complete the appeal process before being considered for financial aid in a future semester.

7. Attend Your Classes.

Related to our previous point, if you do not meet attendance requirements the Department of Education can and will ask for any grant or loan money to be returned to them. Even if a particular class is one you are struggling with, attending it is still your best course of action for protecting your financial aid for that year and the future.

If you are unable to attend a class, or all of your classes, for any reason, let Financial Aid know as soon as possible so we can help determine a course of action for you to take.

8. Take advantage of our Contact Us Page for making appointments in advance.

Lines are exhausting, and in our COVID-19 world they can even be dangerous. Dodge the line by requesting an appointment through the "Contact Us" section on the Financial Aid page.

Here are the links:

Financial Aid Homepage: <https://grayson.edu/FinancialAid/index.html>

Financial Aid Contact Us page: <https://grayson.edu/FinancialAid/financial-aid-contact%20us.html>

Financial Aid Appointment scheduling page: <https://advisingcounseling.as.me/FAVirtualAppointments>

Phi Theta Kappa activities remain uninterrupted

- Storm Anderson, Editor

Late spring and summer are the busiest times of year for Grayson College's Omicron Psi chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society. Despite the pandemic, this year has been no exception. This April, the chapter virtually attended the International Phi Theta Kappa conference, where they successfully ran a candidate for International President.

Following this, the chapter hosted a spring induction in early May, led a card-mailing campaign for the elderly in June, virtually attended another conference in July, held two orientations, and laid the ground work for two major projects to take place during the first Fall term.

The first of these was a TEDx event cohosted with a sister chapter from Collin College. This digital event contained three student and two professional speakers discussing topics related to sociology and human conditioning.

Their second event partnered the chapter with the United Way to connect students with nonprofits addressing housing and food insecurity, child advocacy, and more. Students can learn more about these programs at the Virtual Resource Fair to be held October 6th from 3-5pm. The event is accessible through the College and chapter's social media feeds.

The chapter also has plans for events throughout the rest of the Fall Term including Pumpkin Decorating and Costume contests in October, virtual cookie decorating parties in December, and an induction ceremony at the end of the Fall term.

You can join the chapter in their future activities by visiting their Facebook and Instagram feeds at [ptkomicronpsi](https://www.facebook.com/ptkomicronpsi). They host meetings every Wednesday at 12:30.



Omicron Psi



Above: Chapter officers invite you to their Wednesday meetings. (Photo provided by Phi Theta Kappa)



Above: Fire burns large swath of Oregon, Sept. 8th 2020 (Photo by Carrie Brown)

(Continued from "Oregon" pg 1)

In the midst of panic and utter fear, Hald realized that "houses can be replaced, whereas we can't be built up again."

Speculation of fires' beginnings

As to how these fires were started, many residents have speculated. Dustin Baker, firefighter-paramedic, rescue diver, and CAD specialist, suspects a "majority of the fires were developed from negligence of people." Other residents such as Carrie Brown, a teacher, believes "the fires [were] a result of criminal acts in addition to natural disasters."

According to Baker, when a wildfire has begun to roll with the wind, firefighters will approach the fire from the outer edge to start burning a perimeter around the fire to contain it. This process will create a barrier that has no fuel for the fire, causing it to stop progressing. Baker adds that "a fire can't burn something that has already been burned." Brown confirms that the firefighters who surrounded

the fire traveling north up Interstate 5 from Ashland, were deploying the same tactics.

Mental trauma

During the 72-hour battle against the raging fire, citizens like Hald, Brown, and thousands of other residents along the West Coast suffered mental and physical trauma. Suffering the loss of properties and businesses, financial hardships, and further strains to the medical system during a pandemic add to the psychological trauma of having to fear for everyone's safety, including their own.

Since the peak of the fire's destruction has been contained, local groups have received clothing, food, and school supply donations from thousands who have been fortunate enough to have had their lives and property spared from detriment.

Schools in the affected areas will begin class through virtual learning platforms starting September 28, according to Brown.