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OUR RESPONSE

Plus: FRONT LINE ALUMNI | LEARNING & TEACHING FROM HOME

With more time available than he expected, Academic Librarian Tyler Johnson packed more than 130 boxes of books to be moved to the new Academic Resource Center later this summer.

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A gift to the Donnelly Fund helps keep our mission strong



UPCOMING EVENTS

All event details are considered pending during this time of uncertainty surrounding the impact of Covid-19. Watch your email for event updates. If we do not have your email address on file, please contact us at advancement@donnelly.edu.

Commencement and Nurse Pinning
Saturday, Aug. 1, 10:00 a.m.

Savior Pastoral Center and online at donnelly.edu.
This event will not be open to the public this year.

First Day of Classes in New Building
Monday, Aug. 31

Convocation Mass and Celebration
Thursday, Sept. 3, Time TBA

Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting for New Building
Friday, Sept. 11, 11:00 a.m.

Open House and Tours of New Building
Saturday, Sept. 12, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos Chapel Dedication
Monday, Oct. 5, 3:00 p.m.

SHINE 2020 Online
Thursday, Oct. 15, 7:30 p.m.

Due to possible limitations on gathering size, SHINE will be held virtually this year. Enjoy our SHINE program, student panel and Alumni Hall of Fame inductions from the comfort of your home. All are welcome to join as tickets are not required for 2020. Sponsors and table hosts are encouraged to continue their support! More details to follow or check out donnelly.edu/shine.



OUR RESPONSE

On the morning of March 12, 2020, the Donnelly College community was gathered to celebrate Pi Day, an annual event hosted by a small committee led by math faculty member Dave Cobb. Pi Day is all about math, pie, games and fun. At that time, while we were certainly aware of how COVID-19 was impacting the world around us and the Kansas City community, we were cautiously moving forward, trying to keep life on campus as normal as possible.

Campus business was occurring as usual. Morning classes were conducted as scheduled. Emails were flying between staff members about various plans in the works: the number of students that would participate in the commencement ceremony in May, scheduling “hard hat” tours of the new building, and even plans to hold a public farewell celebration for our existing tower building before it permanently closes for demolition this fall.

But, as we all know, none of that would happen as we thought it might. While we were hosting Pi Day, Kansas Governor Laura Kelly announced the state's first

confirmed death linked to COVID-19 and issued a state of emergency declaration for Kansas. That first death was in Wyandotte County. The crisis that had started across the world only months before had now made it just miles from campus.

ADJUSTING TO REALITY

By the next day, everything had changed. The President of the United States had declared a national state of emergency, just two days after the World Health Organization had declared the spread of COVID-19 a pandemic. In response, on the morning of March 13, David Alvey, Mayor/CEO of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas, convened a conference call with many of the area's leading institutions, response networks and government agencies to discuss plans. Participants included Donnelly College, Kansas City Kansas Community College, University of Kansas Medical Center, USD 500 school district, the Archdiocese of Kansas

City in Kansas, Unified Government and Health Department representatives, and many more.

At the conclusion of that call, it was clear the campus-based experiences our students had been engaged in just the day before would change drastically in the days ahead. Fortunately, the following week was Spring Break for students. Staff were instructed to work from home and await the next set of decisions to be made as the crisis unfolded.

ESSENTIAL AND CONTINUING TO SERVE

Within a few days, Kansas' stay-at-home order was put in place and eventually extended into early May. As part of that order, higher education providers were considered essential and allowed to continue operations, but only with modifications in place to accommodate social distancing.

During that week, Donnelly's leaders made the decision to extend Spring Break an additional week to accommodate shifting all face-to-face instruction to (online) distance learning. Although essential personnel returned to campus during that second week of Spring Break, most faculty and staff transitioned their workspaces to home and began preparing to complete

the semester remotely. Staff modified, postponed or cancelled projects and events, and faculty adjusted their lesson plans and upgraded their technology to support the move to online classes.

While campus facilities were not open to the public (except for limited hours when students could access computer labs), all departments remained accessible and functioning:

- Admissions and Financial Aid continued to accept new students and issue scholarships and financial aid.
- Academic Advisors met online or over the phone with students needing to choose classes.
- The Tutoring Center conducted virtual tutoring sessions.
- Library services and research materials remained available online.
- The Counseling Center offered secure online therapy sessions via video conferencing and sent out weekly emails to promote well-being during the uncertain times.
- Campus Ministry began offering online resources including bible studies, scholarly presentations and videos. The College was also pleased to be able

Learning from Home

"I miss being able to go to school, but having online classes has been a fun experience. What I enjoy most about school being online is that I can spend a lot more time with my family. Most days I would be in a rush to get home from school and then head straight to work. My schedule didn't leave much time for my family but now I spend a lot more time with them. I'm really looking forward to going back to school and being able to go back to work. I miss my friends and my teachers."

Briana Garcia
Current student



"Finishing the semester feels a bit surreal and disjointed. We are all able to sleep a bit more, drive a bit less and spend more time at home. But honestly the difference is not much apart from having Zoom meetings. Sure, we don't see our professors nor see our classmates, but assignments and class times still follow suit just via online. All we can do is adjust and learn and hope for the best."

Geovany Alvarado-Ortega
Current student

to connect students, staff and faculty with a daily livestreamed Mass given by Archbishop Naumann.

- The Campus Cupboard, which provides food and personal care supplies to students in need, began offering no-contact, curbside pickup each week.
- Our instructors at Lansing Correctional Facility converted assignments to an electronic correspondence format. Donnelly was recognized by Kansas Secretary of Corrections Jeff Zmuda for continuing to provide educational services during this crisis.

Like most other schools, Donnelly made the difficult decision to reschedule May graduation and nursing pinning ceremonies to August 1.

In addition to instructional and physical distancing changes put in place, financial implications for the College and our students were also considered. Most Donnelly students typically work 20-40+ hours per week in addition to their school load, and many of their restaurant and other service jobs were halted by shutdowns. To ease students' financial concerns, Donnelly extended all payment plans for current students, pledged to continue to pay work-study students, and began working to secure additional scholarship support, which

is projected to be our biggest need in the coming fiscal year. Donnelly also secured a federal payroll protection program loan.

By late March, Congress passed the CARES Act to address the national crisis caused by the pandemic. Donnelly received almost \$300,000 to issue direct grants to students and assist with costs related to shifting to distance education.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

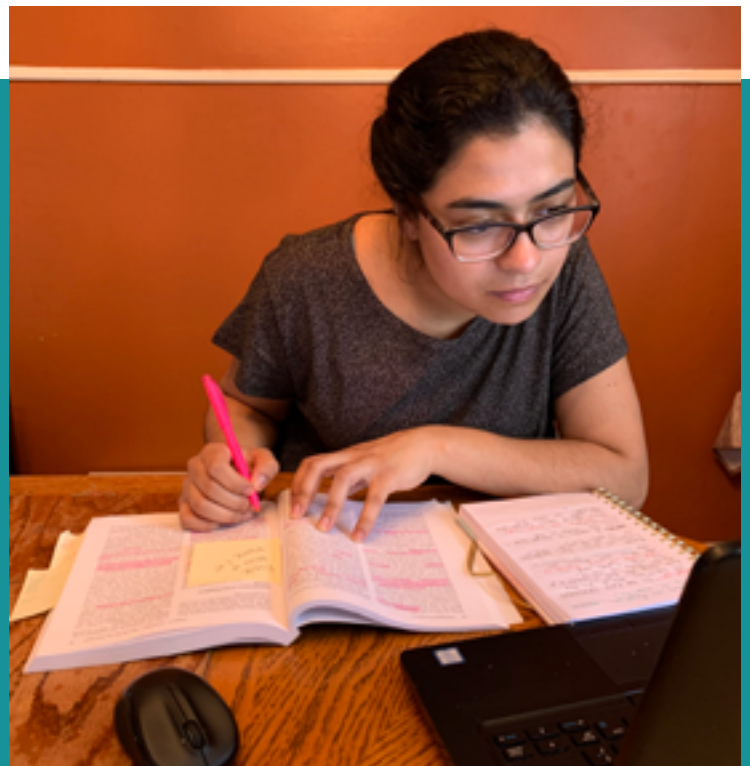
While normal activity was at a minimum on campus, construction continued on our new academic building. Governor Kelly's order classified construction companies working on projects such as Donnelly's academic building as essential businesses so our general contractor, Excel Constructors, and their sub-contractors continued work. While we anticipate some delays to our original timeline as a result of the pandemic, we remain hopeful the building will still open in fall 2020.

Excel instituted a job site policy for dealing with COVID-19 as early as March 16. Unfortunately, by early April the virus had found its way to workers at the Donnelly College construction site. Over the course of the next several weeks, Excel initiated multiple

"I was afraid of taking online classes. You must really have your time management together...it's too easy to put work aside. This helped me get my feet wet. I would do online classes in the future if I needed to, but I prefer to be in a classroom. I like people, and I like to interact."

(Originally published on April 24 in The Leaven in a piece titled "Remote learning offers challenges but also benefits")

Yareli Castor
Current student



Yareli Castor attending class online.

Front Line Alumni



“COVID-19 has tested my ability to become creative... [residents] are restless after 4 weeks of isolation from families. My residents have shined, are resilient, and have shown me as a nurse that creativity exists even under the worst of times! I love my job and my residents. They help me make it through each day.”

Evelyn Smith '15

LPN at Excelsior Springs Nursing and Rehab

“Thursdays we have been helping our community by distributing bags of vegetables. Although El Centro is currently closed to public, we are still making appointments for clients seeking essential services.”

Magali Rojas '18

Intake/Enrollment Specialist
for the Health Navigation
team at El Centro



“I am working in the monastery, rather than outside of the monastery, as a home health nurse. Also, I am the designated COVID nurse if one of the sisters, God forbid, becomes positive.”

**Sr. Mary Teresa Morris,
OSB, RN '74**

Mount St. Scholastica

“It has been an honor using my knowledge and skills in assisting those in need of medical care as a front-line healthcare worker, working in the Emergency Department at Counterpoint Medical Center. Of course, like any other worker, working with patients who have COVID-19 or have encountered the virus and are experiencing similar symptoms can be very nerve wracking at times. It is important to remember, as essential employees, to protect ourselves at any given time when providing care for our patients and to remind each other not to rush into things as we are crucial to our teams, especially when there is a shortage of PPE and supplies are limited throughout many hospitals as we assist our communities. Aside from working countless hours in the department, it is vital to stay alert on frequent changes of our hospital's policies and procedures as our care progresses throughout this pandemic. I wouldn't trade it for any other field and I am blessed in being part of making a positive influence or saving someone's life.

COVID-19 has represented a new challenge for us healthcare workers who work with individuals who demonstrate high risky behaviors, experience suicide ideation, physical self-harm, impulsive or reckless behaviors that may put workers at risk if not properly protected.

Despite the challenge, our team has creatively found ways to work around these encounters to meet the patients' needs when individuals are re-experiencing trauma.”



Yenni Seaman '16

Mental Health Coordinator at Counterpoint Medical Center


in-depth cleaning and disinfecting periods and they and their sub-contractors worked hard to contain spread. As the situation evolved, Donnelly and Excel, in conjunction with local and state health officials, took steps to prevent the spread of the virus on our site. Because the safety of all crew members is of the utmost importance, Donnelly maintains regular communication with Excel as well as local and state health care officials, regularly seeking their advice and counsel regarding our building project. Throughout this period, Wyandotte County health officials recommended that the Donnelly site remain open.

At the time of publication, we are pleased to report that we have had no known cases of COVID-19 infection among our faculty, staff, or board.

THE FUTURE

Despite these immediate pandemic-related challenges, College leadership has not lost sight of Donnelly's long-term goals of strengthening our mission and realizing our vision for our students and our community. Academic program development continues, with a focus on further developing our bachelor's and nursing programs.

Like most institutions of higher education, Donnelly does anticipate future financial challenges as a result of this crisis. Because the College relies heavily on gifts and grants to make our mission possible each year, we remain especially grateful for our donors this academic year who helped ensure we were in a healthy financial position as we entered this unprecedented storm. As we work to sustain and expand our mission, we pray our donors will be able to continue their support even during these uncertain economic times.

We thank all our alumni, benefactors, volunteers, students, staff and faculty for their unwavering support and advocacy, and we look forward to reuniting the Dragons in our new home in fall 2020! 

Teaching from Home



Dr. Melissa Lenos

*In response to several questions she received from students about a reading assignment, **Dr. Melissa Lenos**, Title V Project Director and Associate Professor, answers questions through a video post.*

*Taking a break between classes, **Gretchen Meinhardt, M.S.**, Assistant Professor and Director of Success First, says "My favorite part of teaching from home is that every day is Take Your Dog to Work Day."*



Gretchen Meinhardt, M.S.

New Ways to Give



JEROME SOCIETY

Donnelly is excited to launch The Jerome Society to recognize annual patrons giving \$1,000 or more to the Donnelly Fund, which makes our mission possible each year. To explore member benefits or become an inaugural member, visit donnelly.edu/JeromeSociety or contact Ashlyn Frederick at 913.621.8757 or afrederick@donnelly.edu.

The Jerome Society honors the College's founder, Sister Jerome Keeler, a world-renowned academic and member of the Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica. It also honors St. Jerome (a patron saint of students) and Society members who are valued patrons of Donnelly students.

MONTHLY GIVING

Automatic monthly giving is available! Visit donna.edu/give to schedule your credit card to be billed either the first or third Friday of every month.

STILL TIME TO IMPACT DONNELLY'S MISSION THIS YEAR!

Donnelly's fiscal year ends June 30, and you can still make an impact by supporting the Donnelly Fund at donna.edu/give. *No matter the amount, every gift matters!*

Your gift will help us provide additional student aid this semester and next academic year to address students' financial challenges caused by the pandemic and maintain Donnelly's legacy as an affordable private, Catholic college.

GIVING DAY  3.3.2021

1 DAY 4 DONNELLY

1DAY4DONNELLY

1Day4Donnelly is our annual 24-hour online giving day in support of our students and mission. See highlights of our first-annual 1Day4Donnelly, held this year on March 4, at donna.edu/1day and learn how you can get involved in next year's 1Day event.

DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR MATCHING FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR ENDOWED GIFTS

Donnelly is thrilled to have \$600,000 from a U.S. Department of Education grant to strengthen our Hispanic-Serving college by providing a **1:1 match for endowment gifts through 2024.**

Priority will be given to donors establishing new endowed funds (\$10,000 minimum). Discover more about this opportunity and the academic programs supported by this grant at donna.edu/TitleV.

ONLINE

SHINE

FOR DONNELLY COLLEGE

SHINE ONLINE 2020

Oct. 15, 2020

Chairs Ken & Diane Williams

We are sad we won't get to SHINE together in person this year, but excited to still offer a virtual, live broadcast event. We are currently seeking sponsors but will not be charging individual tickets. If you live outside Kansas City or simply don't enjoy going to events, now is your perfect opportunity to experience SHINE! Visit donna.edu/shine for sponsor and event details.

LEAVE A LEGACY!

It's never too early or too late to include Donnelly in your estate plans, and it may be easier than you think! A planned gift (via your will, life insurance or other ways) lets you support Donnelly's mission beyond your lifetime and may offer you tax savings. Join others who have included DC in their plans and become a member of the Legacy Society. For member benefits and planning tools, visit donna.edu/legacy.

Retirement Announced

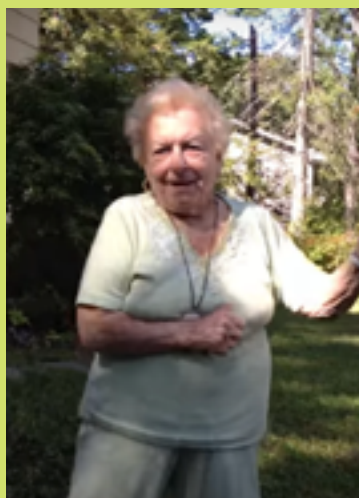
Fr. John Melnick SSA, has announced his retirement after more than 40 years of faithful service to the Catholic Church as Priest, including 11 years serving the Donnelly College community as Vice President of Spirituality and Mission. While at Donnelly, Fr. John touched the lives of countless students through campus ministry programming, R.C.I.A., theology courses and assisting with daily Mass on campus. He also provided friendship and counsel to all faculty and staff including the President and Board of Directors.

In an announcement to Donnelly faculty and staff, Monsignor Swetland said, “We will greatly miss Fr. John, who has served Donnelly College so very well for these past 11 years. On a personal note, he has been an outstanding friend and colleague to me since I arrived six years ago. We are eternally grateful for his service to Donnelly College.”

Thank you, Fr. John!



You may send well wishes to:
Fr. John Melnick c/o Donnelly College
608 N. 18th Street
Kansas City, KS 66102



“Dancing Nana” on YouTube

Staying Positive

As Donnelly transitioned to remote learning, Susan Lechliter, Director of Counseling Services and Coordinator of the Lansing Correctional Program sent weekly emails to students, staff and faculty encouraging them to be proactive about their mental, physical and spiritual health.

She challenged everyone to get up and dance like 88-year-old Dancing Nana on YouTube or to sing a song, loud and proud. Lechliter wrote, “I had a parish priest when I was a child who was encouraging people to sing at mass. He joked: ‘If the good Lord gave you a beautiful voice, use it and show him how thankful you are! If he didn’t, sing

anyway and get even.”

In one email Lechliter reminded students, staff and faculty how much time and energy they expend worrying about things that probably will not happen. She cited a study from Penn State that discovered 91 percent of things people worry about are actually false alarms. She then went on to share concepts and resources associated with clearing our minds and refocusing, often referenced as mindfulness. “Life is too short to waste time worrying about what probably won’t come to pass. One of the most important things we can do for ourselves, especially when times are difficult, is to actively practice self-care.”

SHARE YOUR GOOD NEWS WITH US!

Email marketing@donnelly.edu or visit www.donnelly.edu/alumni



The world has changed. Your plans may have too.



For college, choose local, affordable and flexible. **Choose Donnelly.**

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SHINE

FOR DONNELLY COLLEGE

ONLINE

OCTOBER 15, 2020

CHAIRS KEN &
DIANE WILLIAMS

2020 ALUMNI
HALL OF FAME
INDUCTION

THE STUDENT
PANEL IS BACK!

OPPORTUNITY TO
GIVE VIRTUALLY



REGISTER AT [DONNELLY.EDU/SHINE](https://www.donnelly.edu/shine)