

Coming Together: A Special Message from Dean Foley | CEHS

04/13/2020



Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff Members,

I hope this letter finds you well and strong. The last several weeks have been demanding as the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services has responded to challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are making rapid adjustments to the way we work, communicate, and learn. Thank you for your outstanding efforts to adapt to this changing situation to help keep our campus and our community safe.

Although difficult, this crisis has created many opportunities for increased unity. We have been incredibly touched to hear about the service, connection, and kindness coming from our college. Our faculty, staff, and students are truly coming together as part of the Aggie family in extraordinary ways to respond to the impact of COVID-19. Below are just a few examples of your remarkable successes:

Human Development and Family Studies

The Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic has provided seamless services, particularly through the use of telehealth, to families and individuals across the region. This is particularly important as large scale stressors can increase divorce, spouse and child abuse, and suicide rates. Practicum students are helping with Meals on Wheels, crisis day care, and many other essential services.

Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education

Audiology and speech-language clinics as well as the Sound Beginnings program have required a rapid re-tooling to facilitate remote service delivery. These innovative efforts have helped clients and their families, including children who are deaf or hard of hearing, to continue to receive services. Because of these efforts, students have also been able to continue gaining practicum experience.

Nursing

Many senior capstone students were in the midst of clinical preceptorships in medical/surgical, labor and delivery, ICU, and emergency departments when the crisis hit. They enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to make use of the skills they have learned during the past two years while doing full-shift clinicals with progressively more responsibility. Many students set a goal to take over the entire patient load of their nurse preceptor.

Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences

Students and faculty volunteered their time and skills to help Utah State University's Center for Innovative Design and Instruction facilitate the transition to online learning for classes across the entire university. This team worked long hours to help reformat all face-to-face classes to run entirely on Canvas, getting all of USU's online classes rapidly up and running.

School of Teacher Education and Leadership

TEAL advisors are helping parents stay informed and are referring students who may be facing food insecurities to the USU SNAC office and "Families Feeding Families" food pantries throughout the valley. The math education department is creating flexible online formats to allow educators to work from home, especially those with young children. The GEAR UP program is continuing essential services through online tutoring, virtual field trips, and individual calls to cohort students.

Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling

ASSERT has created many interactive activities for parents and children to complete together online, including new videos of “circle time” lessons. Case managers meet with families via teleconference multiple times per week to support them as they work through behavioral challenges caused by recent disruptions to routine. On another outstanding front, Aggies Elevated mentors and students have stepped up and become Zoom pros, sharing screens with ease and helping with homework via remote desktop technology.

Psychology

Research Week has been reformatted to be entirely online, allowing students to present their research with their peers without traveling. Behavioral Psychology students are coding video data from a real behavioral study to continue their valuable research experience. To help keep spirits up, the department has developed an online resource of self-care ideas such as physical activities, anxiety tamers, and family activities.

Kinesiology and Health Science

KHS faculty and staff quickly created comprehensive lab packets to help students transition to online courses, including new video demonstrations of lab procedures. The department is utilizing volunteers to set up and support COVID-19 volunteer response networks in urban and rural areas. Through the Tribal and Rural Opioid Initiative, they helped produce a recent podcast episode that debunks myths about COVID-19.

Sorenson Legacy Foundation Center for Clinical Excellence

The Sorenson Center now has all services available via telehealth. A few clients are still receiving in-person services with strict safety and health protocols in place. The center is committed to remaining open for essential services (such as repairing or replacing hearing aids). They are largely transitioning to telehealth while remaining flexible in order to address client needs in person when necessary.

Center for Persons with Disabilities

The Up to 3 Early Intervention Program transitioned all early intervention services to virtual visits, and the Developmental Skills Laboratory has moved from on-site to in-home services for their clients. WebAIM has made registration free for its Online Document Accessibility Course for all faculty and staff through June 2020, so educators and employees can share accessible digital resources with students and each other.

Edith Bowen Laboratory School

Teachers have made a complete transition to teaching online using Canvas and Google Classroom. The school issued each student a Chromebook or iPad days after the governor ordered a soft close of schools. The entire staff meets each day via video conference and shares challenges and lessons learned with each other. Although working from a distance, the whole school community has increased its collaboration and grown closer as a result.

In the midst of all that happening within our college, we are pleased to have [wonderful news about our college rankings](#). Nationally, our college was ranked 29th overall and 12th in funded research. As evidenced by the tremendous efforts in the above summary, each of you contribute to making this college one of the best and most highly ranked colleges in the nation.

We will continue to work together to respond to the rapidly evolving needs of our college, university, and community. I encourage you to stay well informed, and I hope you are continuing to be safe and healthy. The dean's office has created a web page with resources that are continually being updated. Please visit our [CEHS COVID-19 resource page](#), which includes [student resources](#) and [remote work resources](#) specific to our college.

I am constantly amazed by how CEHS departments, centers, and programs are pulling together during these unprecedented times. Thank you again for your extraordinary work!

Sincerely,

Beth E. Foley, Ph.D., Dean
Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services
Utah State University
(435)797-1470
beth.foley@usu.edu