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This issue of Cadence is different from others you may have read in the past as it is shaped by a collective experience no one could have foreseen for 2020. As you well know, COVID-19 has affected all of us, some more than others. This issue focuses on just a few of the many stories to unfold throughout our community during this time. Lamar University’s alumni, faculty, staff and students have tried to find solutions and be proactive in the face of uncertainty.

One of the things we are thankful for is being a leader in online education. This provided us an advantage when 100% of our classes went to an online delivery system during the last semester. LU faculty, such as those featured in this issue from the College of Fine Arts and Communication, had the opportunity to showcase their unique and creative teaching methods while our digital learning platform helped K-12 educators across the nation so they could continue teaching during the pandemic. These alumni are also educators. Anna Ayala, Stu Guthrie, and Barbara Ybarra, describe how they translated face-to-face learning into a digital environment.

Another area of focus is supporting our community. LU’s Small Business Development Center is working with struggling small businesses. Alumni are likewise engaged, in Southeast Texas and beyond, helping in different industries affected by the quarantine. Lauren Martin is in event management at The Landau in Beaumont and is guiding couples whose plans were altered or postponed. Megan Mistric works at Buckner Calder Woods senior care home and plans to early testing and monitoring but also for doing critical work in contact tracing for those who may have been exposed. Judith Smith served as manager and spokesperson for the coronavirus testing center at Jack Brooks Regional Airport in Beaumont as well as found a way to attach to their masks for more comfort during long shifts. Judith Smith served as manager and spokesperson for the coronavirus testing center at Jack Brooks Regional Airport in Beaumont as well as found a way to attach to their masks for more comfort during long shifts.

A cheerful presence in the Cardinal community
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Adapting quickly to meet demand
Supporting struggling community members
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Lamar University’s more than 20 years of an overall 25-year effort to provide education delivered directly to the student has played a critical role in transforming the industry and ensuring a continuity of learning during the pandemic.

In 2005, with a few years of experience in the online space, the university was positioned to build a robust online program when Hurricane Rita disabled the physical campus. “We were one of the early pioneers in the concept of providing a critical and value-added dimension to higher education by delivering curriculum to students at their location,” said Kenneth Evans, LU president. “The reason many universities across the country and K-12 schools in Texas were able to flip a switch, transforming their campuses to virtual classrooms during the COVID-19 crisis, because early pioneers like Lamar University, through experience and thorough investigation and implementation and continuous analysis, developed systems that have now been disseminated across the industry.”

In 2007, LU launched three online master’s degree programs in the College of Education and Human Development with huge success. Since that time, the University has expanded its online degrees to include programs in criminal justice, school counseling, computer science, cybersecurity, communication, nursing, business and a Bachelor of Science in technology. In fact, since launching into the online space, 21,741 students have earned degrees online, 2,953 bachelor’s degrees, 18,592 master’s degrees and 556 doctorates.

“We now have 18 undergraduate programs, 21 master’s, one doctoral program and six certifications online,” said Brenda Nichols, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs. “We have 4,000 graduate education students online across eight different areas and another 3,550 graduate and undergraduate students totally online.”

LU’s communication platforms for admissions as well as the ongoing student experience are streamlined. Online students have access to the same learning aids as on-campus students, including library-enhanced learning platforms, tutoring, coaching and advising.

“The same faculty members who teach on-campus classes also instruct the online students,” said Nichols. “We don’t use teaching assistants to teach courses, and we try to maintain small class sizes in order to meet the needs of our students.”

As a result of LU’s now vast experience in the online curriculum space and its students’ exposure to alternative learning methodologies (Many of LU’s on-campus students also take online courses. Pre-pandemic, approximately 5,000 of the 8,000 online students take at least one course online.), the university was able to move to a comprehensive online program in the face of the pandemic. Now every student is taking online courses, from music to mechanical engineering.

“The beauty of the platforms for digital learning environments is they are now being used by universities and colleges across the globe in response to the global pandemic,” said Evans. “Our early efforts were to make this transformative offering available for students in the format that works best for them, never considering that a day would come when online education was the only option, as has been the case during the pandemic.”

LU’s educational faculty and alumni assume leadership roles during pandemic

Where 90% of the world’s schools closed in 185 countries and 1.6 billion children were sent home to finish the school year via alternate instructional methods, Lamar University’s education leadership faculty and its education alumni assumed a leadership role more than 20 years in the making.

After a near seamless transition to a comprehensive online platform during the COVID-19 pandemic, LU’s educational faculty began supporting educators across the country, and LU’s alumni became leaders in their districts.

Krystal Hinerman, clinical assistant professor of educational research; Ken Young, associate professor of educational leadership in the Center for Doctoral Studies of Educational Leadership; and Cindy Cummings, assistant professor of educational leadership, represent more than 30 years’ experience in both PK-12 and higher education online teaching, course development and program planning. They led the cause to help individual educators and entire districts transition to online platforms.

“The training we have received and the years of experience teaching online has prepared us for providing support in these unique times,” said Hinerman. “We’ve looked at this as a statewide effort in response to needs specifically for school districts but have addressed specific requests also, and all remotely.”

Hinerman, Young and Cummings offered free webinars to demonstrate how to teach online using streaming video tools and provided tips on how to set up and conduct instruction with students in an interactive format. Dozens of Lamar University educational leadership faculty joined the effort to support educators across the nation and developed additional webinars based on feedback from teachers and districts.

“It is in this spirit that we felt compelled to do what we could to support them in a manner that would not burden them or their institutions financially or otherwise,” said Young. “We’re not doing this as consultants for money or notoriety, but because we care about them and the success of the students they teach. In our opinion, it is a practical way to bridge the university and communities we serve to make a positive difference in our state and beyond.”

Since the initial webinar, the team has developed additional webinars based on the feedback they’ve received. They have deployed links to recorded meetings and tutorials to anyone who requests them. They are curating resources to support Texas educators and administrators and to be made available to whoever needs them.

“Of course, we’re supporting Lamar University’s faculty, our students and alumni as many of them make this transition to online teaching and learning, but we’re also continuing to support the community members who are reaching out to us individually regarding support and resources for this process,” said Young.
Small Business Development Center: Taking care of business amid coronavirus pandemic

by Shelbe Rodriguez

A just a few weeks ago, the World Health Organization declared the rapidly spreading coronavirus a pandemic, causing a paradigm shift in businesses across the globe. David Mulcahy, director of the LU Small Business Development Center, says only those business owners who have planned well in advance will come out on top.

“As a business owner, even before a disaster, you need to have at least six months of operating cash just in case something happens. Those who do not will be in trouble,” Mulcahy said. “About 40% of businesses have survived, and 40% are out there trying to figure out what’s going on and how they can get out of this situation.” Those businesses that have financially prepared will have easy access to money, capital and other resources because, according to Mulcahy, they are healthier companies. For those businesses that are struggling significantly from the social disruption, the SBDC offers funding options and relief resources.

The SBDC provides the road map for current and future business owners with free consultations, daily webinars on U.S. Small Business Administration Recovery Assistance as well as low-cost training programs and seminars. The center also serves as a link between the SBDC and the consumer with the main goal of relaying information from the legislature and providing future business owners with current information so that they can act appropriately.

According to the SBA, capital access is among the top common issues that small businesses will face during this time. To combat this, on Mar. 27, President Donald Trump signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, which contains $576 billion in relief for American workers and small businesses. The SBA has developed the Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loan Emergency Advance and SBA Express Bridge Loans and provides SBA debt relief for small businesses in economic distress.

“Some of the programs that we have helped so far include the Paycheck Protection Program for small businesses, and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan for larger businesses. We have also provided technical assistance to help businesses navigate through this time,” Mulcahy said. “In the past, we have seen a trend where small businesses are forced to rely on personal funds to get through a crisis, but with the current programs, we are seeing a shift towards relying on government assistance.”

Kristy’s Korner Framing

Despite coronavirus shutdowns, for one mom and pop shop, it’s been business as usual. For early two decades, Beaumont-based business Kristy’s Korner Framing has served the Southeast Texas community and beyond. Owners, Kevin and Barbara Couron ’80 believe that it’s their “old school” business tactics that has kept their business afloat during the pandemic.

“We run our business in an honest and trustworthy manner,” Kevin said. “We offer a good product at a good price while implementing a caring customer service program.”

While they weren’t classified as essential, the pair said that they “tightened the belt” and are hoping for one day retiring. “We didn’t need to use any SBA loans and that’s mainly in part to us living within our means,” Kevin said. “That’s the key—live within your means and prepare for tragedy tomorrow.”

While most business owners have relied on social media and online distribution to keep their businesses afloat during the shutdown, Barbara suggests reaching out directly to your customer base. “Check on them and let them know that you are thinking of them and ask if there’s anything that you can do for them,” she said. “Think outside the box on how you can help them. That’s the way Beaumont operates; we help each other out during times like this.”

As shelter-in-place orders begin to lift, Kristy’s Korner Framing is among those businesses that have officially reopened their doors. Kevin and Barbara said that they will continue to sanitize their work areas and wear protective masks, and, not surprisingly, they will continue to be here when the community needs them.
E-Commerce evolution:

Curb-to-Car application keeps buyers and goods connected in pandemic and beyond

by Casey Ford

n a time when we are all missing human interaction, technology might seem a cold solution for connection. But our phones and computers have, of necessity, replaced hugs and handshakes, so technological innovators have sought out warm, fuzzy solutions to keep us connected to the people—and foods, goods and services—we love and that make us feel normal.

Justin McCullough '02 and his team at FSG SmartBuildings, based in Round Rock, Texas, have used their “down-time” since the pandemic began to stimulate e-commerce with their Curb-to-Car application. The app is not only keeping businesses connected to their homebound customers—and customers connected to their favorite stuff—but it also is evolving virtual commerce, as it allows for simple interactivity, convenience and safety. It may seem ironic that technology would have significant interest in the happiness and safety of human beings, but it makes much more sense when we meet entrepreneurs like McCullough and understand the heart that beats beneath the interface.

For most of his childhood and adolescence, McCullough thought everyone was like his dad—surely everyone owned a business and had two beepers and multiple offices. As he speaks about his father, McCullough tears up—in 2007, he lost the man who taught him that “you can change where you live, where you work, but you cannot change your name; and the McCullough name means something.” A successful business owner in petrochemical shipping, this father encouraged his young son to make his own path in business, so by the time McCullough graduated from Orangefield High School in 1996, he was set on a path toward technology entrepreneurship. It would lead him to Lamar State College-Orange, where he would meet Renae, his wife of now 20 years, and then to Lamar University and a B.B.A. in management information systems. McCullough jokes that back then, before there were names for “what he is,” he thought of his studies ambiguously as “half-computer science, half-management,” but what he really learned during his MIS time at LU was that his big passion was people. To earn a living during his studies, he built a business designing and hosting turnkey websites for some of the most recognizable business names in Southeast Texas. Feedback from his early customers validated that McCullough’s professional purpose was focused on others. For him, entrepreneurship has always been less about financial success and more about innovating to serve and lead. When Hurricane Harvey aftermath moved McCullough and his family away from Beaumont and out to Central Texas, he assumed his role at FSG Smart Buildings.

Beaumont hand back together,” and today in their Round Rock offices, McCullough works with several LU alumni, including his vice president of product, Adam Hayes ’09, his lead architect, Chris Allen ’09; lead software engineers John Tyler ’14, and software engineers Zeb Barrett ’13 and Matt Williams ’13.

Because of the ways the pandemic immediately changed their own day-to-day business routines, McCullough and his team realized early on that they had an opportunity to think about how they could make something immediately deliverable and useful to businesses that might be struggling to adapt and thrive. He compared it to the way that a shoe company transitions to mask-making or a distillery converts to hand sanitizer production—their development of Curb-to-Car was the culmination of past e-commerce experiences and efforts in building an IoT—Internet of Things—platform for smart buildings. They were able to leverage this system architecture into the creation of an app in a moment of exigency to help business owners back into business with curbside pickup capabilities. Curb-to-Car is a contactless pickup application usable by any goods-providing business. Some Austin businesses using it successfully include coffee companies, bookstores, other retailers and restaurants, including those of the world-renowned Hai Hospitality Group. When asked if he thinks the world will ever go back to the old way of buying stuff, McCullough said, philosophically, he thinks not.

“The customer is like water,” he said, “seeking the path of least resistance in its inevitable course downhill. It’s my mission to follow the customer and help cut that path for them—technology is the cutting tool... It’s my mission to follow the customer. It’s my mission to help cut that path for them—technology is the cutting tool. In the past, it was about meeting the need and want—a virtual river seeking the path that the consumer needs and desires. McCullough acknowledges that it can be difficult today to find a viable niche in technology. Consumers are discerning because they have endless options. A concept can seem world-changing, but then people must understand it and use it if the way it was intended, and it has to propagate in beneficial ways long-term. The key to this kind of success, then, would seem to be an understanding of what people want and need and then caring enough about them to give them access. McCullough and entrepreneurs like him are innovating for connection in a world looking for ways to heal itself and move into the future.

"It’s my mission to follow the customer and help cut that path for them—technology is the cutting tool..."

—Justin McCullough

From the 965 orders you and your team have delivered, your average delivery time is 5 Minutes and 45 Seconds. It looks like the busiest time of day for your business is from 5pm until around 7pm. The most common vehicles your customers drive are the Honda Civic, Ford F150, and Honda Accord. The most common colors of your customers’ vehicles are Grey, Black, and White.

The chart below shows your orders over the past week.
New Cardinal Success Coach meets challenges
With student success and retention among its top priorities, the College of Business named Kristie Helm as its new Cardinal success coach. The New England native relocated to Southeast Texas in early February of last year to serve as a career consultant for the College of Fine Arts and Communication. “Thinking back to when I was a college student, I really valued the mentors that I had in my life, and I just wanted to give back like my mentors had given to me.”

Helm assumed her new position just one week after Tropical Storm Ida hit the Southeast Texas community last fall, and it was her first lesson in understanding the importance of her role. “I spent countless hours speaking with students and trying to help them meet their basic needs and discuss how they could successfully move forward in the semesters,” she said. “From that experience, I really feel more connected to our students and the university.”

On the heels of that challenge came university closures and shelter-in-place orders brought on by COVID-19, and again students had a semester other than the one they anticipated. But Helm says it’s times like these when her role matters most as she works with at-risk College of Business students, connecting them to campus resources and communicating with faculty. “During such an emergency, retention is key,” she said. From sleepy WiFi and academic distress to financial need and health concerns, Helm said, “It’s hard to know that students will potentially drop out because they can’t afford future semesters, or they don’t have access to basic necessities.”

When the university initially moved online to online learning, Helm knew that she had to act fast in order to ensure that business students adapted successfully. She reached out to College of Business dean, directors and department chairs for assistance in pinpointing which students might be most in need of resources. She then collaborated with Craig Recamilla, executive director of retention and student success, on university calling campaigns to both online and on-campus students.

“This was such a much different way to have college from an online learning point of view. A number of students, they were so much more engaged than they are in the classroom. It’s a real time now for those students to be really engaged,” Helm said. “One thing that’s really so powerful about online learning is that you really get connected to the students.”

Many students reached out to Helm for support, some because they could not afford living in a dormitory, others because they had to work from home because of family circumstances. “I would get calls from students who were three hours behind in their course, and I would just have to contact the professor directly and ask, ‘What can I do? What can I do to help them?’”

“From all of those interactions, I really learned how much I wanted to have a career where I could help connect and support students,” says Helm. She is looking forward to continuing to help students in the future through career coaching and mentorship programs, and she says she is very excited about the opportunities to connect with students online.”

Charles Daleo -68 comes from a family where they have pharmacy and LU in common. His father, Anthony 31 graduated from South Park Junior College, while Charles and his brother Frank -59 took pre-pharmacy classes in the 1960s at Lamar University before graduating with pharmacy degrees from the University of Texas at Austin. Their sister Antonette (Daleo) Mabe earned her degree in education from LU in 1958, and Charles Daleo’s son Grady graduated from LU in 2014. The brothers opened Daleo Compounding Pharmacy and Wellness Center in 1980, still located on Calder 40 years later. A Beaumont native, Daleo believes LU serves Southeast Texas well. “Lamar University is a tremendous asset to our community,” he says. “It has been a part of my father’s and three siblings’ education and allowed all of us to achieve our university degrees.”

One way of giving back to the community he grew up in was through the creation of hand sanitizer for first responders. “In the past, it has not been legal for pharmacists in Texas to compound a medication without a prescription from a practitioner,” Daleo explains. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. “But the pandemic has allowed it.” Because of this current great need for hand sanitizer, the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization have authorized pharmacists to compound alcohol-based hand sanitizer. "It has been a part of..."
Collaborate, innovate, create.

That’s the motto for the College of Fine Arts and Communication at Lamar University. Never has the faculty had to live this more than in the pandemic time of COVID-19. As classes began their work through online meetings, the question abounded, how do you live and teach the fine arts through a Zoom call? In this article, we discuss some innovative ways students lived and practiced the arts, as well as how a Beaumont Independent School District principal had to implement new learning strategies overnight.

For Travis Prokop, assistant professor of dance in the Department of Theatre and Dance, he knew he needed to adjust accordingly and fast. He began filming dance combinations that he could send to his students and researched different forums to connect through like Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

“My biggest worry was how to do an online dance class. We play off of each other’s energy in person, and I didn’t know how that would work through a computer screen. I knew this would be the largest pitfall to overcome,” said Prokop. “The next obstacle to overcome was what our dancers focus on with the space they were working with.”

Prokop decided to be realistic and choose one goal—to keep connections established. He wanted to also focus on his students’ mental health and knew dance was what they needed as a distraction and a way to cope.

“What I’ve enjoyed the most through this situation is seeing people dance and do choreography more on social media. More people are enjoying the arts, and everyone is realizing they can become an artist,” mused Prokop.

For Xenia Fedorchenko, associate professor in the Department of Art and Design, panic planning and quick decision-making was what got her and her art students through this difficult time.

“Normally we teach our art students in an amazing facility with access to labs, studios, ink, paint, rollers and many other media that are very accessible to our artists. Suddenly, we were in a situation where we had to be very creative and experimental,” said Fedorchenko. “We went back to the Renaissance age and used the same materials artists used hundreds of years ago.”

Fedorchenko had to utilize her entire house to set up different classrooms. For her printmaking class, she set up her kitchen island to have room to experiment printing with ladles, spoons, a stone egg and other materials she had. The class used rolled up fabric as a dabber and leather as a stampers. Other kitchen essentials used were spices such as turmeric, cinnamon and vegetable oil to make ink. For her Alternate Fibers class, Fedorchenko set up in a different room to make paper and had to experiment with different chemical reactions to see what they could create. The class made paper from using grass and okra slime instead of the typical lye that would have been used at school.

“I believe this group of students will be more resilient and stronger critical thinkers and creative problem solvers because of how they have had to adapt to COVID-19,” said Fedorchenko.

For Belinda George, ‘03, ‘08, ‘15, principal of Homer Drive Elementary in BSD, going virtual for her wasn’t scary. The hardest part was knowing her students couldn’t interact with her or their teachers.

“I created a Q and A from the state mandate of the school closure for the teachers and created Zoom meeting trainings for my faculty and staff. I had to learn how to present information virtually, but by the third week we had our rhythm down,” said George.

To connect with her students, George started virtually reading books to her students and their families on the Homer Drive Facebook page. Because this was such a success and seemed to connect with her families, George started reaching out to the authors of the children’s books she was reading and invited them to participate in Zoom meetings with the students.

“Not only did our students love getting the chance to meet the authors of their favorite childhood books, the authors enjoyed it as well,” said George. “We were able to ask them questions and find out what inspired their stories.”

George would like to keep some of the new learning instruments in place when life returns to normal. She would like to see some of the Zoom meetings for students who are absent and to also have PowerPoint presentations available with clickable links to lessons.

“It has been so precious to see my students learning technology and interacting through different ways,” said George. “Who knew doing jumping jacks through Zoom P.E. could be so fun?”

One of the highlights for George during this phase was planning a parade for her students to see their teachers and for the faculty and staff to celebrate the students. As they were riding through the neighborhoods of their students, she heard one student exclaim, “I knew my principal would be here. I knew she would show up!”

Colleagues in the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music hit all the high notes of collaboration, striking an innovative chord and creating a harmony of instruction, practice and ultimately learning.

Immediately, many of the faculty began recording short videos and posting them in order to conduct asynchronous teaching on various platforms, including Zoom. Brian Shook, the chair of the department, focused on updating his YouTube channel, a resource for LU faculty as well as faculty across the country.

“By and large, we had no dramatic problems. Professors came up with alternative assignments that still focused on objectives of the courses and the

4 I believe this group of students will be more resilient and stronger critical thinkers and creative problem solvers because of how they have had to adapt to COVID-19.™

—Xenia Fedorchenko

Connections: Innovative teaching during a pandemic

by J.T. Robertson & Shelly Vitanza
“My research involved interviews with {names} served as the director. {names}, dean of the College of Fine Arts and {names}, Beaumont; juniors {Deaf Studies} and {Deaf}, Jo Mayo Endowed Professor in the Department of {music}. {names} for larger studio class meetings. {names} faithful, but this generation of students is decline, but {names} surprised. {names} theory online for years but not {names} other adjustments to the syllabus.” said Benson.

“They were perspective,” said Benson. “They were ready to get a feel for their {music}. {names} own discussion board to get his {music}. The 10,000-member group shared tips, discuss teaching higher education music. The quality of the performance was not as good as in person, but {names} worked well for hearing the tone,” said Benson. “Flipgrid is a great visual component, although heavy headed on the teacher’s side. It was easy for students to log in, and we could perform and talk about what they were working on in that musical passage. It was easy to open a grid for a studio class so everyone could comment on each other’s performances.”

Although Flipgrid had some limitations, Frost found the visual aspects of the application, as well as the ability for students to record themselves and hear their recordings played back, were extremely beneficial.

“They created a vibe story about who they are with fun pictures. Many downloaded the application, even though it’s web-based, and it was another way for them to learn and a great process for students who recorded themselves numerous times, listened with a critical ear and then recorded. I think some of them spent hours that first few weeks,” said Frost.

Dueppen, the area coordinator for the brass festival as well as the organizer of the Collage Concert, used the extra time to plan these events. He also reached out more to students. “I’m surviving by doing the stuff I can do to get caught up for when the university opens back up,” said Dueppen. “We are all kind of making this work in some way. With a great attitude, confidence and resilience, we can step up to the challenge that the world is facing.”

Brielle Frost has a YouTube channel—Brian Snow—to make recordings and Skype, FaceTime or Zoom to meet up and listen to the recordings. “The quality of the performance was not as good as in person, but Skype worked well for hearing the tone.” said Brielle. “Flipgrid is a great visual component, although heavy headed on the teacher’s side. It was easy for students to log in, and we could perform and talk about what they were working on in that musical passage. It was easy to open a grid for a studio class so everyone could comment on each other’s performances.”

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Dueppen, the area coordinator for the brass festival as well as the organizer of the Collage Concert, used the extra time to plan these events. He also reached out more to students. “I’m surviving by doing the stuff I can do to get caught up for when the university opens back up,” said Dueppen. “We are all kind of making this work in some way. With a great attitude, confidence and resilience, we can step up to the challenge that the world is facing.”

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Couch named “highly effective” math educator

PJ Couch, associate professor of mathematics, has been named one of the top mathematics educators in the country. Most of us know Couch as “the guy who rides the unicycle around campus.” He was one of three mathematics educators in the nation to receive the Henry L. Alder Award that is given annually to faculty members whose teaching has been effective and successful in undergraduate mathematics.

“Education has created many opportunities for me, and Lamar University’s role in my success has been a cornerstone,” said Couch. “It feels great to be able to parlay LU’s investment in me to the benefit of others, and I hope that this recognition can help me create more opportunities for more people.”

As a faculty member, Couch has founded the MAPP Challenge for high school students, has displayed a passion for undergraduate research, is a part of the Key Communicators initiative with Beaumont Independent School District and an active member of the Lamar University Greater South Park Neighborhood Partnership.

Stinson receives prestigious community service award

Cynthia Stinson, chair of the JuliAnn Gay Dishman School of Nursing, has been honored as the 2019 Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award recipient. Although Stinson has served at Lamar University for 25 years, she’s been a Cardinal much longer. She received her bachelor’s degree from LU in 1980 and then continued her education at other Texas institutions.

The Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award was established in 1979 to acknowledge the members of Lamar University’s faculty and staff who make a lasting impact on the Lamar University community through an outstanding record of service and volunteer work. Individuals from LU, Lamar Institute of Technology, Lamar State College – Port Arthur and Orange are chosen.

Stinson combines her vocation with her life experience through service leading. She serves on the Board for the Pink Power Support Group, organized “Cancer Crusaders,” and formed the collaboration between the Gift of Life and Dishman School of Nursing to teach high school students about the dangers of tobacco and risks of cancer. Not only has she served on many committees and in organizations at Lamar University, but she continues to present on numerous topics to community members outside of the classroom on topics such as health and disease, treatment and caregiving.

Students within the School of Nursing average around 6,000 hours of community service to local agencies each year, largely attributable to their service-oriented leader, Stinson.

Couch and Stinson

Couch named “highly effective” math educator and Stinson receives prestigious community service award

Cardinals Esports hits the ground running

Cardinals Esports was founded in October of 2019 by Interim Associate Dean Tim Reden and computer science professor Zachary Mosetller. In the five months since Cardinals Esports started, the organization has added 42 full-affiliated members and has over 150 students in their discord channel. Cardinals Esports—a form of sport competition using video games—currently supports multiple teams.

Of the teams, Overwatch, Rocket League, Fortnite and League of Legends competed in full-fledged collegiate seasons throughout the fall 2019 semester. All competitive teams have made great strides during the past semester and promise to be top contenders in collegiate sports. Team Overwatch recently hit a milestone by defeating the Chicago College Renegades. This win is proof of all the hard work and practice the members of the team have put in.

Recent grad accepted into Ph.D. program

Hamza received more than half a million views through social media.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
Alumna Daniella DeLaRue ’03 evacuates from Tonga

Earlier this year on March 15, more than 7,300 Peace Corps volunteers in 60 countries were forced to retreat in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, leaving behind students, friends, families and the country in which they’d dedicated so much time. Daniella DeLaRue ’03, a Peace Corps volunteer stationed in Tonga and former director of the Lamar University McNair Scholars Program, was discussing plans for college with one of her students when the email arrived that would ultimately send her and her fellow volunteers back home.

“I remember trying to figure out just how quickly it was spreading,” said DeLaRue, recalling the days and weeks leading up to the exodus. “Because of the communal nature of Tonga’s culture, I knew how quickly a virus like that would spread.”

With 55 volunteers living among four island groups, DeLaRue pondered the implications of not only these members evacuating their posts, but also those of Peace Corps posts around the world.

“This is completely unprecedented—like so many things with the pandemic—that every volunteer was evacuated back to the U.S.,” said DeLaRue. “In the midst of packing and giving out all the hugs I could to everyone before I left, it was difficult to process.” Two days later, DeLaRue and her fellow volunteers would be on a flight back to the U.S. “It was simply heart-wrenching for everyone.”

With the current education project underway, DeLaRue was an English literacy facilitator on the main island of Tongatapu, and the program manager for their learning center and library. She also managed the American Center, which the U.S. Embassy in Fiji sponsors, and provided resources such as free internet access and guidance for students wanting to study in the U.S., as well as events for the public like the Saturday morning reading club that DeLaRue and her staff also conducted.

“Everything has been disrupted,” she said. “I had a feeling we would be evacuated for safety reasons, but I had hoped it wouldn’t be this soon. We could not predict how quickly this would consume resources and shake infrastructures in travel and healthcare.” DeLaRue remains in touch with the school in Tonga and supervises the staff from a distance. She has plans to remain in touch as soon as volunteers are cleared to return to finish her service. “I, like so many others, really feel I have unfinished business there,” said DeLaRue. DeLaRue describes the connections she had with the Tongan people as crucial to her understanding and appreciation of their culture. “The best part of my service in Tonga had to have been the relationships I built, whether it was with my host family, teachers at my school, the students I taught, vendors in the market, other volunteers in my cohort, or other friends I made,” said DeLaRue. “I miss the feeling of home I felt, even thousands of miles away from Southeast Texas.”
COVID-19 was the ‘big one’ Smith and her team anticipated but hoped would never happen. However, they had a pandemic plan in place. They also had experience with drive-in testing. In 2005, under Smith’s direction as the newly appointed director of the Port Arthur Health Department, a drive-through flu clinic was established.

“We were familiar with drive through, so the county used our idea. We could show them how it should be done where people call if they are symptomatic and make an appointment. It all fit into the CDC guidelines.”

Jefferson County provided the funding for Smith and the department’s 11 nurses to run the makeshift center. For four weeks, the health department was shut down so that Smith and her team could conduct all of the testing.

Smith, a cancer survivor, didn’t hesitate for a minute to take the assignment. However, because many of her nurses have small children or elderly parents at home, she gave them the option of not working at the center to guard their personal health.

“The nurses are the real heroes. Every one of them accepted and said they wanted to go out and help. They did an amazing job. It ran very smoothly. Patients were satisfied. There were no complaints, and no one had to wait.”

Not only did Smith and her staff conduct testing, but the staff also gathered all of the information from each patient.

When test results were returned, the department communicated outcomes to patients and counties.

“Our epidemiologist made sure that each county was contacted and contact tracing initiated. The big focus became contact tracing, and we had a team set up for that when results were positive. We made sure that contacts were notified and told to quarantine according to the CDC guidelines. We called a lot of people.”

As challenging as closing the department was and moving to a makeshift center, wearing layers of personal protective equipment and delivering bad news to people was, the media spotlight was the most overwhelming aspect of Smith’s leadership role.

“I watched how hard the staff worked and then to hear and read the critique from media was the most challenging. It [COVID-19] was new, and we just didn’t know everything, but media continually called and wanted to spin something that we didn’t do or overlooked. To read something unfair or taken out of context, especially during this time when we should be giving each other an encouraging word, was the most challenging part.”

Smith has seen a lot of changes during her stint in public health. It wasn’t that long ago that gloves became a part of standard operating procedures to draw blood or give shots. She also has witnessed the death of patients from HIV to now live in a time of effective medications as well as vaccines for varying strains of flu. She predicts a new era post pandemic.

“I have not been afraid but I think the scary part for me is just thinking about how can we live with a new normal until a vaccine or a treatment or antiviral is available without people just relaxing and just thinking it’s no longer here,” she said.

While Smith is trying to determine how “we come to grips with living a new normal,” she continues to lead her expanding team (funding has been granted for more people to help with COVID-19 contact tracing) at the Port Arthur Health Department to meet future new public health challenges.

“We don’t visit in the office as much as we used to because of the virus, so I just try to encourage people by sending out texts and emails telling them, ‘you’ve done a good job’ or ‘this is going to be a good day.’ I have fun and laugh a lot, I respect each employee and encourage everyone to have the same respect to one another.”

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—Judith Smith
Cardinal Cadence | Red + White Together | Summer 2020

Men’s cross country wins 17th Southland title

The men’s cross country team recorded the most dominant season in Southland Conference history on its way to a league record 17th league title—the program’s 12th in the past 14 years. Big Red scored 34 points to win the championship meet by 86 points—the largest margin of victory in championship history. Senior Jordan Rowe clocked a time of 24:01.7 to win the race by seven seconds and averaged a 4:50.1 mile. Rowe was not a one-man show, but the tip of a spear that was painted LU Red and White. He led an attack that saw LU place three runners in the overall Top five and five in the Top 15 for the victory.

The Cardinals were recognised by the Southland for their efforts on the course. Six runners garnered all-conference recognition, including three first-team selections. Rowe was named Men’s Cross Country Athlete of the Year, while Liam Burren received league Newcomer of the Year honors. LU distance coach Tony Houchin also received his fourth South Cross Country Coach of the Year honor. Big Red’s point total was its best performance since scoring 27 to win the 2015 title. The 86-point margin of victory smashed the previous record, which was also held by LU and set during the 2008 season.

Cardinal Cadence | Red + White Together | Summer 2020

Soccer advances to national spotlight

For the second time in program history—and the second time in just four years under head coach Steve Holeman—LU soccer won the Southland Conference regular season and tournament titles to advance to the NCAA Championships. Big Red posted a 16-7-4 (.696) overall record—the second-best win total in program history—and dominated the conference with a 10-1-0 (.909) league mark.

The Cardinals opened the season with one of the toughest non-conference schedules in program history and the nation. LU’s non-conference docket consisted of two teams ranked in the final top 25 poll, and included the likes of Oklahoma State, UL Lafayette, Southern Mississippi, Arkansas and Tulsa.

After a 1-5-1 (167) start to the season, and numerous injuries to the starting lineup, Holeman rallied the troops as Big Red won 15 of its next 16 contests on their way to the league title. During their run, the Cardinals held 10 opponents to one goal or fewer.

The Cardinals’ season came to an end during the first round of the NCAA Championships against No. 14 UCLA. LU came up just short to the nationally ranked Bruins but the Southland honored their efforts on the field, bestowing four superlative honors and assigning seven spots on the all-conference teams. Junior Lucy Ashworth was named LSC Player and Forward of the Year, while classmate Esther Okoronkwo was named league Newcomer. The Year and Holeman was named LSC Coach of the Year.

Following LU’s postseason run, the Red and White received more accolades on the field as Ashworth, Okoronkwo and Plata were all named to the United Soccer Coaches All-Region teams. Ashworth and Okoronkwo received first-team recognition while Plata was named to the third team.

Cardinal Cadence | Red + White Together | Summer 2020

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Lamar University Cheerleading Team Coordinator Kelsey Baden explains life never-ending spirit and passion. While most people on campus recognize her work through Cardinal Athletics, it’s Baden’s off the field (and court) leadership and positivity that make a difference during this global pandemic.

Baden arrived at LU in June 2018 from Southern Illinois University, with previous stops at UT-Tyler and St. Louis University in Missouri. She grew up cheering competitively, beginning at age nine, and continued at her alma mater—Webster University, where she studied communications. She also cheered professionally in the NFL for the St. Louis Rams, so she knows what it takes to compete at the highest level.

When asked her favorite thing about coaching, she describes watching her athletes grow and “seeing not just the cheerleaders, but the type of people they become.” Baden talks of the growth in one of her cheerleaders as he went from timid and never having cheered before to being named a captain his senior season in 2019.

In describing her “LU moment,” Baden doesn’t hesitate to talk about the exciting experience of coaching her team as the Cards went to the playoffs for the first time in 2018. She recounts being on the sidelines with her cheerleaders for the LU vs. Texas A&M football game in 2019. “It was pretty wild! It was kind of like they did not even know what to do with themselves. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for all of us.”

Baden and the LU Cheerleading Team can naturally make not-so-great situations fun and maintain the same energy regardless. “They work very well in ’pumping up energy’ in the crowd, engaging with current and prospective students, alumni and Cardinal fans to make people smile. An exciting new tradition Baden is proud of is having alumni cheerleaders ring the bell at football games.

While she and the team have done their best to remain spirited during the COVID-19 pandemic, Baden looks forward to getting back to what they love—cheering on the Cards and bringing positivity and pride to the LU community when it is needed most!
In an effort to support Southeast Texas greatest petrochemical expansion in decades, Lamar University announced the establishment of the Center for Midstream Management and Science.

Lamar University announced the establishment of the Center for Midstream Management and Science. The center was established to bridge university and industry partnerships to develop the next generation of midstream professionals. It will focus on education and research related to the midstream sector, including oil and gas, chemicals, and renewable resources. The center will work closely with industry partners to provide training, research, and outreach opportunities.

James Henry, associate professor of chemical engineering, was awarded a National Science Foundation grant for the acquisition of a flow cytometer/sorter for LU. This flow cytometer funded, a game changer for LU and the community. Henry is primarily focused on Alzheimer’s research, and the new cytometer will enable his research group to identify and sort cells based on their characteristics, opening new avenues for understanding and treating this devastating disease.
Lamar University has 90,000 alumni and 12,000 of those are in education. These educators assumed leadership roles during the pandemic to ensure children across the nation were able to continue their educational pursuits despite the challenges. LU initiated online courses in 1995 in the College of Education and Human Development. Therefore, most of LU’s educational alumni are familiar with online learning platforms. Theses alumni either were employed in online courses at LU or they were taught online tools in their educational curriculum. “Our educational alumni across the nation are well-trained in online education, and many of them are now available leaders at this time in our nation’s history,” said Robert Spina, dean of the College of Education and Human Development. “These alumni have not only moved their teaching, mentoring and student connections to digital formats, but their experience and knowledge base has been a critical part of the success of moving education online.”

Barbara Ybarra ’16
Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning
Bryan Independent School District, Bryan

Bryan ISD, a district that generally serves a lower socioeconomic status demographic where 76% of the population receives free and reduced cost lunch, launched its learning management system in place when the pandemic hit. The first week of the pandemic, the district purchased Schoology, a program that automatically integrated with the district’s student information system. They trained more than 3,200 teachers in a 48-hour period and were completely launched and teaching students online within two weeks.

“We had researching systems for several years and planned to bring the top companies back this spring for implementation in 18 months,” said Barbara Ybarra, associate superintendent of teaching and learning. “We got the system purchased within the first week and had it enrolling students by the second. Five weeks in, we have 93.5% of 16,000 students online.”

The district created a lead trainer program to train teachers district wide, all virtually, through Google Hangouts. Through slide deck and on-demand video series, the teachers were fully immersed.

“Teachers did incredibly great,” said Ybarra, who earned her doctorate in educational leadership from LU in 2016. “We said to the teachers, ‘This is what you’re faced with now, we’ve got to keep going.’ They actively rose to the occasion.”

The district did provide content for courses in a starter kit and provided a consistent structure for all classes, which Ybarra had learned from her work at LU was essential in helping parents and students navigate in the new online platform.

“First and foremost, I was a student in an online program, and I know what worked for me and really appreciated how courses were structured and the consistency from one course to the next,” said Ybarra. “One of the courses I took at LU was about developing online. I’m thankful I learned how to develop a quality online course that is easily accessible.”

Bryan ISD, like many schools, has a significant digital divide between students who have access at home and those who don’t. The district has distributed more than 5,000 Chromebooks to meet the students’ needs.

The district also made sure that every student, including those with special needs, were accommodated through the virtual learning platform. Special education courses are occurring on video conferencing and through teletherapy. Some online courses are modified for students with vision impairments and dyslexia but submitted with everyone else’s assignments, and those students are included in discussion boards.

“For example, if a student is supposed to receive preferential seating in a classroom, we’re rearranging in the parents and determining where the best place for that student to work in the home is,” said Ybarra. “Our special education and accommodations are continuing through the virtual platform.”

Bryan ISD’s pandemic experience is documented on Facebook at #bryanIsd and Twitter @bryanisd.

“These are great stories and little wonderful moments, but what’s been the most wonderful, incredible thing to watch is what can happen when an entire team is completely behind getting kids what they need,” said Ybarra.

Alline Ayala ’18
Digital Graphics 1 and Gateway to Technology/Engineering 1
Hudson Bend Middle School
Lake Travis Independent School District, Austin

Alline Ayala’s school went on spring break March 11 and then extended the break another two weeks, giving teachers time to plan lessons and prepare for an online learning experience. The district coordinated all curriculum through Schoology. All assignments were consistent for every subject in every grade, assigned the same day with the same due date. Teachers were then asked to offer “office hours” for students to attend via Google Meet.

“A few schools and educators began reaching out to me mid to late February asking for help on designing their emergency plans for teaching and learning,” said Ayala. “Knowing that I had the preparation and knowledge to be able to support them was very helpful in my own journey to make sense of this situation. Contributing to their efforts and giving back to a profession that has given me so much has been an integral part of my own self-care process. Teachers in Ayala’s school and the entire district have worked together using their strengths. Those with more experience with online learning have taken the lead on the structures for lesson creation and instruction, and others with video production skills have created videos for the rest of the team to use. Ayala, who received her doctorate in educational leadership from Lamar University in 2018, said the doctoral research she conducted, titled ‘Perceived motivations of educators applying and volunteering in Edtech ambassador programs within McClellan’s Achievement Motivation Theory,’ applies to the current pandemic situation.

“The doctorate program, prepared me to be open to the unexpected and trust the process, and that has really been helpful in navigating the uncertainty of the times,” said Ayala.

“During the program I participated in research around online learning, teacher personal learning networks, micro-credentialing with badges and achievement motivation. My understanding of these topics has deeply shaped the way I am approaching the process of teaching and learning with my students during this crisis.”

“She has valued her experience as an online learner because she can appreciate what her students are going through. ‘Much of what is published is modeled from my experience as an online learner. Our multi-week project started with an introduction similar to a course syllabus, in which we share what the topics and tasks are for each week. I also have modeled much of my feedback strategies to those I had received from my professors (clear, specific, actionable). I feel much more comfortable about when in front of the camera and can manage the calls well with muting others and pausing the presentation.’

Ayala created the presentation, “Supporting Continuity of Teaching and Learning During an Emergency: Conversation Guide and Quick Start Recommendations” for other teachers and districts.

“...WHAT’S BEEN THE MOST WORRYING, INCREDIBLE THING TO WATCH IS WHAT HAPPEN WHEN AN ENTIRE TEAM IS COMPLETELY BEHIND GETTING KIDS WHAT THEY NEED...”

–Barbara Ybarra ’16
Within a couple of days of sending his accomplished things.” Guthrie said. “I asked how we could help them, devices, less work, etc., to get them through. It’s important that students see and hear from you and continue to build personal connections.”

Guthrie learned what he expected, not every student had his or her home desk set up with computers, lights and materials. Additionally, some students were helping their younger siblings. Others had spotty internet connections.

In the coming weeks, Guthrie remained focused on building strong personal connections and staying in touch with his faculty, students and parents. He consistently informed how he could be part of the solution where problems arose, assuring parents their children would not fall behind, and just listened to parents who needed to talk. The school issued Chromebooks and laptops where there was need and slowly implemented the online program for all students.

“As a result of being an online student at LU, I kept communication clear and concise, made all assignments phone friendly in the beginning and didn’t get fancy until we had everyone going friendly in the beginning and didn’t get fancy until we had everyone going,” said Guthrie.

“I’ve received good feedback from our parents, from students, and our teachers. They have really stepped up and done an amazing job,” said Guthrie. “And trust the process, And presenting and leave out the fluff, but the highlights of the material we’re presenting and leave out the fluff, but we’ve told the teachers now is the time you can start to test the boundaries and ramp up the rigor a little bit.”

Guthrie continues to communicate and interact with students. He recently hosted a Zoom lunch, where he went into the cafeteria with kids who attended and kids popped in on Zoom. They talked about their food, their dogs, their families and the crisis.

The Bush pandemic experience is documented on Twitter: @theguthrieweeks.

Dean Spina named distinguished alum

The distinguished alum award is the highest award presented to University. Dean Bob Spina was honored by the University’s School of Education Department of Health and Physical Activity’s Distinguished Alumna. Spina has 30 years of combined teaching, research, service and administration experience in higher education after graduation from the University of Pittsburgh’s doctoral program in health, physical and recreation education. Currently, he serves as dean of the College of Education and Human Development at James University and as a fellow in both the National Academy of Kinesiology and the American College of Sports Medicine.

New department name points to the future

Family and Consumer Sciences has a new name: The Department of Nutrition, Hospitality and Human Services. The name change intent is to reflect current departmental and college efforts to align with the department’s respective fields of study in order to better align with the mission and the vision for the college in order to better align with the mission and the vision for the college.

The department’s professional disciplines are bound by the common goal of lifelong learning and service to individuals, families and communities. A major goal of all learning in the department includes the development of students across the campus can now minor in culinary arts, event planning, hospitality administration, fashion retailing, family studies and nutrition.

Education advocate and mathematician Freeman Hrabowski presents Academic Lecture

The Lamar University Academic Lecture Series, presented by the College of Education and Human Development, invited one of TIME Magazine’s ‘100 Most Influential People in the World’ Freeman Hrabowski to campus last fall. Hrabowski is renowned for ‘getting kids to love to learn’ especially lower income students and those underrepresented in STEM disciplines. His research and publications focus on science and math education, with a special emphasis on minority participation and performance. His leadership, expertise and vision are integral to programs worldwide and used by universities, school systems and community groups around the country. His lecture, “Pursuing the Dream: A 50-Year Perspective on Broadening Participation in Education,” was based on his experience as a valued consultant on science and education to national agencies, universities and school systems. Hrabowski has a compelling story which he tells in his most recent book, “Finding Fast to Dreams: Empowering Youth from the Civil Rights Crusade to STEM Achievement.” He describes the events and experiences that played a central role in his development as an educator and leader including being jailed at the age of 12 for participating in Martin Luther King Jr.’s children’s crusade.

• Assessment research office formed

The college has heavily invested in the faculty and is working to bolster their efforts and resources. The college has heavily invested in the faculty and is working to bolster their efforts and resources. The college has heavily invested in the faculty and is working to bolster their efforts and resources. The college has heavily invested in the faculty and is working to bolster their efforts and resources.

• Alumna Danielle Jackson named Texas Assistant Principal of the Year

Danielle Jackson was honored at the December 2019 commencement ceremony. Graduates and guests alike were encouraged by his humble words focused on future opportunities and understanding that leaving the college had an end but remains a process.

• Superintendent Jay Kilgore gives commencement address

Jay Kilgore, Vidor school district superintendent, delivered an inspiring speech during the December 2019 commencement ceremony.

• College Snapshot: Education & Human Development

The college has heavily invested in the faculty and is working to bolster their efforts and resources. The college has heavily invested in the faculty and is working to bolster their efforts and resources. The college has heavily invested in the faculty and is working to bolster their efforts and resources.
L auren Martin '03, B.S. interior design, is a designer at The Laurel's, a family owned and operated wedding venue in Beaumont. She has made a career of helping couples plan the dream wedding many have imagined for years. But what happens when that perfect day falls in the middle of a pandemic?

“A lot of our couples have had to change plans,” Martin said. “We had to cancel all of March, April and May, and for the ones coming up, we’re having to reduce numbers. But we are able to reschedule them all.”

From changing dates to cutting guest lists, the coronavirus pandemic has certainly had an effect on weddings. Under the first social distancing guidelines, gatherings of more than 10 people were banned. This meant that some couples who chose to get married had to reduce a large guest list of loved ones down to about eight people.

“One couple had a really small ceremony with just immediate family, and then we rescheduled the reception for next year, so it’ll be like their one-year anniversary,” Martin said. “We’re trying to be flexible, work with them, meet their needs and still make it special for them.”

In any situation, Martin reminds clients that the most important part of a wedding is the couple’s love, and that reassurance is especially needed today.

“I just tell them at the end of the day, the only thing that matters is that you’re married to your best friend. You’re going to look back at this in 50 years and laugh about it,” Martin said. “You’re going to go through a lot of things in your marriage. Just know that if you can get through this, you can get through a lot in your marriage.”

Through it all, Kimball, a 1991 graduate of the College of Fine Arts and Communication, coordinated the delivery of life-sustaining meals and critical services, such as transportation, to area seniors.

Already tested by water and fire, Kimball and the 350 employees and volunteers of Nutrition and Senior Services adapted quickly in the face of a global pandemic. The recipients of their services are among the most vulnerable to COVID-19, and many of their volunteers are seniors, as well. “We recognized immediately the need for alterations,” Kimball says. To deal with the uptick in demand driven by stay-at-home orders and the inherently fragile population, they adjusted their service plan by limiting operations to full-time staff and closing a dining facility and replacing it with a drive-through format.

They also utilized contactless delivery to maintain a sense of personal connection with their clients.

Lunch Ministry continues to fill the need where it can every Sunday currently. Jones and other long-time members of the group, including Fred Antoine ’78, are operating under a COVID-19-specific protocol that involves a smaller team in the kitchen, increased sanitation and an altered delivery method. As businesses reopen and the desire to recapture old routines grows stronger, Jones admitted that the return to normal operations might not be immediate. Acknowledging the uncertainty but never forgetting the original mission, she remarked, “We will try to encourage social distancing and we will follow the guidelines that are put into place. Right now, we are all just feeling our way, and trying to continue our mission of feeding the hungry.”

To learn more about volunteer opportunities once normal operations resume or to donate, visit the Sack Lunch Ministry (st anthonycathedral.org/events) and Some Other Place (someotherplacebeaumont.com) on the web.

Supporting struggling community members

by Grayson Meek '10, '17

T he St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica Sack Lunch Ministry, begun in 1997, always had a clear mission. Mary Beth Jones ’10 became a parishioner around that time and recalled that the group emerged to fill a specific need in the community. When Some Other Place, an initiative of the College of Fine Arts and Communication, coordinated the delivery of life-sustaining meals and critical services, such as transportation, to area seniors.

Ensuring seniors are healthy, happy

by Madison Franco

M egan Mistric ’13, or “Miss Sunshine” as her residents sometimes call her, began volunteering at her grandmother’s senior living home when she was only 10 years old. Since then, senior care has become her lifelong passion. “I fell in love instantly, and it became my lifelong passion,” Mistric said.

After she earned her bachelor’s degree in general studies at U.L., Mistric followed her dream to work in senior living. As the healthcare activity director of Buckner Calder Woods senior care home, keeping residents happy and loved is part of her job. Normally, that might include organizing activities such as group events and family visits, but with the risk of COVID-19, Mistric has had to get creative.

From Mother’s Day Zoom calls to “noodle ball” (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure noodles), Mistric makes sure (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure (hallway hockey with pool noodles), Mistric makes sure that residents and staff are always having fun while social distancing. She has helped organize a drive-by parade, asked local dancers to perform outside residents’ windows, and goes above and beyond to keep residents happy and safe at the same time.

“We’re constantly cleaning, constantly social distancing, constantly wearing face masks. We’re just trying to keep our residents safe and show them love as much as possible,” Mistric said. “Her efforts to entertain and protect residents at Buckner Calder Woods are too many to list, but even outside of work, Mistric keeps the wellbeing of her residents in mind. “When I go out in public, I wear a face mask. I constantly wash my hands. I have hand sanitizer in my pocket,” Mistric said.

“Outside the building, I take every precaution. I’m just trying to do what’s best for my residents and family members and just try to keep as much calm and peace and happiness as possible. In a troubled time of changing circumstances, Mistric responded to stress with compassion and creativity to meet the needs of the residents she calls “family.”

To find out more, call 409-892-4455.
In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Morgan Mitcham wanted her friends and family to have comfortable fitting masks with high-quality filters, so the Lamar University senior mechanical engineering major created her own.

With two 3-D printers, printer filament and a few items from the hardware store, Mitcham, who plans to graduate in December, crafted a mask kit that is comfortable, meets CDC filtration standards and comes in a variety of colors.

“I basically found a design online that I made my own,” said Mitcham. “I added a little more comfort to the existing design to accommodate different nose sizes and added insulation foam right around the edge, so it seals better than an N95 mask.”

Most unique about Mitcham’s masks is the filter. She uses the highest quality residential air conditioning filters. The filter material is capable of preventing COVID-19 from passing through it and has a 97% particle removal efficiency rate.

“It’s been really fun making them and now I’m making them in different colors which is more fun than solid white,” said Mitcham. “I’ve got colorful filament for ear sabers like turquoise and yellow.”

To support her new project, Mitcham has joined a Facebook group—COVID HomeBrew Mask Relief. The group communicates about the availability of filament, which is in high demand, and where masks are needed all over the country.

“People are really appreciative of the masks,” said Mitcham. “I’m helping people to stay healthy,” said Mitcham.

Xuejun Fan receives distinguished TSUS Regent’s Professor Award

Xuejun Fan, professor of mechanical engineering, was awarded the Texas State University System Regents’ Professor Award for 2019. This prestigious award honors university professors for exemplary performance and contributions to the educational community.

Fan, an internationally renowned scholar and expert in modeling and characterization in electronic packaging design and reliability relating to microchip packaging, joined the faculty in 2007. Since that time, Fan has won multiple awards for research and teaching, including the University Scholar Award and the Distinguished Faculty Research Fellow award. In 2018, he was named University Professor and Mary Ann and Lawrence E. Faust Endowed Professor. He has authored and edited four books, published more than 100 peer-reviewed journal papers, filed five patents around the world and won numerous research grants.

LU establishes MOU with Emerson for cutting-edge training technology

LU reached a Memorandum of Understanding with Emerson, a global technology and engineering leader, to ensure the College of Engineering prepares its students with the latest digital transformation technologies and advanced process automation, instrumentation and controls.

As part of LU’s innovative, leading-edge instruction, curriculum and research, the university will provide engineering students, faculty and working professionals access to labs that include Emerson automation systems and technologies. Additionally, LU will develop applicable curriculum to fully integrate the equipment.

In addition to contributing $200,000 to Lamar University’s Foundation in 2018, Emerson will contribute to the provision of two Perforamce Learning Platforms, fully instrumented and operable process skills that provide hands-on training—TerminaManaager™ software to teach students how the industry manages the entire terminal business process. In addition, Scallon Controls, Emerson’s Impact Partner, will also contribute to the provision of four DeltaV™ distributed control system process trainer panels—allowing students to learn control system fundamentals in a safe and controlled environment—as well as lifecycle services and support for all of LU’s engineering labs that host Emerson equipment. Emerson will also provide training materials relating to their products and provide guest speakers on campus.

Another ‘Mitcham distinction’ is the comfort of her masks. She super-glues insulation foam that is used to secure window unit air conditioners in windows. The memory foam-like product easily adheres to the edges of the mask that come in contact with the face providing cushion. She also prints ear straps using a flexible rubber material that is adjustable for different head sizes and also removes the strain from the ears.

“I have made about 30 masks for family, friends and medical professionals I know personally,” said Mitcham. “They are working really well, and it’s something I can do to help in this situation.”
Lamar University Alumni Board members Sharita Gardner (Gordon), Rodriguez ’04 and Tea (Nguyen) Do ’08, organized projects with their work and Junior League of Beaumont to assist the community.

Tea (Nguyen) Do ’08, who owns a Farmers Insurance Agency, personally saved hundreds of cloth face masks for Baptist Hospital. She also sent care packages of cleaning supplies and toilet paper to her customers and provided treats for their clients to pick up outside her business for Easter.

With the money left over in the budget from canceled events at the Junior League of Beaumont, Sharita Gardner ’12, who is a business development representative for MobilIDQ Credit Union and is the COVID-19 Response Ad-Hoc Committee chair for the Junior League, organized a team of members to use the funds to show appreciation through meals to frontline healthcare workers. She purchased thank you boxes of girl scout cookies to send to the hospitals, helped with a Hometown Heroes Lunch for Christus, delivered stacks of pizza to Baptist Hospitals in Beaumont, and worked to help relieve stress from canceled events at the Junior League.

“With COVID-19, people are having to teach from home and it has opened up their eyes to what we really do on a daily basis,” she said. “Teachers really have a tough job, and it’s amazing to see people reaching out to say thank you. Some teachers need only prayers, others smiles and wish lists.

Port Acres Elementary Kindergarten teacher Marissa Phillips ’09 wish list was fulfilled last week. She received numerous goodies for her classroom, including pencils, mounting tap, carpet markers and more. “More than anything, I’m so happy to see how many people love and appreciate teachers, myself included,” she said. “This has been a trying time for everyone, and I think the realization that this is much more than a job for teachers has become apparent. We long to be back in our classroom with our children, I would give anything for just one more day with my babies.”

Groves Middle School sixth-grade teacher Ashley Nicole Vickery ’18 received books, school supplies, bookmarks and games. “Some of these items were bought by friends and family, but that was even more touching were the items purchased by complete strangers,” Vickery said.
50s
Mike Clark ’56, B.S. geology, was recognized as ‘Shelton’s Natural Resource Ecologist’ and received a Medal for geologic excellence from the Texas Department of Geology and Geophysics. This award is given for significant contributions to the discipline of geology and geophysics.

Herbert Zucker ’57, a title IX administrator and former professor of history at the University of Texas at San Antonio, received the 2020 Texas Preparatory Academy Distinguished Alumni Award.

Paul E. DeLong ’58, B.S. chemistry, received the 2020 Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award.

Ronald M. Gold ’59, B.S. biology, was awarded the 2020 Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award.

Brian L. Blair ’59, B.S. geology, was awarded the 2020 Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award.

Joseph Malbrough ’60, B.A. engineering, was awarded the 2020 Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award.

Dwight B. Copeland ’60, B.S. physics, was awarded the 2020 Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award.

Clyde W. Presley ’60, M.S. civil engineering, was awarded the 2020 Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award.

Robert B. Wilkins ’60, B.S. economics, was awarded the 2020 Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award.

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lamar.edu/alumni

We hope you enjoy reading about former classmates. If you have news to share—a position announcement, milestone achievement, noteworthy personal news—we know who to write to at lost alumnae. We want you to hear from us.

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Gerald Duford ’61, B.A. English, also has a B.A. and M.A. in English and was induced into the Texas Literary Hall of Fame in March 2019 by the friends of the Fort Worth Public Library. Gerald had taught at many interesting places during his university career, including University of Essex, Vanderbilt University, University of West Florida, Ohio University, Bluefield College and Virginia Commonwealth University. He lives in Lebanon, Ill. with his wife, Patricia.

Edward Metcalfe ’61, B.S. electrical engineering, also had served as an engineer and safety manager for Oil and Gas in Bakersfield, Calif., where he lived with his family.

David Shepard ’62, B.S. biology, holds master’s and doctorate degrees in cell biology and physiology and taught biology, anthropology and American studies at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. He taught at many interesting places during his university career, including University of Essex, Vanderbilt University, University of West Florida, Ohio University, Bluefield College and Virginia Commonwealth University. He lives in Lebanon, Ill. with his wife, Patricia.

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and has two grown children, Lauren and John.

Tracy Cormier ’97, B.B.A. general business, is the managing director of financial services for the City of DeRidder. He lives in Grand Prairie with his wife, Romona.

Ellen (Hlaw) Law Core ’97, B.B.A. accounting, married her husband, John, in 2018. He is president of Core and Associates, PC. Formerly named Ellen Hlaw; CPA, CPA, PC; and a financial advisor at Freeman Wealth & Retirement Planning. They have three grown children in Montgomery, and she has an older son, Evan.

David Ellison ’97, B.B.A. industrial technology, holds an M.Ed. in administration, and retired, having previously worked at Devil Dog Co., also known as Perro de Diablo. He lives in La Joya.

Kirk (Holoman) Knox ’97, B.S. speech, W. A. M. drama education, is a second-grade teacher at Sotul Lake Elementary School in Kenedy Jefferson school district. Her husband, Pat, J.D. & psychology, is an attorney with the district attorney’s office in Jefferson County. They live in Beaumont.

Dana (Henderson) Kyler ’97, B.S. psychology, left her job as a travel agent specializing in education, is a second-grade teacher with her husband, John. She is president of Premiere Wealth & Retirement CPA, P.C., and a financial advisor at The Williams Firm, P.C. Her husband, John, in 2018.

Antonio Kelly ’87, B.A. psychology, went on to get his master’s degree in psychology and worked as a psychologist, then worked in corporate marketing and public relations.

Terry Kuebodeaux ’85, A.A.S nursing, lives in Lake Charles with her wife, Reva, and two grandchildren. They live in Ogden.

Wade Armor ’87, B.S. mathematical sciences, ’88, B.S. administration, ’82, B.A. in business, is vice president of engineering at Orleans Oil in Beaumont, and he lives in Houston.

James Arnett ’89, B.S. secondary education, ’91, M.S. educational administration, retired after serving 30 years at Lamar High School. He and his wife, Rhonda (Keller), ’93, B.A. nursing, also worked at the university.

Craig Bailey Sr. ’89, B.A. computer drafting technology, ’81, A.S. graphic operating technology, is a production coordinator at Invista in Orange. He and his wife, Terilyn, live in Port Arthur.

Rebecca Cauley ’90, B.S. graphic design, holds an M.S. in project management, and is a graphic design teacher at Wagner High School in San Antonio. She lives in New Braunfels.

Charles Calvin ’90, B.S. psychology, ’11, M.Ed administration, is the interim principal of Fairmont Learning Center in Beaumont, where he lives with his wife, Kelly.

Thomas ‘Greg’ glaciers ’90, B.S. accounting, was promoted in July 2016 to chief financial officer of Goodwill Industries of Fort Worth, where he lives. Greg has worked for Goodwill for more than 20 years, serving as CEO of Goodwill Industries of Southeast Texas and Southeast Louisiana before moving to Fort Worth.

Charles Jamerson ’90, B.S. electrical engineering, who also holds an M.S., is a senior project manager at McMillen International in Houston. He lives with his wife, Cindy, in Sugar Land.

Liz (Dullit) Mayfield ’91, B.B.A. elementary education, is a dyslexia/ reading specialist at Kinnsdale Intermediate School, and she lives in Groves.

Cindy (Moore) Williams ’91, B.B.A. general business, holds a J.D., and is a trial attorney at The Williams Firm, P.C. Her husband, Theron, ’93, B.B.A. marketing, is a commissioned diminished value specialist at Expert Appraiser Group. They live in Jacksonville.

Mark Pierro ’93, B.S. criminal justice, is a compliance and regulatory operations manager at the Tufts Health Care System, which is a Franciscan owned with Sigma Nu Collegiate Chapters. Mark has held various roles at the company for 20 years.

Chris Graham ’98, B.S. computer science, works as an engineer for Siemens Energy. He lives in Beaumont with his wife, Francine.

Tony Landry ’94, B.B.A. personnel administration, is a material damage specialist at HyperQuest. He lives in Nederland and has a daughter named Macy.

Jeff McKinnon ’93, B.A. sociology and B.S. psychology, ’88, M.Ed. counseling and development, is a student data manager for Nederland school district. He lives in Port Neches with his wife, Brooke.

Liz (Soliz) Mayfield ’90, B.B.A. applied arts and sciences, ’92, M.P.A. public administration, holds a Ph.D. in public policy and public administration and is the chief of staff for Operation New Hope. She has served as program director for the Beaumont Community Players Valley Ballads for the Best Featured Actress in a play. Antoinette is a member of the Paul Brown Learning Center of Beaumont school district.

Tom Redmond ’93, B.S. social work, holds a master’s degree in theology, is a licensed social worker in Beaumont, where he lives.

Cindy (Moore) Williams ’91, B.B.A. general business, holds a J.D., and is a trial attorney at The Williams Firm, P.C. Her husband, Theron, ’93, B.B.A. marketing, is a commissioned diminished value specialist at Expert Appraiser Group. They live in Jacksonville.

Clay Naiser ’98, B.S. mechanical engineering, was a trial attorney and also holds an M.B.A. and is a mechanical and engineering managing engineer at Well Dril DoCo Park. He and his wife, Sherry, live in Nederland.

Angie (Landry) Guillory ’97, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, ’10, M.Ed administration, is assistant principal at Lamar Elementary School in Port Arthur. She lives in Nederland with her husband, Charlie.

Jill (Chadly) Hartig-Freeman ’97, B.S. psychology, holds a master’s degree in professional counseling and is a counselor atforkbridge in Bridge City. She opened her private practice in 2014 and she and her husband, Robert, live in Bridge City.

Sherr (Calvit) Henry ’97, B.S. health education, holds a master’s degree in counseling and a doctorate in education and is an assistant principal of Bradley Elementary School in Lamar consolidated school district. She and her husband, Robert, B.S. communication, live in Nederland.

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Stephanie (Hendrick) Long ’94, B.S. graphic design, ’37, M.Ed school administration, is the interim principal of Pelagie Elementary School in Beaumont. He lives with his wife, Brooke.

Shean Oubre ’95, B.A. applied arts and sciences, ’92, M.P.A. public administration, holds a Ph.D. in public policy and public administration and is the chief of staff for Operation New Hope. She has served as program director for the Beaumont Community Players Valley Ballads for the Best Featured Actress in a play. Antoinette is a member of the Paul Brown Learning Center of Beaumont school district.

Dow Logan ’95, M.Ed. education, is a principal at the Paul Brown Learning Center of Beaumont school district, and she lives in Beaumont.

Craig Bailey Sr. ’89, B.A. computer science, works as an engineer for Siemens Energy. He lives in Beaumont with his wife, Francine.
Brenda (Codette) Brown 10, B.B.A., applied science and technology, is a chief information officer for the Beaumont School District. She lives in Orange.

Bev (Kuykendall) cortazzo 10, B.B.A., accounting, is a project manager in the financial services department at the Bank of America. She lives in Beaumont.

Katherine (Hunt) foshee 11, M.Ed. communication and technology leadership, is an Ed.D. candidate in educational leadership at Lamar University in College Station. "I am grateful that I chose to pursue a doctorate degree in special education, with a focus on students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. I was able to take what I learned in my own life and translate that into a lifetime career in which I can make a difference in the lives of individuals with autism."

Karen Lucius 11, B.S. business administration, was named the 2022 Kentucky Department of Education High School Teacher of the Year. Kentucky Department of Education officials said Lucius has been an influential teacher for students during the ongoing pandemic and that she "models the importance of collaborative leadership and a commitment to equity in education." Lucius is the fourth woman to win the award in Kentucky in 20 years.

Faison (Durke) Grimes 10, B.S., applied science and technology, is the technology manager for theBIKE2022 event in Beaumont. She lives in Port Neches.

Kristie (Matsch) Brown 10, B.S., applied science and technology, served as the technology manager for the BIKE2022 event in Beaumont. She lives in Port Neches.

Ariana (Jones) Zuber 08, B.A., sociology, works in the Office of Health Affairs at the University of Alabama. She lives in Tuscaloosa.

Gary Lucius 10, M.Ed. administration, is a teacher in the BISD's Adult Education Department. He lives in Nederland.

Joanna (Morgan) Kuykendall 09, B.S. computer science, is a senior project manager at Englert. She lives with her husband, Scott, in Nederland.

Ariana (Jones) Zuber 08, B.A., sociology, works in the Office of Health Affairs at the University of Alabama. She lives in Tuscaloosa.

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Gary Lucius 10, M.Ed. administration, is a teacher in the BISD's Adult Education Department. He lives in Nederland.
Hillary (Dean) Brett, a B.S. nursing, '11, M.S., and married, in Houston, where he lives with his wife, Emily.

Marcus Myers '11, E.DD, deaf studies-biology, attended from teaching at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi after 16 years as an E-RP consultant at TimePayment and lives in Humble, Texas. They live in Humble.

Wesley Smith '11, B.A., nursing, is an engineer in the Brinicombe department at Texas Children's Hospital and lives in Houston. He is married to Jokes, and they live in Collin County.

Lori (Wener) Stratton '11, B.S., nursing education, is a nursing instructor in the Lankenau University Hospital Pediatric Department. She married her husband, Jared, on June 25, 2016. They live in Nashville, Tenn.

Kaila Spoonemore '15, B.M. music, is an organist at Mosaic Church in College Station.

Tyler Thomas '11, B.B.A. finance, '14, M.B.A., is an ERP consultant at TimePayment and lives in Houston. He is married to Skye, and they live in Conroe, Texas.

Cameron Dennis '10, B.B.A. accounting, holds an M.B.A. and an M.S. and is an accountant at Apache Corp. in Houston.

Sarah Carpenter '10, B.B.A. management information systems, is a principal at Westwood Management Group in Houston, where she lives.

Megan Collins '10, B.S. family studies, is a trust associate at Westwood Management Group in Houston, where she lives.

Nathan Bush, Ida (Hirasaki) Bush '67, Emma (Gonzales) Isleib '67, and Bruce Isleib '70—Last November, Lamar University students, Nathan Bush, Ida (Hirasaki) Bush ’67, Emma (Gonzales) Isleib ’67, and Bruce Isleib ’70 received the Outstanding Alumnus award at the Lamar University Golden Circle Luncheon. The event honored alumni from the 1960s and 1970s.

Cardinal Cadence Red + White Together—Last November, Lamar University students, Nathan Bush, Ida (Hirasaki) Bush ’67, Emma (Gonzales) Isleib ’67, and Bruce Isleib ’70 received the Outstanding Alumnus award at the Lamar University Golden Circle Luncheon. The event honored alumni from the 1960s and 1970s.

Golden Circle Luncheon—Lamar State College of Technology graduates (1924-1997) gathered last November for a luncheon honoring the 75-year graduates.

1. Nathan Bush, Ida (Hirasaki) Bush ’67, Emma (Gonzales) Isleib ’67, and Bruce Isleib ’70

2. Alumni Past President’s Council Luncheon—Past presidents of both the former Lamar College of Technology and the former Lamar University Advisory Board gathered last November for a luncheon honoring the 75-year graduates.
Lidia (Dumulse) Weaver ’17, B.S. international business, is an assistant professor at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. She lives in Beaumont.

Simmers (Sims) Fink ’17, B.S. industrial engineering, is a student assistant at Lamar University’s Center for Enterprise Development. She lives in Cleveland, Texas.

Lexi (Village) Wooten ’17, B.S. communication disorders, is a special education teacher at Lamar. She lives in Port Arthur.

Lauren (Koch) Salomon ’18, B.S. psychology, is an art teacher at Churchill High School, and she lives in Cypress.

Jessica (Koch) Salomon ’18, B.S. psychology, is an art teacher at Churchill High School, and she lives in Cypress.

Lyndsey Symes ’17, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a lecturer in the School of Health, Wellbeing and Society. She lives in Lumberton.

Dave Bennett ’17, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is director of technology for the George school district and his wife, Tara, live in Lumberton.

Ryan Blanchette ’17, B.S. nursing, and Daytonia Stowe ’17, B.S. nursing, married in July 2018. Ryan is a registered nurse at Memorial Anderson and Daytonia is a nurse at Memorial Hospitell South. They live in Humble.

Jamie (Destin) Dillon ’17, B.S. human resources management, married her husband, Jacob, in January 2016. Jamie is a human resources staffing coordinator at Wolfland in Beaumont.

Lauren Forse ’17, B.S. computer and information sciences, is a systems analyst at CGI in Beaumont, and she lives in Orange.

Sahithi Godde ’17, M.S. chemistry, is an analytical quality control chemist at Anoxic Pharmaceuticals and lives in Coastal Bend, N.Y.

Dana Karrson ’17, B.S. nursing, is a school nurse for San Benito Valley Unified School District in San Juan, Calif., where she lives.

Cindy Colichia ’18, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is the administrative coordinator for the Varas School of Humanities at U.T. She and her husband, Kirk, live in Nederland.

Sheila Dryden ’18, B.S. theatre and dance, is a dance instructor at the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra, and she lives in Jacksonville.

Shana Escobedo ’18, B.B.A. business management, is a research coordinator at Presbyterian University Film and lives in Forney, Texas.

Marie Farley ’19, B.A. engineering, is a student engineer at Anschutz Medical Campus. She lives in Fort Worth, with her husband, Kyle.

Amy (Carr) Saye ’19, M.A. psychology, is a graduate student at Sam Houston State University. She lives in Conroe with her husband, Jared.

Anjum Shreniama ’19, M.E. civil engineering, is a project manager at Dragun Site in Spring. She and her husband, Muneer, live in Houston.

Susana Tablada ’18, M.E. educational technology leadership, is a teacher at Churchill High School in Northeast school district, and she lives in San Antonio.
March 12, Lamar University hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for its new Welcome Center to be constructed on the southeast corner of Rolfe Christopher Drive and Jim Gilligan Way. The center will be a one-story 6,300-square foot building featuring a spacious two-story lobby with comfortable seating areas for visitors, a refreshment counter and a self-service kiosk for prospective students. The lobby and a side gallery will include a variety of media to “tell the LU story.” A 40-seat theater for structured presentations will be located adjacent the lobby and designed to lead visitors to the gathering area for campus tours.

“The Welcome Center will be the first stop on campus for prospective students, family members, alumni and other visitors,” said Tracie Craig, center director. “It will be the first building people see as they approach campus on Cardinal Drive. We will provide information about the campus, LU’s history, academic programs, athletics and student activities. It also will be the starting point for campus and housing tours.”

To ensure a holistic design for the campus, LU developed conceptual designs of the new south campus entrance and will implement site features as funding becomes available.

The building materials will be primarily brick, with cast stone elements, metal wall panels and a storefront glazing system. The storefront system will provide transparency for a visual connection between the main entrance on the east, the interior lobby and the back side on the west of the building, which will contain an outdoor event space.

The interior finishes will include porcelain floor tiles at the lobby, theater, gallery spaces and restrooms. All light fixtures will be energy efficient LEDs, and the building is planned to achieve LEED Silver accreditation.

The landscape design includes improvements to the surrounding site and landscape elements for visual connection between the building and the site.

“We placed an emphasis on plants that have low-water requirements, quick establishment periods and manageable growth, and that require minimal long-term maintenance,” said Katherine Miller, assistant vice president, planning and construction.

An evapotranspiration-based, automated irrigation system that can be programmed to minimize water waste will be installed. The system is capable of efficiently delivering the required water needed for plant establishment and development as well as making seasonal adjustments.

Projected to be completed in one year, the site will house office space for admissions counselors and the center director, a workroom for student LU Crew members and other support spaces and will include visitor parking, bus drop-off, outdoor gathering areas, a public art sculpture by Paul Kittelson and Carter Ernst and an iconic “photo op” monument sign.