FROM THE PRESIDENT

E ach of us has made the most of 2020. Some of us have worked from home while others served critical roles in hospitals and in law enforcement. We have all social distanced, worn masks and done everything we can to keep ourselves and those we love safe and healthy. We have persevered. This issue of Cadence tells just a few of the many stories of perseverance during 2020 in the face of disruption and uncertainty.

Southeast Texas has proven to be one of the most resilient communities in the country, simultaneously overcoming numerous hurricanes and working through a global pandemic. In this same vein, hosting the first Resilience and Recovery Summit here at LU made sense. This new annual conference will bring together current and pertinent issues surrounding crises and revival in the aftermath of whatever regional and national challenges we face.

While virtual learning is not a new concept to Lamar University, transitioning over to fully online classes this spring, and a combination of online and hybrid learning this fall, was a new process. Read about the innovation LU used to bring all classes online as well as how we continued to engage students in this modality. Engaging students in the online space is the challenge all K-12 teachers are facing. Three education professionals and alumnae were first responders in the educational dilemma of 2020 and are now role models in our new normal.

Despite the challenges of 2020, LU students graduated; many were able to find employment, like Marcus Rodgers, who is now working for NASA. Other graduates, like Cade Johnson, chose to go on to medical school or graduate school to further their educations.

On campus, while having a record enrollment of more than 17,000 students during the fall semester, departments and programs were more creative than ever in their efforts to serve students. LU’s Disability Resource Center held its annual Transition Fair virtually; the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music hosted its annual Texas Music Education Association All-State Choir Camp fully online; our student-athletes continued to practice while confronting health concern responses, we’ve drawn from the wealth of our reserves during the past few years. The individuals who form our community have managed the resulting changes from recent crises admirably, with determination and creativity. This issue focuses on some of these stories.

Enjoy this issue of Cadence, and I wish you the best in 2021.

With Cardinal Pride,

Kenneth R. Evans
President
Last August, LU’s first Resilience and Recovery Summit brought together diverse researchers with local leaders in government, healthcare, industry, science and business to discuss their investigations of and experiences with disaster recovery from Hurricane Harvey through the current pandemic. A key outcome of the summit was to enhance future preparedness, but just as important were the studies and discussions of the indomitable strength and solidarity of Southeast Texas individuals and communities coming together in times of crisis and uncertainty.

Because nothing is quite so onerous as Southeast Texas roads in the rain, Liz Haselbach, professor and chair of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and a team of area engineers and specialists formed a committee to address stormwater infrastructure that could reduce flood risk, increase public safety and protect the environment in the event of the next flood disaster. The committee looked at placing permeable pavement systems with underground aggregate storage to mitigate flash flooding. To test its efficacy in the region’s soils, a group of senior LU design students in 2018 implemented such a system at LU’s South Park Community Garden and found it effectively drained runoff—the kind that inhibits our communities during typically heavy rainfall flooding parking lots, streets and access/foreground roads. Their research promises the possibility of safer access during rainfall events that might otherwise isolate us from the people and resources we need.

Jim Lee, director of the South Texas Economic Development Center at TAMU- Corpus Christi, looked at the impacts of Harvey (and Irma) on sales by industry and socioeconomic factors including population, employment and recovery spending. Lee showed data from Acmass County, Texas, where Harvey made landfall, and Monroe County, Florida, where Irma made landfall, and found that in terms of socioeconomic indicators, both counties showed surprisingly high resilience and recovered to pre-hurricane levels in less than two years. He talked about the strong civic organizations in Rockport, Texas, and how people came together to support each other and to rebuild. The big lesson in the data, Lee said, was that “policy relief has a significant impact on recovery.” We are truly stronger together—recovery is not possible without help from our neighbors, our organizations, our governments—and our ability to depend on those people and systems impacts our resilience.

Rachel Robinson and Cynthia Stinson, associate professors in the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing, found that our resilience is not impervious to mental distress, especially when we become caregivers. When disaster strikes, we are called upon to care for others in ways that distract us from caring for ourselves. Their research focused on compassion fatigue in first responders and health care providers who “take on the emotional strain and burden of the victims.” Their data showed—through interviews of caregivers, first responders and patients—that prolonged or repeated exposure to trauma, the stress of time constraints and lack of access to necessary supplies and equipment amplify compassion fatigue and can both cause and trigger PTSD, depression and anxiety. They looked at tools to measure this fatigue and discussed self-care strategies—specifically, being aware of symptoms and asking for help when we are struggling with mild-to-severe mental illness that can overwhelm our lives.

Jim Mann, associate professor of criminal justice, and Brian Williams, assistant professor of political science, conducted focus group research with area law enforcement and government officials to discuss emergency plan implementation and its challenges during Hurricane Harvey. As Mann said, these personnel must “expect the unexpected and prepare to do more with less.” This study highlighted the extraordinary burden our first responders bear and our area’s deep dependence on their expertise, organization, steadfastness and compassion. Williams talked about how communication failures, physical barriers and isolation, and even fast-traveling rumors made planners’ jobs challenging during Harvey. A key implication of the research, he said, and the way they were able to overcome challenges, was that “networks (of industry-government-nonprofits-communities) are vital to solving problems that have not been solved before.” Participants talked about the liability of directing and accepting volunteer help, but they also credited individual volunteers, nonprofit organizations and even private industry for stepping into relationship with governments, and those relationships helped us to recover as successfully as we did.

The conference included panels dealing with the pandemic, including a presentation by Praphul Joshi, associate professor of health and kinesiology, on public health disasters. Other area officials addressed the current crisis, including Sherry Ulmer, Beaumont Public Health director. The implications of their work further reveal—whether we are recovering from hurricane-force winds, tropical deluge or a public health catastrophe—how much we rely on each other at individual, organizational, governmental and global levels to survive, to recover and to move forward with new knowledge and strength.

Visit lamar.edu/resilience-recovery to view archived presentations from the 2020 Resilience and Recovery Summit and information on the 2021 summit.
“It was a tear-dropping moment for everyone to see how much we care for others and to confirm that we will not give up anything because of this pandemic life.”

—James Han

“...we usually have around 200-250 students attend camp from the Southeast Texas and Houston areas. Because we were one of the few schools offering this virtual option, we had students attending from across Texas, including Abilene, Amarillo, El Paso, Dallas and San Antonio,” said Han. “...a great way to introduce them to LU!”

Each year, the LU All-State Choir Camp offers full learning opportunities of the entire TMEA audition repertoire, as well as sight-reading skills development training and injuring afternoons activities. This year was no different. The Virtual All-State Choir Camp proceeded with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods: asynchronous through pre-recorded masterclasses that facilitated relevant independent study and synchronous through live virtual classes that included interactive aspects. By creating recorded content, the instructors were given the unique opportunity to not only use the content to benefit the students within the structure of the camp, but to also make it available to the students after completion of the camp.

“Our favorite moment of the camp was our welcome session where we all witnessed how much our students missed their friends and their classes. It was a tear-dropping moment for everyone to see how much we care for others and to confirm that we will not give up anything because of this pandemic life,” said Han.

The final presentation from the camp may be viewed at lamar.edu/choircamp.
In Lamar University’s effort to ensure no disaster prevents students from attaining their degrees, a key factor lies in adaptability. In uncertain times, decisions made by faculty and staff today may be the difference between success and failure in the future. At the apex of the coronavirus pandemic, the pressures of this reality are significant, yet familiar, to the staff at the Student Health Center, with Director Shawn Gray at the helm.

“Our mission has always been to promote the health and wellness of the campus population by offering quality medical and psychological services,” said Gray, who holds a Master of Science in nursing. “We know students are excited about returning to campus, seeing their friends and engaging in college life.”

Prior to closure of campus in the Spring 2020 semester, the questions that require important decisions began to circulate; questions on how to keep the students safe for the impending semester.

“What was my department’s role in doing the same for the campus community?” Rico, sophomore and student worker at the center. “I work as a peer health educator, where we help give presentations on topics such as stress, mindfulness, sexual health and relationships.”

Rico’s main concern in returning to campus was whether or not students would adhere to the CDC guidelines in place to protect themselves and others from COVID-19, such as social distancing and mask usage, to prevent a spike in cases and cause a campus closure.

“If I were to get sick and go home, I would expose my loved ones with weakened immune systems to the virus,” said Rico. “While I have seen great news regarding ways to reduce symptoms and help strengthen the immune system, personally, I have also seen friends and family members who have been hospitalized or even lost a loved one due to the virus.”

This year, Rico and the center started Wellness Wednesdays, where they held virtual presentations on different topics every other Wednesday.

“COVID-19 is still a major issue here in the United States,” said Rico. “Personally, I think it’s important to still social distance and wear a mask—properly, over your nose—to keep our students safe and healthy. Even though at times it may not seem like much, a little goes a long way to protect those around us.” In regard to student health in the near future, Gray maintains an optimistic outlook. “Many students and employees have reached out to us for guidance and treatment,” she said.

“We are excited about how engaged students and employees have been with actively monitoring their health habits and routines and following the university’s health and safety protocols.”

“Treatment protocols would come as the medical community evaluated the data, but my job was to continue as before,” said Gray. “Assess, diagnose, treat and educate.”

Medical staff immediately began assessing physical and procedural changes. The check-in process was modified to meet CDC recommendations and the waiting room arrangement and appointment scheduling were modified to keep students safe through social distancing and separation of sick patients from well patient visits. Testing supplies, special equipment and PPE (personal protective equipment) were purchased through support from university administration in order to function safely and effectively, along with the addition and implementation of telemedicine practices.

“The awesome staff at the Student Health Center not only want to create a safe environment where students have easy access to medical and counseling services on campus, but also work on providing health education to students,” said Stefany Rico, sophomore and student worker at the center. “I work as a peer health educator, where we help give presentations on topics such as stress, mindfulness, sexual health and relationships.”

When Lamar University hired Shellie Richter 35 years ago, students walked building to building for classes on paper. Internet wasn’t vital to the university’s operations and her current position didn’t exist.

A 1985 alum with a B.S. in computer science, Richter has witnessed numerous changes in technology. She was on the information technology team when internet became an integral part of operations. “It was slow, and we only had so many dial-up lines, but any new technology has hiccups.” Today, as senior director of IT compliance, she ensures software and technology that departments use are accessible, secure and compatible with LU systems. “I spend a lot of my time reviewing and approving requisitions before people buy new technology and software.”

With natural disasters, recessions, leadership changes and now a pandemic, each challenge has helped the Division of Information Management and Decision Support (formerly Division of Information Technology) improve processes. COVID-19 has affected every facet of life, especially education. In March, institutions transitioned coursework to online platforms.

Fortunately, Lamar University was prepared; LU began offering online courses in 2005 and is a model for higher education online learning. Richter states, “We’ve handled hurricanes, why not COVID-19? I’m proud of how we’ve built resilient systems and adapted to change. Those resilient systems are due to experiences we’ve been through together.” Richter is a Cardinal through and through—Doug ’96, her husband of 58 years, and their children (Elissa ’10 and Eric ’12) also are alumni.

Emphasizing that despite structural changes and effects of COVID-19, Richter says everyone on the IT team wants to work together. “I would like IT to be in business areas as or before people make purchases. We want to know how we can help. I would like people to view IT as a ‘place’ they can go for advice and consulting, especially in this time with fewer staff, rather than making decisions from an individual perspective.”

Richter is no stranger to challenges. Growing up on a farm in Woodville, her grandfather raised her and her twin sister, and they didn’t have much money. When LU offered summer courses for students affected by Social Security Legislation in 1981, she grabbed the opportunity to pursue a degree and made the drive to Port Arthur every day for class. Later in life came another challenge. Richter is a breast cancer survivor, diagnosed in October 2012 with stage three after a self-examination—she urges everyone to frequently perform self-examinations. “It doesn’t matter if you’re a man or woman or what age you are.” At that same time, she had a kidney tumor and underwent chemotherapy, surgery and radiation. Happy that she still has her hair, she exclaims, “Any hair is a good day!” Richter attributes that positivity to her faith, leaning on scripture from the book of James, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”

In these unprecedented times, we have to find joy. What brings Richter joy? “I love growing flowers and tending to plants—and people.” At Beaumont’s Friendship Baptist Church, Richter leads the children’s group AWANAs and teaches children’s church. Her fundraisers for the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation—recently donating $4,040. As pandemic concerns continue, she misses hospitality and being around others. “I love cooking for people and having a full house, eating and playing games together.” She emphasizes, “I can’t wait to hug again!” Until then, she’s keeping us connected while apart.
Cade is currently a first-year medical student at McGovern Medical School. He plans to become a pediatric hematology oncologist, and now I have a responsibility to ensure that those investments are passed on to others.” —Cade Johnson ’19, ’20

The Lamar University community honors the life of College of Business alumnus LaKisha R. Thomas, who died Apr. 15, 2020. In her memory, colleagues, family, friends and other donors worked to endow the LaKisha R. Thomas Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship will support incoming freshman students majoring in general business with any concentration under general business.

Thomas worked at LU for 16 years, having served as administrative associate, and more recently coordinator, for the general business program. At the time of her passing, she was working towards her R.B.A. in general studies at LU and throughout her time at the university, she championed academic success, shepherding many students through the hurdles of obtaining their R.B.A. She was also a guiding beacon for LU’s chapter of the Beta Gamma Sigma National Honor Society, serving as a mentor for all members. The LaKisha R. Thomas Memorial Scholarship will award its first recipients in fall of 2020, and it is hoped that through this scholarship students will have that great sense of passion Thomas had for helping students.

First Annual Dean’s Award for Excellence in Engagement, Innovation and Impact

On May 15, 2020, Dr. French, dean of the College of Business, announced the first recipients of the annual Dean’s Award for Excellence in Engagement, Innovation and Impact. This year’s recognition award carried with it a stipend of $1,000. Award recipients include:

Kabell Bandyopadhyay, department chair and professor of information systems and analysis, brought MIS students, both past and present, under one umbrella. Bandyopadhyay received recognition for a series of collaborative learning techniques, including the formation of an MS-MIS alumni network through LinkedIn, using YouTube as a teaching tool and producing more than 200 videos for remote learning.

Clare Burns, instructor of accounting and business law and director of the MSA program, facilitated several accounting events, “Sound Bites for Success” and “Employer Informational,” to encourage engagement among accounting students. For each event, partners from international, mid-market and local accounting firms provided students with professional development tips for their future careers.

Kamal Karani, associate professor of management and marketing, provided students with engagement in the Southeast Texas community through real-world experience. Karani worked with her students on research projects with several local small businesses including family-owned, eco-friendly bath and body company, Beau-tanicals. With innovation in mind, she changed the structure of her MGMT-5340 course to include more roundtable discussions among students. Karani continues to enrich the LU community by serving as faculty advisor to three student organizations: American Marketing Association, Sigma Sigma Rho and Friends of India.

In the spirit of shared learning, John McCollough, associate professor of economics and finance, engaged students through a series of group projects and live online lectures. McCollough creates a stress-free learning environment for his students during exams. “If a student has an average test score, I will select five random exam questions, and we have a mini test after that student had a chance to review the material,” McCollough said. “This reinforces what they’ve learned from the exam while greatly impacting their learning environment.”

Heather Boler-Doornbos, instructor of management and marketing, uses the innovative response platform TopHat. “TopHat utilizes a student’s personal mobile device to participate and improve engagement, critical thinking and comprehension,” she said. “TopHat empowers every student to have a voice.” Boler said she motivated students to participate by meeting with each one to establish personal objectives, build strong relationships and encourage the full potential of each student.

McGovern Medical School

by Brooke Barnett

When Cade Johnson ’19, ‘20 was 11 years old, he won his battle with acute lymphocytic leukemia, a rare childhood cancer that affects white blood cells. It was that life-changing experience that inspired him to pursue a career in medicine. “For me, the opportunity to attend medical school is about paying it forward,” he explains. “I wanted to become a force for positive change in the lives of others.” His motivation to become a doctor centers around being able to give families more time together, whether it’s an additional year in college or more time and energy for my gain than I could have possibly ever deserved,” he says. “The willingness of LU’s faculty to provide experiences in which students can be challenged and grow academically is unlike anything I have ever seen.” During his time at LU, Cade earned a Bachelor of Science in exercise science and fitness management and a Bachelor of Science in biology in 2019, as well as his M.B.A. in leadership in 2020. “My professors consistently pushed my intellectual and academic curiosity forward, which forced me to mature and grow,” he adds.
Making the transition: How the Disability Resource Center promotes success for all students

by Brooke Barnett

The event began with 60 attendees six years ago and has grown to include nearly 300 students from 15 different school districts. Students who attend the Transition Fair have the opportunity to tour campus, explore available resources and meet with staff. The event’s popular Resource Fair allows students to create a support network of campus and community resources with the goal of easing the transition from high school to college.

Freshman Casey Lieby attended the Transition Fair twice, in 2019 and 2020, while he was making college plans and preparing to graduate from Spurger High School. “My high school counselor brought me and several other students, and I found the fair to be very interesting and helpful,” he reflects. “I decided to attend the fair at least one more time because I wanted to learn about what was offered at Lamar University, especially since I had always planned to attend there and had several family members who attended. When my counselor asked me if I wanted to go to the Transition Fair again, I jumped at the chance.”

Lieby’s experience at the Transition Fair helped him to understand the accommodations offered by the Disability Resource Center, including extended time on exams, note-taking services, audio recorders and other assistive technology. “The willingness of the LU community to assist each other, the option to attend class in person or remotely, and understanding the options the DRC can provide,” he concludes. “Even if you are self-conscious of your disability, you should still learn about all the support that LU can give to help you succeed.”

Research drones lift GIS certificate program

Jim Jordan, professor and chair of Lamar University’s Department of Geosciences, received his FAA drone pilot certificate and will soon be teaching students to be drone pilots. The department has three drones, all of which have FAA drone-certified pilots present when flying. The drones are operated for spatial research and are equipped with cameras and sensors.

“The drones are capable of extensive uses in understanding geologic, mineral discoveries, plant health and a variety of other uses,” said Jordan. “The capabilities of the drones range from mapping and methane gas detection to roof leakage, thermal anomaly and economic mineral deposits detection. The Department of Earth and Space Science also has introduced a new certificate in GIS, or Geographic Information Systems, with an emphasis on geospatial technology. GIS technology includes an integrated framework that allows for gathering, managing and analyzing spatial geographic data that is used in a variety of ways. Students can enroll in the certification program as an undergraduate or graduate student. The beauty of GIS is its wide range of application. Therefore, students who have certificates in GIS can secure future careers as geoscientists, gispatial analysts, environmental consultants, GIS technicians, data managers, GIS technicians and project managers.”

 Dishman School of Nursing graduate defeats the odds

Forced to remain at home due to COVID-19, Gerald Dishman ‘20, the son of Laron Dishman, was accepted into the nursing program at Lamar University. Gerald contacted LU’s Disability Resource Center and stated that he was looking for accommodations that enabled her to work closely with nursing faculty to ensure that she could successfully practice and master the skills she needed to become a nurse. Her main goal was also to find a way to adapt and be safe while performing meticulous nursing skills. “She spent countless hours practicing in the lab to attain the dexterity required for some vital procedures that nurses perform routinely,” said Gina Hale, assistant professor and director of Undergraduate Nursing Studies in the Department of Nursing.

“Hannah graduating is a significant achievement for Lamar University because it shows the university’s commitment to opportunities for everyone, despite a disability or a challenge. LU is a place where you can achieve your career goals and dreams, even if you face adversity,” said Kyle Muth, director of the Disability Resource Center. After graduation, Gerald hopes to work in an ICU. “I suppose myself throughout my time at LU,” she said. “I would always say, ‘Can I do this? am I going to make it?’ It’s been a long ride, but I’m excited for what’s next.”

Social work is a helping profession

The global pandemic during the last year has highlighted many issues facing individuals, families and groups as well as the importance of human relationships. Skilled in the dynamics of these connections, social workers help people in stressful times, especially COVID-19 challenges, services that ensure physical and mental wellbeing are needed now more than ever. Cassidy Bicker, current social work major and president of the Social Work Student Association, has made it a point to stay connected with her fellow SWSA members and the local community. Bicker attended Houston Community College in 2016 and gave birth to her micro-premature son while finishing her degree. During her son’s extended five-month stay in the NICU she met her social worker Marli, who gave Bicker hope for her future.

It was then that Cassidy decided social work was the career path she felt called to pursue. As GSA president, she stayed connected to her organizations members virtually through the spring and summer semester. She also encouraged them to communicate about any resources or assistance needed during the pandemic, Ribbex social work professors to their students.

Bicker shared that her positive perspective of social work has increased dramatically during the last year. “Social work is considering the entire system’s ecological perspective and helping a client learn ways to help himself or herself. The reward comes from seeing people learn and understand. Bicker plans to graduate next May, but would like to see herself working as a social work major during the peak of a global pandemic extremely difficult but rewarding.”

“Trying to learn and practice the importance of human relationships through Zoom isn’t the most effective way to learn, but it’s social work and learning for a profession,” Bicker said.

While working through the pandemic, she saw “education and teaching methods altered, adopted new forms of technology, and learned more about helping people self-care than ever before.”
There were so many starts and stops, things and adapting to online school—but also the athlete’s requirements were established for the first time. So, there’s a lot of change, and we would get more familiar with our teammates and face the unexpected when things happened.

Throughout the semester, athletes were tested weekly but also screened daily prior to entering the building. “Personally, I felt safe, especially in the weight room because we were all split up,” said Garza. “It was a remnant for a business major from Lumberton. “We’re going into our fall seasons, but we are excited about the busiest spring of competitive play. Spring competition is at the forefront of Garza’s mind, too. “I’m excited to have a spring season and be able to compete for a conference title,” said Garza.

The most unpredictable and perhaps disappointing fall in college sports could be the return of football, with its 2020 season shortened by the coronavirus pandemic. The cancellation of spring sports became a reality in March, just as the school year was coming to an end. “If we had to choose one event to cancel before the spring season, it would be remembered for the adversity that our student-athletes faced during the COVID-19 outbreak, recorded a team GPA of 3.81, which was a program record. The netters were one of just two spring sports who managed to set new program benchmarks. The men’s golf team closed the semester with a team-record 3.76 GPA.

For many, the 2020 spring semester will be remembered for the adversity that all students faced due to the COVID-19 outbreak, but our student-athletes didn’t allow that to affect the work ethic,” saidDirector of Athletics Marco Born. “I’m very proud of the hard work by our student-athletes during some very unique situations. I’m very proud of the support staff in their attention to detail when it came to our student-athletes.”

The women’s tennis team—one of the many spring sports that had 2020 seasons cut short because of the precautions surrounding COVID-19, recorded a team GPA of 3.81, which was a program record. The netters were one of just two spring sports who managed to set new program benchmarks. The men’s golf team closed the semester with a team-record 3.76 GPA.

LU Student-Athletes Excel in the Classroom

Less than a week after 36 student-athletes tossed their caps, and only three days after receiving the report from the Coaching Association of the Academic Progress Rate May 22, Lamar University celebrated a record-setting performance in the classroom. LU athletic director Ken Nunley said 50 student-athletes recording a 4.0 grade-point average during the 2020 spring semester, breaking the previous mark of 42.

A wonderful career for four years and 2020 season shortened by COVID-19, finished his career with four appearances and 28 starts, and holds a career ERA of 3.54 through 138.1 innings of work. He struck out 143 batters while allowing just 56 walks, a 1.66 strikeout-to-walks ratio, and led his team to a third-place finish in the Southland Conference championship. Spring competition is at the forefront of Garza’s mind, too. “I’m excited to have a spring season and be able to compete for a conference title,” said Garza.

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A wonderful career for four years and 2020 season shortened by COVID-19, finished his career with four appearances and 28 starts, and holds a career ERA of 3.54 through 138.1 innings of work. He struck out 143 batters while allowing just 56 walks, a 1.66 strikeout-to-walks ratio, and led his team to a third-place finish in the Southland Conference championship. Spring competition is at the forefront of Garza’s mind, too. “I’m excited to have a spring season and be able to compete for a conference title,” said Garza.

The most unpredictable and perhaps disappointing fall in college sports could be the return of football, with its 2020 season shortened by the coronavirus pandemic. The cancellation of spring sports became a reality in March, just as the school year was coming to an end. “If we had to choose one event to cancel before the spring season, it would be remembered for the adversity that our student-athletes faced during the COVID-19 outbreak, recorded a team GPA of 3.81, which was a program record. The netters were one of just two spring sports who managed to set new program benchmarks. The men’s golf team closed the semester with a team-record 3.76 GPA.
...I'm mentoring all the kids in Fort Worth and work with them six days a week—two days on the field, two days on the computer, one day just having fun and being a dad. I do that with complete love and purpose, and it’s something I’ve been able to do because of the grace of God and the grace of His people. It’s been a blessing for me to bring encouragement and hope into the lives of these young men. It’s been an honor to be a part of their lives and to watch them grow and develop into leaders.

Miles has been with Hope Farm on staff for two years, he’s the lead program mentor on the Morningside Campus which serves the largest number of boys among Hope Farm’s three campuses in the DFW area metros. "He leads by example and speaks with authority," said Becky Ringer, public relations and communications director for Hope Farm. "He is calm, positive, self-reliant, peaceable, capable and secure."
Chief operating officer at CHRISTUS Ryan Miller reached out to LU to inquire about the possibility of making 1,500 ear savers for CHRISTUS employees. Nathan Ross, a makerspace junior from Tomball majoring in mechanical engineering, created the laser-cutting file and ran the machines to simulate the needed quantity. The College of Engineering also created alternative battery packs for powered air purifier respirators. CHRISTUS has approximately 15 PAPRs that keep its staff safe when working with COVID patients; however, the hospital only had battery packs for five of the units and had no additional packs. Miller again sought help from LU Electrical engineering professors Glab Tcheslavski and Hassam Zargarzadeh. He engaged them in a long-term solution by re-engineering the battery packs so they could be powered by plugging them into an electrical outlet inside the patient room.

Engineering receives industry donations to initiate flood mitigation study
College of Engineering received $200,000 from the Lower Neches Valley Authority and the Sabine River Authority of Texas to help initiate the Southeast Texas Flood Coordination Study. A collaborative project designed to help the region improve its resiliency during large-scale flooding events. Led by Prof. Brian Craig, the Center for Midstream and Energy Education students and faculty helped meet the dynamics. He brings an industrial side of the research. The Center’s Gulf Research Laboratory will gather data and coordinate storm water modeling and decision making to support the State Flood Plan as well as launch a networked, information team in Southeast Texas to help initiate the Southeast Texas Flood Coordination Study, Neches Valley Authority and the Sabine River Authority of Texas engineering students make PPE during COVID-19 response
Engineering students and faculty helped meet the need for personal protective equipment early in the COVID-19 pandemic by putting their engineering skills to work. When Ian Kannoed, a mechanical engineering major, learned that healthcare workers were in need of PPE, he used the makerspace 3-D printer to make face shield frames and ship them to the nonprofit Masks for Docs. When LU announced transition to online instruction Kannoed moved the operation home to Houston and continued to make 20 face shields per day. Engineering students make PPE during COVID-19 response

A new named director LU has named Thomas Kalb director of the Center for Midstream Management and Science. The three reasons Kalb cites are creating opportunities for students in their major, helping energy industry career opportunities for Texas, the people and the state, and helping bridge the gap between industry and LU to a time industry challenges that faculty and students will see wet. He is developing a midstream certificate for students and professionals.

Mariner Safety Research Initiative receives grant
To further an important national goal, the Mariner Safety Research Initiative received a $154,000 grant. The grant will fund the Mariner Safety Research Initiative, supporting a collaborative research project between LU and the University of Houston, in the areas of human factors, outcomes, patient experience and education in the field of maritime safety. The project is led by Brian Craig, chief of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Oil and gas industry devotes
The Center for Midstream Management and Science at Texas Lutheran University’s Center for Midstream Management and Science (CMM) received a grant from the Texas Oil and Gas Association. The grant will fund research into the concept of offshore energy industry safety culture, which will be published in the Journal of Security and Risk Management.

NASA chooses LU for project collaborations
Lamar University is one of seven university teams chosen for NASA’s University collaborative program, which will enable the project and instructors to develop innovative projects and coursework that will help support the Artemis program objectives. NASA awarded a team at LU a grant to design an electric excavator arm for lunar construction, which includes a mechanical engineering student advisor and project lead. Kevin Peterson has been thinking about the project for the past year. As a center capstone project, design, building and testing began in August and will continue through May 2021. The goal is to design a mini-excavator arm and housing using a bidirectional pulley system. The substantial project, which will be fabricated in LU’s Manufacturing Lab and assembled in the Science and Technology Building’s Makerspace, comes with some unique challenges that Peterson has already started working through. “If successful, this could be the enabling technology for sustainable human life on deep space,” Peterson said.

Nichole Brake, associate professor of civil engineering, is the project mentor for a group of students from Lamar High School seeking to design and fabricate a mobile home that can be used to perform studies in space. As part of the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP) through the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education, the students submitted their proposed project to December and were chosen out of hundreds of submissions for their experiment in strengthening concrete in space. Working with Brake, the team is preparing a design where one that will go into space for experimentation.

Cardinal, he hit the ground running both academically and socially, taking advantage of opportunities to get involved and broaden his educational experience. "I set all of my internships, and my eventual job thanks to the university. My first internship at WestRock, the paper mill in Evadale, then Covestro in Baytown and finally NASA. “I was always told I had an ‘engineering mind,’ said Rodgers. “I went to an engineering camp one summer, and I was hooked. I have always wanted to take things apart, and tried, sometimes unsuccessfully, to put them all back together.”

Intrigued with electronics and mechanisms, Rodgers wanted to pursue a dual major in mechanical engineering and electrical engineering but decided on taking electrical engineering classes for the experience as well as art classes. “It didn’t count towards my major, but it kept me sane, and let me see something different to get a feel for it, which is how to do and learn some great techniques that I still use today,” said Rodgers. In January of 2018, Rodgers began his internship at the Johnson Space Center, which would prove to be a life-changing experience for him. “My NASA experience was a dream come true. Ever since I was little, I always dreamed of working there. It was the pinnacle of engineering in my mind,” said Rodgers. Once he got the opportunity to work there, he recognized as his niche, the place he was born to work. “I learned how to fail. I spent a whole semester prototyping and trying to get a design approved. I never got one completely correct, but I learned what to pay attention to and what matters in a design.” Rodgers would eventually win an award for being one of the top interns at the Johnson Space Center.

Rodgers’ first full-time job at NASA is engineer in the aircraft operations division at NASA Johnson Space Center, facilitating space missions and diagnosing and analyzing equipment going out into space, or upgrading and keeping the planes operational. “I have done a lot, but I like to have fun and try to be very laid back,” said Rodgers. “I worked to get what I have, but I couldn’t have done any of it without my friends and family. They support me and have given me so much more than what I could have done by myself.”

Daniel Houston
The grapevine of information for any university begins in its communication department, the heart of the campus for students of journalism, media, broadcasting and similar disciplines. The student body at large relies on LUTV and the University Press, the communication engines responsible for the circulation of information relevant to our Cardinal community. While the resurgence of COVID-19 threatened to derail operations, the directors of these programs along with communication-related majors have worked diligently to ensure this train stays on track.

“Our student media is important to our student body, as well as our faculty and staff, because it is the first place we go to hear ‘our’ stories,” said J.T. Robertson, marketing communications and new procedures, the chances of spreading the virus are reduced.

“We will continue to provide accurate, credible and objective information for the students, faculty and staff at Lamar University,” said Malick. “Universities without a student press do not serve their students to the best of their abilities, that is something that should always be remembered.”

The University Press continues to maintain its reputation for its work; the students involved in its success have won a phenomenal amount of rewards, and even though times are challenging, the goal remains the same—to report on and keep the LU community aware of events.

“Flexibility is a key part of journalism,” said Coughlan. “The UP will carry on because that’s what we do, and have done since 1923.”

Additionally, LUTV is committed to providing the community with the latest news related to our region and the world. “Throughout the semester we have faced setbacks, hurricanes, and students having to quarantine due to the pandemic,” said Williams. “Broadcast journalists are asked to cover the news, no matter the situation. We plan to continue that mindset for the foreseeable future.”
From left to right: David Martin, Doug Wilson, Grover Williams

**Facilities Staff Answer**

When tough times call

By Hannah Snodgrass

Their work is often unseen, unknown and underappreciated, but their contributions to Lamar University allow the campus to operate. The approximately 100 staff members on the Facilities Management team—comprised of maintenance, campus services and landscaping, custodial, fleet and administrative personnel—are hardworking and resilient. They keep the electricity and water on, floors clean, and grounds beautiful—all so that students, faculty and staff are happy, safe and productive.

David Martin, associate vice president of facilities management, has worked at LU since 2016 after retiring from a 30-year career in the Air Force. Grover Williams, manager of facilities management, has worked at LU since 2016 after retiring from the Air Force. Martin and Williams shared that while campus buildings and grounds were safe. Doug Wilson, that’s just him doing his job, but Williams and Martin are quick to boast about their employee’s extraordinary commitment.

How has Wilson faced adversity? “I just try to stay focused, keep everything one day at a time and take things as they come,” Wilson answers. “The guys I work for really helped me out, they’ve helped my job when I haven’t been able to work.” The facilities staff cares about each other. Not only do Wilson’s supervisors hold down his job for him while he is out, but Martin says, “We worry about him. Anytime he is not feeling well and can’t come in, we worry.” Wilson’s love for Lamar University is clear when he emphasizes, “I used to work at other places and sometimes I talk to people and tell them I work at LU. They want me to leave and go work somewhere else and I tell them no. I think I’ll retire from LU. I’m comfortable, and students are respectful.”

What’s the most significant challenge the facilities staff has faced? Martin said, “For me, it’s been Burnett. When we have a positive [COVID-19] case, it affects the whole department. At one point, 40% of us were out due to a positive test result or contact tracing. You just have to move people around and do what you have to do to take care of everything.”

Maintaining positive energy during tough times makes facilities staff resilient. “What makes me proud is that all of our guys always want to help, they want to make LU nice to come to,” Williams said. He smiles, sharing that he has called some of his staff as they’re sitting down to eat with family. “I’ve caught them while they’re at a restaurant about to order and told them to eat first and then come in, and they say, ‘No, I am on my way’!” Martin explained, “Facilities staff are all hourly workers and paid less than almost everyone else on campus. They never once complained about coming to work during all of this.” He added, “We do what we can to make them feel appreciated.

Every year, we have a department Christmas party and normally a barbecue in the summer. We’re currently working with Jeremy Alltop (vice president of finance and operations and CFO) and President Evans to develop a centralized facilities office where we can all gather, have our offices in one place and build our team.” Martin echoes Williams’ sentiment of their staff’s dedication, saying, “There is something to be said for having people who have been here and who have come to call them. They don’t have to be here, but they want to be.”

“What makes me proud is that all our guys always want to help, they want to make LU nice to come to.”

—Grover Williams

cardinal cadence | LU Everywhere: Perseverance Through Community | Winter 2020
With a mandate to close but remain fully operational, Lamar University relied on technology and ingenuity through the pandemic shutdown to retain and recruit new students while using creative digital learning techniques to engage current ones as well as the community.

From March to June, most employees worked remotely, and there were few students on campus. The remarkable scenario was challenging to every aspect of university operations but likely the most confounding to recruitment efforts.

“Our primary objectives are to showcase Lamar University as a place where students can attain their life goals and to be available to support students through the enrollment process,” said Tracie Craig, director of the Welcome Center in the Office of Admissions and Recruitment. “We were not physically available to showcase LU, and it made me cringe to think that people could not come to our door for help and support.”

The admissions team’s first task was to ensure uninterrupted daily operations. They quickly pivoted to LU Crew student employees making calls via internet.

“I was worried about our student workforce, 21 students, because they count on the money they make working at LU,” said Craig. “I’m proud we kept them busy and proud of them for staying productive and helpful to keep their jobs.”

Additionally, a core group of students and staff came in each day to handle mailed transcripts so operations could continue processing applications from home which were followed by personalized acceptance packets.

Craig and her team considered their audiences—tech-savvy high school and college students, comfortable with texting and online chatting. They quickly realized business could continue because their target market is very comfortable in the virtual space.

“It’s their comfort zone, so we met them where they are; we just had to get out of our comfort zone to do it,” said Craig. LU’s chatbot, “Chirp,” which had launched in February, was immediately expanded to allow all enrollment management departments to chat remotely with current and prospective students. This was complemented by test campaigns using a new texting platform.

“Before the pandemic, we only had one chatbot account for each department, but during the pandemic every individual had his or her own account and could operate live chat,” Craig said. “We had 96 people student employees and admissions counselors—on chat.”

Practically overnight enrollment services produced a virtual Admitted Student Day. The event allowed admitted students to hear from and live chat with staff from every department involved in the enrollment process—Texas Success Initiative, advising, New Student Orientation, STAR Services, financial aid, scholarships and housing. The program also included the Student Health Center to address any health concerns and gave instructions to students about how to access their Banner accounts.

“Any topic we thought a student might have a question about was addressed through this virtual event, and there was a Spanish version,” said Craig. “We reached 441 students during the three live events plus an additional 165 through views of the recording of one of them.”

Enrollment services hosted virtual events titled “A Major Discussion” with individual academic departments, including a live chat Q&A so guests could engage with faculty. They also hosted graduate zoom sessions for several programs with thank-you gifts to those who attended.

Because the pandemic built so many new barriers to college entry, LU implemented ways to increase accessibility. The application fee was waived to help with financial concerns and a test-optimal path to admissions implemented to allow students to apply without having to take a standardized test. The new approach to admissions also included normalizing GPAs to help make equitable decisions.

“Some LU programs waived the GRE and GMAT requirements for admissions and allowed unofficial documents to be submitted when official documents were not available because schools were closed,” Craig said.

The planning, creativity and innovative “meeting-applicants-where-they-are” approach was successful. While working remotely, enrollment services processed 4,152 undergraduate applications and 5,352 graduate applications for a total of 9,504, an increase of 24% over 2019 at the same time, and Craig says virtual engagement is the new normal.

“For people who can’t get here because they live in Dallas, we can give a virtual tour,” said Craig. “We’ve tapped into the virtual realm and can easily continue in the future. We’ve learned what we’re capable of and opened up a whole new realm of opportunity.”

Tapping into the virtual realm also expanded opportunities globally. Although traditional in-person education and exchange programs were cancelled for the summer, around the world, schools and institutions began using virtual exchange to help young people develop cross-cultural relationships and vital skills.

Lamar University’s JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing received funding from the Stevens Initiative to participate in the Texas International Education Consortium’s Virtual Exchange for Undergraduate Nursing in Texas, Egypt and Jordan, one of 18 programs funded as part of the Stevens Initiative Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic. With this funding, the school of nursing will plan and implement a virtual exchange program based in the U.S. and in partnership with Middle Eastern and North African institutions.

“We are extremely excited for the opportunity to collaborate with nursing faculty and students from Tanta University in Egypt for this global virtual initiative,” said Stacey Knight, director of articulation and assistant professor of nursing.

Knight and Gina Hale, assistant professor of nursing, participated in a two-week intensive orientation to prepare for and develop an innovative learning experience for the nursing students,

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Everyone who completed the survey said "the summit provided information useful to their organization," and 87% reported that they were "extremely satisfied" with the event.

The outcome of the virtual meeting was so positive, the summit team will continue a virtual approach in the future. "We are currently planning to host the second annual Resiliency and Recovery Summit on April 9, 2021," said Mann. Coordination with professionals across Lamar University has already begun to provide this second summit both virtually and face-to-face.

Human relationships, including face-to-face contact, are at the core of LU's social work program. When the pandemic began, the Social Work Student Association launched an initiative using social media as the platform to keep students in the program connected.

"Knowing they were going to be physically separated, our students knew they needed to stay emotionally and socially connected." —Ginger Gummell

They created solidarity circles for self-care, to connect with one another, meditate and identify ways to serve the greater community," said Ginger Gummell, associate professor and director of the social work program. "Knowing they were going to be physically separated, our students knew they needed to stay emotionally and socially connected."

Human connection is not only the crux of social work, it's required to graduate. Every LU social work major must complete 30 hours of volunteer work and another 400-hour placement or internship in order to graduate. In the spring semester, 24 social work students were in the middle of their internships and another 28 were lining up placements for the summer.

The accreditation agency said we'd have to figure something out; they weren't going to allow students to graduate without the in-person placement hours. "They had to figure out what to do to allow our students to finish safely and in a meaningful learning experience where hours spent counted and give students the opportunity to put their skills to work."

The "figuring out" fell on Lori Wright, a sociology and criminal justice instructor. Wright worked with agencies like Child Protective Services, Communities in Schools, Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas. The agency leaders and others to identify ways that students could fulfill their requirements to graduate. And while other universities postponed or halted their social work programs until the end of the pandemic, LU worked with administration and the Texas State University System to ensure its social work students fulfilled their degree requirements. All students continued with the program with the exception of three, who postponed their internships until this fall.

"Students were ready to start working and didn't hesitate because this is what we do when people are in need," said Wright. "Students bravely walked out there, because the connection with people is what we need, no matter what. And we found safe ways to do that."

Gummell said the connection with people during the pandemic was more vital than ever before. "We need this time of social distancing is also the advent of the social worker. 'The need in the community skyrocketed. There was food, resource and job insecurities; domestic violence and child abuse increased; and the issues of social justice came up. With all of the isolation and/or being stuck with your family for long periods of time, we saw significant mental health issues," said Gummell. "And then we saw this transition start to happen, and the whole idea of social work to advocate, educate, intervene and deescalate recognized.'"

Associate Professor Mamta Singh developed Mason STEM initiative

Mamta Singh, associate professor of education, developed the Mason STEM Initiative project to pursue research and recruit talent, and the Mason STEM Initiative Project in summer 2020. The program survey results suggested that 100% of student participants and the faculty and staff who exhibited teaching ability and an inquisitive nature had a positive K-12 teaching and learning experience, and 75% of student participants felt the program increased their interest in becoming a K-12 science teacher.

Becky "71 and Chuck Mason "72 made the Mason STEM initiative possible through a generous gift, the largest in history to department chair of teacher education; Associate Professor Freddie Tilles '83, '86, a longtime department chair of teacher education; Associate Professor Cristian Ahrim, provost; and Assistant Professor Johnny O’Connor, who led the Department of Educational Leadership.

McFadden-Ward grant funds new equipment to support culinary arts This past McFadden-Ward Heritage Foundation awarded a grant to the Hospitality Administration and Culinary Arts Program, which used the funds to purchase and install three new pieces of commercial kitchen equipment in the culinary lab. Funds from the grant also were used to increase safety on the production line. Stainless steel flooring was installed, and the fire suppression system was repositioned. This grant helps the program achieve its aim of providing students with a balanced blend of technical and managerial skills that ensures graduates are prepared for practical success in the industry.

"First, the grant allowed us to upgrade and integrate equipment and increase safety measures," said Chef Charles Dult, culinary instructor. "Second, the new equipment and reconfiguration of the cooking line will increase overall capacity and the number of student work stations. And third, the new equipment allows us to expand the range of dishes students can master. In a challenging industry, it’s crucial to give students to continually experiment—develop their repertoire of skills, and prepare the student learning a bachelor’s degree in hospitality administration with an emphasis in culinary arts learns everything needed to launch a career as a chef and, ultimately, a successful business owner in the food industry.”

Professors conduct online blended-learning labs During the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, Department of Educational Leadership faculty Dwayne Harapnuik, clinical instructor, and Wilia Thibodeaux, assistant professor, reached out to the broader community of educators, including recent graduates, alumni and local area teachers to offer online blended learning labs. The goal of the labs was to model and immerse educators in a synchronous session in digital tools, blend face-to-face and online learning, and conduct the labs.

More than 137 participants signed up for the three one-hour learning labs hosted via Zoom that allowed educators to connect with each other across the nation and learn how to effectively create significant digital learning environments for their students. Hargroove and Thibodeaux have spent the last two years working to create a program that could attract educators and be a valuable opportunity for those looking to integrate technology into their teaching and learning experience.

The three-day lab sessions included a variety of highly requested topics for discussion around digital learning. A Becky and Chuck Mason Distinguished Faculty Fellowship enabled the digital learning and leading professors to develop and conduct the labs.

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Lamar University awarded Xing Wang the 2020 University Professor title. Xing Wang is professor of chemical engineering at the highly regarded College of Engineering’s Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering. The prestigious award is given for lifetime achievement, for academic excellence, and to recognize leadership at Lamar University.

“The award is the pinnacle of academic achievement and recognition for a faculty member,” said Bowlby. “It is recognized by the creation and funding of the Lamar University Faculty Excellence Endowment by Ann Die Hasselmo Scholar, an honor concurrent with the title of University Professor. The honor is possible by the creation and funding of the Lamar University Faculty Excellence Endowment by Ann Die Hasselmo, a graduate of LU (see related story, pg. 30-31).”

Xing Wang has published nearly 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals and more than 200 peer-reviewed conference proceedings papers. He is a corresponding author of an article that was recently peer-reviewed and awarded a patent titled “Study for the Optimal Operation of Natural Gas Liquid Recovery and Natural Gas Production” in the book Natural Gas Processing from Midstream to Downstream. Xing Wang is a member of the Lamar University College of Engineering Distinguished Faculty Research Award. He has also been recognized for his work with students at the national and international level. The award recognizes the outstanding research conducted by Lamar University faculty members. Xing Wang has received 17 doctoral students and multiple research projects with national funding.

Xing Wang said, “We will continue to support and encourage our graduate and undergraduate students to develop their research skills. Lamar University is known as a top-tier research institution that values and supports the development of innovative research projects. The award helps me to continue my work and to support young researchers in our department.”

Many Hasselmo, assistant professor in the Department of Industrial Engineering and lead on the project, said, “We’ll develop user interface software using programming skills, database design and optimization techniques to increase efficiency.”

Cardinals CARE Project visits isolated long-term care residents

Elizabeth Long and nursing student Makaya Brown of the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing have organized a research project called Cardinals CARE (Cardinals Adopt Residents for Engagement) with a two-fold mission to engage isolated residents in long-term care facilities with nursing students and provide nursing students with required learning experience and learning hours prevented because of Stay Home, Stay Safe parameters.

Since late March 2020, no visitors or non-medical personnel have been allowed in long-term care facilities, and residents have been isolated in their rooms away from other residents and family. The team has worked closely with residents and facilities to limit connectivity to two major rail lines along major truck corridors, has access to one of the largest high-density and low-density polyethylene facilities on the Gulf Coast. The company is focused on streamlining processes to supplement strategic Southwest Texas regional growth opportunities.

Maryam Hamidi, assistant professor in the Department of Industrial Engineering and lead on the project, said, “We’ll develop user interface software using programming skills, database design and optimization techniques to increase efficiency.”

Pandemic puts stress on long-term care facilities

We all have learned a hard lesson about the value of a quality education during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing economic challenges. Lamar University has been working to ensure that our students have the resources they need to be successful despite the pandemic. This year, the university has once again been named one of the top 100 best online programs in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. The university’s online programs have been consistently ranked in the top 100 by various organizations and are recognized for their quality and affordability. Lamar University offers a wide range of online programs that are designed to meet the needs of students who are looking to advance their careers, change their careers, or simply gain new skills.

The university’s online programs are delivered by experienced and dedicated faculty members who are committed to providing high-quality education to students around the world. The university’s online programs are designed to be flexible and accessible, allowing students to fit their education into their busy lives. Lamar University’s online programs are fully accredited, and graduates are eligible for the same academic credentials and professional opportunities as on-campus students. Lamar University’s online programs are available in a variety of formats, including traditional online courses, hybrid courses, and on-demand courses.

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A LEVEL ABOVE: 
EVER-CHANGING CHALLENGES AND THE SEARCH FOR LEADERS

by Shelly Vitanza

who taught me psychology and was a great department chair and later dean. I think of individuals who can lead me before me and after me as Faculty Senate presidents who were great role models for leading the faculty trust and admire and don't ever believe you can do these. I would say this would be true of CEOs of corporations as well—and be a leader of a very entire awe, a lone wolf, just seeking your own counsel and your own thoughts.

One of Hasselmo’s important leadership qualities is her ability to find mentors and to feel comfortable with them. During Hasselmo’s tenure at Lamar State College, she had the opportunity to work with leadership staff members and is grateful for the experience. She explains, “I had many faculty experiences, and I learned that being a student and a faculty member, you have to be willing to work with the people around you. We are all in this together.”

Hasselmo credits her time at Lamar State College as a student and faculty member as an important leadership quality. She says, “I learned to work with my colleagues. I had so many faculty—Ralph Wissotzky, Myrtle Bell, and others—there are many who were great role models for me.”

Hasselmo later went on to earn a master’s degree in technology at the time, was Lamar State College provost, then attended LU, which was a big deal career synopsis. She says, “I love all of it, and I love everything about being a leader. I would say this would be true of CEOs of corporations as well—and be a leader of a very entire awe, a lone wolf, just seeking your own counsel and your own thoughts.”

Hasselmo is known for her ability to develop close relationships with faculty and staff. She says, “I have had the opportunity to work with so many talented individuals who have been instrumental in my career. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with them.”

Hasselmo has also been a leader in the community. She has served on numerous boards and committees, and she has been involved in many community events. She says, “I have been involved in many community events, and I have enjoyed being a leader in the community.”

Hasselmo is a strong advocate for the importance of mentorship. She says, “I feel extremely fortunate that I had, throughout my career, individuals who were willing to be mentors and to be leaders I could emulate.”

Hasselmo also underwrites the ceremony at which the award is announced. That ceremony includes the announcement of the University Merit Awards. Hasselmo said, “I just want to celebrate the incredible faculty who continue to bring the programs and academic instruction because I so appreciated the wonderful heritage, very personalized instruction and mentorship that I got from so many faculty. And, then being a faculty member at Lamar University, I know the dedication and commitment of those who were my colleagues.”

Although not leading a college campus, Die Hasselmo is ensuring the next cadre of leaders in higher ed are well-equipped to take institutions to the next level.

“Working in executive search, coast to coast, public and private, with very talented candidates,” she said, “I’m still in some way institution building.”
Shannon
lamar.edu/alumni

We hope you enjoy reading about former classmates. If you have news to share—a position announcement, milestone, achievement, wedding, baby or other news or whereabouts of a lost alumna—we want to hear from you.

Cardinal Cadence  | LU Everywhere: Perseverance Through Community  | WINTER 2020

Hofert Courtney ’59
B.B. mechanical engineering, also holds an M.B.A. and a Ph.D. in accounting from the University of Texas at Austin. He has been in the insurance business for the next four years in living and traveling the U.S. and Canada in a motorhome. He and Ann, his wife, live in Dallas. 

Rainey Bentz ’59
B.B. mechanical engineering, is a retired engineer and lives in San Antonio.

Tim Mullally Sr. ’59
B.B. management, is retired and lives with his family in Dallas.

Colin (Cong) Warren ’59
B.Sc. mechanical technology, is a medical technology professional and research laboratory in NASA/Johnson Space Center. He has worked for 35 years. He and his wife, Carol, live in Dallas.

Danny Williams ’59
B.B. mechanical engineering, is a retired professor who lives in Corpus Christi with his wife, Diana.

Jena Senter ’60
B.S. elementary education, who also holds a master’s degree in social work, retired in 2018. She is a board-certified school social worker in the Houston Independent School District. She has been a community volunteer in her hometown of Alvin, and in the Heights neighborhood of Houston.

Bill Durst ’60
B.B. accounting, retired as a comptroller and training manager for E.I. du Pont de Nemours and in Mobile, Ala., with his wife, Mary Louise.

Holly Hammonds ’61
B.S. social work, is director of the Office of Student Support Services at Rice University. She has served in that role since 1989. She and her husband, John, live in Katy.

Walter (Dubu) Long Jr. ’63
B.B. marketing, retired in 2002 after working as a pharmacist/critical care pharmacist for Phibee Inc. After graduating from U.T. with a B.S. in pharmacy in 1963, he served in the U.S. Navy and served until honorably discharged in 1977. Dubu has played a major role with the U.T. Cardiac Board and served as president in 2005. He and his wife, Catherine, are involved in the Beaumont community, including the American Heart Association and the Rotary Club. They live in Beaumont.

Joyce Covington ’64
B.A. elementary education, is a retired teacher in Houston. She has served in that role since 1971. She and her husband, C. H., live in South Houston.

Levy Dumes ’64
B.B. civil engineering, has been with B.B.A. in operations management and supervision, and is the executive vice president of SHED International Engineering. He and his wife, Shermee, live in Sacramento, Calif.

Randy McCollum ’64
B.S. physical education, 1969, M.Ed. secondary education, retired from a career as a consultant, manager and venture capitalist in Austin with his wife, Nancy.

Brian D. Dickey ’66
B.S. mechanical engineering, is a retired engineer and lives in Houston.

Paul Turner ’71
B.S. mathematics, also holds an M.B.A. in hospital administration, and retired in June 2018 as Vice President of Operations for SafeCare EMS in New Braunfels with his wife, Loretta.

Sandras (French) Clark ’71
M.A. English, also holds a law degree, and is a trial lawyer and shareholder/shareholder president at Maloney&Weber. She joined the company in 1989 and became a shareholder in 2003. While at the firm, she received the Blackmon Award from the Houston Bar Association, honor bestowed upon an attorney by peers. She lives in Beaumont.

Jim Broadway Jr. ’72
B.B. accounting, is a tax director for Goizueta Accounting Holdings. He lives in Houston with his wife, Donna.

James Collins ’72
B.B. accounting, retired as a comptroller and training manager for E.I. du Pont de Nemours and in Mobile, Ala., with his wife, Mary Louise.

David Beck ’74
B.S. computer science, is retiring as professor accounting from the University of Texas at Arlington. He retired as professor accounting from M.B.A. and a Ph.D. in accounting, at the University of Texas at Austin in 2019 with his wife, Sandy.

Charles Grado ’75
A quality control manager at Kinetica Chemical Co. He lives in Beaumont with his wife, Janet.

Bob Oldham ’75
B.B. marketing, is president of Oldham Inc. Furniture Co. He lives in Cypress with his wife, Louise.

Lee A. Young ’76
B.B. mechanical engineering, is retired and lives in Katy.

LU and YOU: A Life-long relationship

The Office of Alumni Affairs is your connection.

Update your information so you can keep up-to-date on what’s happening at the university, invite you to special events and make sure you get access to all of the perks of being a Cardinal.

lamar.edu/alumni
Stephen Floyd, ‘90, B.S. secondary education, teaches at the Nederland school district. He lives with his long-time partner, Emily.

Evron (Rodriguez) Miralles, ‘90, B.A. graphic design, is an associate professor for strategic information initiatives and technology at the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

David Rotulio, ‘90, B.B.A. management, is an account manager for ABB in Houston. He lives in Port Neches with his wife, Dorothy.

Mary Porterie, ‘90, B.S. criminal justice, who also holds master's and doctorate degrees in education, has served as the superintendent of Port Arthur school district since 2014. In May 2019, the Port Arthur Consolidated Memorial Lodge 872 awarded him with the 2019 Community Builder award, citing his manifold efforts to keep his school system afloat and functioning after Hurricane Harvey. Mark and his wife, Cathy, have two grown daughters.

Amir Shakar, ‘90, M.A. history, holds a PhD in African American Studies and is a professor of African American studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He lives in Amherst, Mass., with his wife, Drena.

Jerry “J.3” Toups Jr., ‘90, B.S. health education, teaches math south at George Ranch High School in the Lamar school district. He lives in San Antonio with his wife, Angela, in San Antonio.

Leilah (Cable) Pembel, ‘90, B.B.A. management, was a former administrative assistant at CHRISTUS in Beaumont. She and her husband, Craig, ‘90, B.B.A. computer science, is a senior tech support analyst at the College Station Educational Development, lives in Beaumont.

Jeff Steffel, ‘91, B.S. electrical engineering, is an electrical engineer for ChevronPhillips. He lives in Port Arthur with his wife, Valerie.

Ray Smith, ‘91, M.E. engineering management, is an engineering and plant manager of processes at Abilene Christian University after 28 years of service with Southwestern edibles.


Eric Hensley, ‘92, B.F.A. graphic design, is a professor of visual arts at Cameron County College. He and his wife, Nicole, live in Magnolia.

Ken Mazza, ‘92, B.F.A. studio art, holds a master’s degree in fine art and is a self-employed fine artist. He lives in Houston.

Cynthia Parra, ‘93, A.A.S. nursing, ‘95, B.A. business management, is a B.D. employee in law and is an attorney for Strong Ford Buick & Fordham law firm. She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Gabe, and their two children.

Dessi (Oliver) Jackson, ‘93, B.S. psychology, ‘95, M.A. English, is associate principal in Fort Bend Marshall High School in Missouri City, and was named Assistant Principal of the Year in 2019 for her husband Robert. ‘98, B.S. criminal justice, ‘06, M.B.A. business administration, works for the Hinesco Group in Houston. They live in Beaumont.


Johnna “Reese” (Edminger) Guydell, ‘95, B.G.S. general studies-labor arts, is a visual arts teacher at Marshall High School in Marshall, where she lives.

Donna (Oliver) Jackson, ‘97, B.B.A. management information systems, holds an M.B.A. in information systems and works for the global organization – new client at Walmart Stores Inc. He lives in Corpus Christi.


Amilcar Shabazz, ‘99, M.A. history, is a professor in the Department of History at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. He lives in Beaumont with his wife, Sarah.

Jevonne Pollard, Nikki Relford and Natasha Branch-Galveston. He and his wife, Rebekah, live in Galveston.

Michael Leger, ‘93, A.A.S. nursing, holds a B.S.N., M.A. and a Ph.D. in nursing, and is an assistant dean, interim director of nursing, and associate professor for teaching at the University of Texas Medical Branch Galveston. He and his partner, Charles Handy, ‘93, B.B.A. applied arts and sciences, live in Galveston.

Jennifer (Benske) Birdsong, ‘94, B.A. elementary studies, received an M.A. in teaching, and is the director of advanced learning at FlightSafety International in Fort Worth. She and her husband, James, live in Denton.


Jerry “J.3” Toups Jr., ‘90, B.S. health education, teaches math south at George Ranch High School in the Lamar school district. He lives in San Antonio with his wife, Angela, in San Antonio.

Nineteenth-century America and Public Morality. Helen is the director of the Gordon Center for Advancement in Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., where she lives with her husband, Dennis.

Tricia (Pope) Kimball, ‘98, B.S. secondary education, is a science and chemistry teacher at Nederland High School. He and his wife, Kiley, live in Nederland. Their daughter, Bella, is currently enrolled in the Round Horn College at U.L.

Dawn (Voller) Pollard, ‘98, B.S. educational administration, retired after teaching 32 years in the Beaumont school district. She and her husband, Sam, live in Beaumont.

Michelle (Tennice) Smith, ‘98, B.B.A. accounting, who also holds a D. ed., received the Kenneth W. Lewis Professor Award from the Jefferson County Bar Association in May 2019. The award is given to a lawyer who exemplifies, by conduct and character truly professional traits. Michelle married Walter Phillip F.B. in 1993 and became a shareholder in 1999. Michelle and her husband, Mitch, live in Beaumont and both serve on the board of numerous local organizations.

Lester Wilkinson Jr., ‘98, B.S. family and consumer sciences education, is the Beaumont community involvement coordinator for the Port Arthur school district, where he lives.


TMEA Music Alumni Reception—Feb. 14
Music alumni and friends enjoyed an after hours networking social at the TMEA Conference in San Antonio.

Secret to a Successful Side Hustle—The Greatest Businessman’s Chamber of Commerce along with the Southeast Texas Young Professionals Organizations teamed up with Lamar University to present a professional development panel talk titled “Secret to a Successful Side Hustle.”

Panelists Katie (Whitney) Celli ‘08, Roy West ‘83, Jeanne Felland, Nicki Rollard and Nathalie Garrett with Meredith Beene Smith.
ALUMNI SHARE FASCINATING STORIES—from artist John Alexander to broadcaster Larry Beall—during our Digital Alumni & Friends Gatherings. e-mail us at alumni@lamar.edu or connect on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA to learn more about university news, events, contests and prizes:
• @lamaralumni on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
• Lamar University Alumni group on LinkedIn

CARDINAL BUSINESS NETWORK Are you an alumni-owned business? Call us to get your Cardinal Business Network decal!

-END-

JOHN BOONE ‘87, B.S. electrical engineering, is president of Bartholomew Co. He lives in Richardson with his wife, Dana.

WENDY (Woodall) Gray, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is a teacher for the Beaumont Independent School District. He lives in Vidor with his wife, Dana. Gray also the P.E. and health department director. He earned a doctorate in education.

JENNY RICHARDSON, B.S. political science, is now a Ph.D. student in educational administration and supervision and is the public and government affairs director for the Beaumont Independent School District. She matriculated through Charisma, her teaching fellow program in England, as language, history and teaching at South Park High School. Charisma was a funded graduate program through the University of Oklahoma and currently serves as the program coordinator.

ROBERT ’01, M.Ed. ’92, B.S. is an accountant and managing systems, ‘03, B.B.A. accounting, and is the director of the Lamar University Alumni Advisory Board. He lives in Vidor with his wife, Christi.

Jesse Sykes, B.S. family and consumer science teacher in Port Arthur school district. She lives in Bridge City with her husband, Tyler.

Bhakti Shatoyia (Lewis) Eaga, B.S. chemical engineering, is a safety and loss prevention engineer at SRM in Oklahoma City. He and his wife, Donatra, live in Humble with their daughter, Dana.

Jenni Richardson with her husband, Dana. Richardson with his wife, Dana.

Robert ’03, B.G.S. general studies, is a music education teacher in Illinois school district. She lives in Houston with her husband, wife, Annie. Siegel has taught for 14 years in Beaumont with his wife, Cheryl.

Josh LeBlanc, B.B.A. accounting, is a CPA-associate partner with Baker Tilly. He lives in Conroe with his wife, Travis.

Wendy Ridley, B.S. chemical engineering, is a production engineering expertise manager at Dow Chemical in Orange. He and his wife, Sherri, live in Groves.

Sherry Turner, M.B.A. finance, is a consultant in business consulting for the Michigan University football team. She lives in Dallas with her husband, husband, husband.

Monica (Santrum) Cablin, B.S. education, is principal of Jefferson Middle School in Nondale School District. She lives in Nondale with her husband, Roger, in San Antonio.

Yvonne Clark ’97, M.B. educational technology, is a PE and fine arts teacher at Lamar Intermediate School and lives with her husband, Blakey.

Reginald Collins ‘99, B.B.A. human resources, is a M.B.A. and business administration and a PE and fine arts teacher at Lamar Intermediate School and lives with her husband, Blakey.

Brett Wingo, B.S. political science, is a political science teacher at Abilene High School. He and his wife, Trisha, live in Abilene.

Aubrey (Scott) Beebe ’03, B.S. interior design, is a visual merchandising manager for CHICAGO Santa Rose Hospital. She lives in Houston with his wife, Sheryl.

Josh Martin ’11, B.A. business management, is an internal auditor for the United States Postal Service in Brownsville. His wife, Melissa, works in internal audit.

Joshua (Stevens) Godwin ’11, B.S. human resources, is an account manager at the PEO in New Braunfels. His wife, Christi, works for the large national company.

Jenna Flowers (Turner) ’05, B.S. interior design, is an associate director in Houston. His wife, Dana, lives in Houston.

Wendy Ridley, B.S. chemical engineering, is a production engineering expertize manager at Dow Chemical in Orange. He and his wife, Sherri, live in Groves.

Nick Cline ’98, B.S. communication, is a real estate agent in Houston in May 2019. He is the assistant regional manager for the San Francisco office. He and his wife, Linda, live in Cumming with their daughter, Blakey.

Kristy (Staley) Cleveland ’04, B.S. fashion retailing/merchandising, is a fashion retailing/merchandising teacher at Lamar Intermediate School and lives with her husband, William.

Dan Desch’s book, Texas Rising Stars list of top 20 under 30 in 2019 from the University of Utah was published in 2019.

Mira yarn, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is an information specialist for the Houston school district. She lives in Houston with her children.

Judy D’Andrea, B.B.A. social science, is a human resources at Valero Energy Corporation. She and her husband, Al, live in Houston.

Fred Vernon ‘12, ‘13, B.S. communication, is an assistant head coach and wide receiver coach at Glendale State College. Vernon graduated from Lamar in Fall 2019, where he lives with his wife, Demetra.

Bharath Eaga, B.S. chemical engineering, is a safety and loss prevention engineer at SRM in Oklahoma City. He and his wife, Donatra, live in Humble with their daughter, Dana.

Jenni Richardson with her husband, Dana. Richardson with his wife, Dana.

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Monica (Santrum) Cablin, B.S. education, is principal of Jefferson Middle School in Nondale School District. She lives in Nondale with her husband, Roger, in San Antonio.
part of the Morris Cullen "Knobby"

Kim Dobie

emphasizes character development

all-boys public school. The school

Young Men's Leadership Academy at

Derrick Brown

She lives in Indiana, Pa.

live in Valparaiso, Ind.

ultimately become part of Special Collections and the

advice for visitors. Memorabilia collected will be conserved

assisted center staff with preservation and conservation

Spindletop-Gladys City Museum. Local museum curators

help them with identifying and preserving their treasures,"

The "digitization day" took place in the Spindletop-Glades City Museum.

collection efforts are ongoing, and we would love

for you. From more information about sharing your LU

memories, email pelindseylfman@lsu.edu or call (409) 651-9082.

Ahlibeh Thakor

M.S., kinesiology, is lead physical

education teacher at Therapeutics

Fisher, Ind. She and her wife, Mori,

Velasco at Lafayette.

Yossi Kasten

2019, B.S., electrical engineering,

is a business analyst at Google

in addition to serving as an advisor to

Henry Brown

Marina

Brown

Laura

Brown

M.B.A., accountancy, is in the

she and her husband, David McNally,

is a biochemist at Cytokine

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M.B.A., accountancy, is in the

she and her husband, David McNally,

is a biochemist at Cytokine
Lacym (Long) Baley 17, M.Ed. education, is a high school teacher at Neeville Elementary School. She lives in Neeville with her husband, John.

Caleb Baze 17, B.S., electrical engineering, is a junior engineering intern at ExxonMobil Corp. in Beaumont. He and his wife, Kaitlyn, live in Nederland.

Joseph Garcia Sr. 17, B.S., criminal justice, is a police officer with the Police Department. He lives in Weslaco with his wife, Misty.

Michael Hegwood 17, B.S., criminal justice, is a conscript for the U.S. Army in Houston, and his wife, Stephanie, lives in Alvin.

Jannet Hernandez 16, M.B.A., administration, is an assistant principal at La Paz Elementary School. He lives in Cameron with his wife, Adriana.

Krissy Hines 17, B.A., school counseling, is a third-grade teacher at Lee Elementary School in Keller district school. She and her husband, Kevin, live in Fort Worth.

Lakisha Leach 17, M.Ed., administration, is a instructional coach in the Victoria school district. She lives in Victoria.

Marsha Patel 17, B.S., behavioral sciences, is a behavioral specialist at TechNIC in Houston, and she and her husband, Ramoo, live in Pearland.

Roy Strief 17, B.A., applied arts & sciences, is a criminal justice major at the University of the Incarnate Word. Because he and his wife, Ashley, live in London with their daughter, Heavenly.

Alexandra Sosolova 17, B.S., criminal justice, is a drug control and crime prevention intern for the Drug Enforcement Office of Drugs and Crime in Vienna Austria.

Carrie Stock 17, B.S., kinesiology, is a registered dental hygienist and a coach at Middle School South in Barbers Hill. Because she and her husband, Kolton, live in Baytown.

Pea (Stirling) Thompson 17, B.S., civil engineering, is a police officer in Houston. In 2020, he married his fiancée, her mother and his brother.

Arlin Ludow 16, M.B.A., criminal justice, is an assistant probation officer at the Brownsville Police Department. In 2020, he married his fiancée, her mother and her brother.

Nive Maladka 16, M.E. mechanical engineering, is a design engineer at General Dynamics. She lives in Los Angeles, Calif.

A.H. Noman 16, M.Com. management, is a software engineer at Dolce Technologies in the Woodlands. He and his wife, Sham. 16, B.S. computer science, live in Houston.

Karlee (Wiggs) Ogden 18, B.S. psychology, is a criminal investigator at LifeWay in Houston, and she and her husband, Garrett, lived in Liberty Hill.

Javonda Allen 16, M.Ed. school counseling, is a school counselor at Golden Meadow Elementary School in Garland. In 2019, she was the named 2012-2013 Teacher of the Year for her school, having taught prior to being named a counselor. She lives in McKinney.

Bryan Angel 15, B.S. business economics, is an IT specialist at Reynolds and Reynolds in Houston, and his wife, Ashley, lives in Atlanta.

Nikita Grigoriev 18, B.S. computer science, is a senior developer at the Seattle-based company, Yelp. She lives in Farmington, N.Y.

Isaiah Robinson 18, B.S. Biology, is a research assistant at Trinity College in Austin. He lives in Pflugerville.

Lina Salgir 18, B.S. educational technology leadership, is a math specialist at Oakwood Intermediate School in College Station school district. She and her husband, David, live in Fort Worth.

Amelia Song 18, B.A., computer science, is an associate software developer at Boeing in Huntsville, Alabama. She and her husband, Andrew, live in Austin.

Cheyenne Johnson 18, B.A.A. applied arts and sciences, is a years-long coordinator for Citgo Oil Corp. Petroleum in Houston, where she lives.

Cara Thrasher 18, B.S., criminal justice, is a correctional officer with the ward facility. He lives in Vidor with his wife, Alivia.

Kerri Knee 18, M.Ed., education, is a counselor at Cambridge College in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

John Obi 18, B.S. digital arts and science, is a designer at Apple in Austin. He lives in Austin.

Karlee Hendler 18, M.Ed. educational psychology, is an educational psychologist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her husband, Alex, and their daughter, Riley, live in Reston, Va.

Allie Rasmussen 18, B.S. applied studies, is a teacher at Lake View High School in Liberty Hill. She and her husband, J.C., and their son, J.C., Jr., live in Lakeway.

Willie S. "Bud" Leonard

As a beacon of Lamar's light, William "Bud" Leonard '50, '57, '70, was loved, by friends, by teammates, and by the Lamar family, too. His passing was truly a shock to all who knew him. "Bud" was a man of faith and principle, and he had a special love for photography, especially in the beauty of the natural world. He was a dedicated Lamar football player and a loyal supporter of the University, and his legacy will live on through the namesake scholarship fund that was established in his honor.

In Memoriam

William S. "Bud" Leonard

Lamar University’s sixth president Franklin Thomas Jr. died Aug. 6, 2020, at the age of 96. Thomas served Lamar University with honor and distinction from 1970 through 1972. He began his academic career in 1951 when he joined the staff of Georgia Tech as an instructor. Thomas came aboard Lamar Tech in 1959 as professor and head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering. In 1961, he was named dean of the School of Engineering, and in 1967 he was promoted to vice president of academic affairs. After the death of his predecessor, Dr. W. Lee Thomas, in 1959, Thomas was selected as university president.

When taking the role of president, Thomas told the regents, "The most important service we can do to our students is to provide them with the tools to lead successful and meaningful lives who in our region just as it is now for you, the regents, our faculty, administration and student body."

Thomas served until 1972, when the Board of Regents distinguished him as the university’s first "Regents’ Professor." His family, which includes his spouse, Dorothy (Raven) Thomas ’72 and his daughters, Sarah (Thomas) Yatz ’71 and Nancy (Thomas) Melian ’73, wishes for benevolences in his memory to be directed to the General Scholarship Fund at Lamar University, P.O. Box 10000, Beaumont, TX 77710; Alumni Scholarship Fund at Lamar University, P.O. Box 11500, Beaumont, TX 77710; Alumni Leaders Lamar University, P.O. Box 10000, Beaumont, TX 77710; or the Lamar University Mathematics Department, P.O. Box 1900, Beaumont, TX 77710.
The pandemic hit. LU made a swift transition to online learning. Moreover, its graduates in education, online learners themselves, became the front-line leaders helping K-12 schools across the country move to a digital platform.

"LU became a welting of resources with our students, faculty and staff doing amazing things that are helping in all aspects and areas of education during this unprecedented time," said George Saltsman, director of the Center for Educational Innovation and Digital Learning and research associate professor of educational leadership.

With so many of our former students having first-hand experience in online education, they were able to quickly implement programs in their school districts when the pandemic hit. As a professor, it is so rewarding to see our students now replicate the quality learning programs that were collectively worked so hard to create for them at LU," Saltsman said.

For more information visit Blythe Creech’s blog at bylthewadesign.com.

"We have to create this new educational system of connectivity and LU Cardinal Kiesha Taylor '18 is at the center of the wireless company’s initiative.

"If I was queen of the world, I would make internet a utility," said Blythe Creech. "What's really important to student outcomes is the role of the adults in the room," said Blythe Creech. "The bigger question is if we went back to doing everything 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. Though slide deck and on-demand video series, the teachers were fully immersed.

"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," said Ybarra, who earned her doctorate in educational administration and leadership degree from LU in 2016. The district did provide content for courses in a starter kit and worked to develop a consistent structure for all courses, which Ybarra learned from her work at LU was essential to helping parents and students navigate in the new online platform.

"First and foremost, I was a student with work that I really appreciated how courses were structured and that the consistency from one course to the next," said Ybarra. "I'm thankful I learned how to develop an easily accessible course." Bryan ISD's pandemic experience is documented on Facebook at @bryanship and Twitter at @bryanship.

"Teachers need to mind the gap and remember no one is an island. Teaching online exposes gaps in the students' learning habits and behaviors, so teachers have to be flexible and open to talking to students and helping them reach out for support," said Blythe Creech. "However, online learning brings the world into the classroom, and resources are everywhere. The potential as an online educator is limitless." While encouraging other educators to keep teaching creatively during the pandemic, Blythe Creech began envisioning education anew. She dreamed of a world where her underrepresented students would be included so how do we make it work better for kids?"

"What’s really important to student outcomes is the role of the adults in the room," said Blythe Creech. "The bigger question is if we went back to doing everything the same again. What's our priority now? We're in the midst of a historic crisis, but the pandemic didn't cause this, the pandemic broke out. As District Teacher of the Year and with knowledge from her participation in the Apple Community Learning Initiative at LU, she wanted to help the district with structuring the remote learning environment.

"I presented ideas and options emphasizing simplicity and ease and access," said Blythe Creech. "I wanted to be a vector for communication more than anything else and created an online video presenting the opportunities that this wild situation presented." In Blythe Creech's four-part video discussing best practices for teaching online, she encourages teachers not to be intimidated but to "keep calm and carry on teaching," focusing on "engagement and equity." Blythe Creech gives instructions for creating structure in the online environment and how to effectively and efficiently create a digital classroom with clear and concise objectives and expectations, telling educators they don’t need to be coders to offer quality curriculum online but also that there is more to teaching online than offering worksheets as PDFs. "Teachers need to mind the gap and remember no one is an island. Teaching online exposes gaps in the students' learning habits and behaviors, and so teachers have to be flexible and open to talking to students and helping them reach out for support," said Blythe Creech. "However, online learning brings the world into the classroom, and resources are everywhere. The potential as an online educator is limitless." While encouraging other educators to keep teaching creatively during the pandemic, Blythe Creech began envisioning education anew. She dreamed of a world where her underrepresented students would be included so how do we make it work better for kids?"

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Rebecca Boone, professor of history, is the recipient of the first Dr. Ralph and Edna Wooster Endowed Professorship. Boone will hold the position for two years.

The Wooster Professorship was established, first, to honor Ralph A. Wooster, a gifted teacher who served LU as a faculty member and as dean of faculties and associate vice president for academic affairs, and, secondly, to promote excellence in teaching and research among faculty in the Department of History.

“This is a great honor,” said Lynn Maurer, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “Dr. Boone was chosen for her well-rounded approach to service, teaching and research at Lamar University.”

Like Wooster, Boone teaches history and is chair of the department. She has been a member of the LU faculty since 2002. “Dr. Wooster was a kind man of integrity who inspired the best in people. I am honored to continue his legacy as the first Dr. Ralph and Edna Wooster Endowed professor,” Boone said. “Being named the first Wooster professor inspires me to be a better historian, teacher and administrator.”

Boone teaches courses on the Renaissance and Reformation, Early Modern Europe, the French Revolution and Napoleon, the Atlantic World, Witchcraft and the Occult, Ancient Greece and Rome, and the History of Food, among others.

Boone’s “Issues in World Cultures II” course was cited as exemplary by the Center for Educational Policy Research. An intellectual and cultural historian, Boone researches the relationship between information and state power in the early modern world. Her books include War, Domination, and the Monarchy of France: Claude de Seyssel and the Language of Politics in the Renaissance, Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire and Real Lives in the Sixteenth Century: A Global Perspective. She also is the general editor of a five-book series on global history, Real Lives in Global Perspective. In 2018, Boone was awarded a grant from MIT and the Andrew Mellon Foundation to complete a module for the Global Architectural History Teaching Collaborative.

Boone plans to use the resources of this endowed professorship to conduct two major projects in the field of global history. She will use a semester course release to resume work on editing the five-volume series, which is under contract with Routledge and is intended for undergraduate students in world history courses. She also will use the professorship to continue original research on a global history of apocalypticism, which will enhance a course she currently teaches on the era of the witch trials as well as another course she is developing on world revolutions.

“Through teaching global history, I have endeavored to bring the world to our students and to bring our students into the wider world,” said Boone.

Wooster's son, Robert, established the professorship in memory of his father who died in 2019.

“For years I went to lunch with Professors Wooster, Sutton, Anderson and Serrat at Kampus Korner every Tuesday, and I still cherish the stories and warm hospitality shown by these amazing colleagues, many of whom I miss dearly,” said Boone. “I strive to bring that sense of camaraderie, goodwill and unity of purpose to the faculty and students in the History Department.”