

DALTON STATE DIGEST

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Changes in Higher Ed After COVID-19

**By Dr. Margaret Venable
President**

When I was a graduate student considering my career in teaching, I was certain I would be the perfect professor. I had been a student for a couple of decades, so I felt certain I knew how to teach. I would be the professor I always wanted and sometimes had. The first thing I discovered when I began teaching, though, is that my students were not like me. The second thing I discovered is they were not even all like each other. And, that is when I first began appreciating the profession of teaching as an art rather than a science.

Many of us teach the way we were taught or at least our favorite ways we were taught. But, times change; student expectations and needs change. Algebra was a subject I studied in eighth and ninth grade. I had never heard of studying algebra in college. But, when I began teaching college chemistry, I learned quickly that my chemistry students lacked some basic math skills I had taken for granted. To be successful, I had to adapt my teaching to include a refresher on basic algebra and use of a scientific calculator, along with the chemistry content. I also discovered my students struggled to take useful notes. So, I revised my lecture delivery methods to offer an organized set of notes.

Eventually, I realized my students were spending our class periods copying my organized notes into their notebooks and not really digesting the course content. They discovered after they were alone at home they did not understand how to apply the information. This time, I completely changed my teaching. I stopped lecturing entirely. My colleagues were skeptical I'd be successful, but I pushed on. I created online modules for each class period and instructed my students to study these prior to coming to class. In class, we worked individually and in small groups to practice chemistry problems and exploring the concepts, while I was there to assist if they couldn't manage on their own. Of course, it took a class period or two for students to realize I really was NOT going to lecture and they MUST look at the online module ahead of time. But, my students transformed from passive consumers of lecture notes to engaged learners. Attendance improved significantly, and so did their grades. It took me about a decade of teaching to get

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FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EDITORIAL STAFF

Content Editors

- Jennifer Randall, jrandall@daltonstate.edu
- Susan Burran, sburran@daltonstate.edu
- Alicia Briganti, abriganti@daltonstate.edu
- Forrest Blackbourn, fblackbourn@daltonstate.edu
- Amy Burger, aburger1@daltonstate.edu

Layout Editor

- Megan Vallowe, mvallowe@daltonstate.edu

to this point, and I vividly recall some of my earlier and less effective attempts at teaching chemistry. My time as a professor will always be very special to me. I believe I would have continued to look for better ways to convey the course content if I had not transitioned into administration.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, I routinely read headlines in the academic journals that higher education is being disrupted: higher ed must reinvent itself or risk following the outcome of the dinosaur. In fact, there are entire books written on this subject. Whether we like it or not, this pandemic has pushed us to re-think what we do and how we deliver a college education. At a time when it is difficult to be together in person, we are asking ourselves what really needs to be done in person and what could be done virtually or even offline. As hard as it is, I think in some respects there have been positive surprises. Maybe this health crisis has spurred us to reinvent the college experience.

Technology is an important tool, but not the answer to all our challenges in higher ed. Technology has certainly played a key role in our operations since

March. Perhaps the need for revising our pedagogical methods in the midst of this health crisis has forced us to take actions we would never have considered otherwise. And, although I think most of us wish we could get back to a more normal life soon, I also believe many of us would admit, if pressed, there are things we have learned that we will continue in some form even after we don't have to.

As an administrator, I marveled at how much more cost-effective and time-efficient a virtual meeting is versus traveling to another part of the state or country for an in-person meeting. While there are important reasons for meeting in person, I hope some of my meetings after COVID-19 will remain virtual.

I have also noted we have significantly higher student participation in virtual co-curricular activities than we did in-person activities prior to COVID. Why do you suppose this is happening? Should we consider offering virtual activities even after this pandemic is behind us? We also noted more of our students opted for e-Core and eMajor classes this fall. Will some of these students decide they prefer online classes for at least

some of their subjects?

Similarly, I have spoken with several faculty who have discovered some of their new teaching tools and methods are actually improving their teaching and the learning experiences for our students. What would you keep doing after this pandemic is behind us that you weren't doing before March? What do you think your students would say they like better about your class now?

I'm looking forward to the day we can safely operate in person without worrying about distancing and face coverings and contaminated surfaces. While we are in the midst of this pandemic, it is hard to think beyond all of the extra things we are doing to deliver a quality education. However, we have a rare opportunity now to consider activities to retain when we no longer have to operate this way. Many aspects will be better and easier in person, but not all things. How do we incorporate what we've learned about teaching during this time when we no longer have to distance ourselves from each other? The possibility for positive transformation is ours. §

A Note from Your *Digest* Editors

Dear Fellow Roadrunners,

It is safe to say we are all exhausted. This year has pushed everyone beyond what we thought we were capable of managing. We all need some rest, and we are hopeful that the Winter Break will allow us to recharge.

Connection between humans is crucial to our sense of well-being, and there is no denying that our sense of community has suffered because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is our hope that The Digest can, in a small way, serve to connect the campus community. Your perspectives, innovations, observations, advice, and accomplishments continue to inspire us.

Thank you for sharing with all of us. We are grateful for you..

Yours in scholarship,
The DSD editorial team §



A Positive Perspective

By Kimberly Correll

Assistant Professor of Communication and Theatre

When thinking about my teaching experience during COVID-19, my first thought is gratefulness. Grateful that we are able to come to campus and meet in person—if only part of the time. Grateful that we have so many wonderful students who wanted to come back to school and be with each other once again. Grateful that I could direct a fall theatre production and bring a piece of art back into the lives of my students and

our community. Grateful for amazing colleagues and administrators who value what we do and who care about enriching the lives of our students.

Now, I can't say that every day has been easy in my classes, or for me personally. I have seen my students struggle to keep up with the demands of online learning as well as being in class face to face. That has been a challenge for myself as well

with teaching behind a mask and looking at my students—also behind a mask—and wondering if I am able to communicate effectively.

I love engaging with my students face to face—especially in the subjects I teach like Speech and Theater. I prefer to be with my whole class 100% of the time. Sadly, we can't quite do that yet. My deepest hope is that in the very near future this will be but a memory, and one in which we will have learned many important lessons. For now, I will do my best to appreciate my students—especially on those difficult days, and be grateful for what we have right now. §



COVID-19 Classroom Impact Thoughts

By Marina Smitherman
Chair, Department of Life Sciences

I miss seeing faces. I never realized how much I relied on reading the room when teaching, both for knowing when to mix things up and my own reward of seeing smiles when those light-bulbs go off.

Don't get me wrong, whilst the rapid transition to remote learning in the spring was a shock paired with collective grief, I felt that flexible virtual instruction had been nipping at the heels of higher education for a long time. Yet, we ended up with no choice but to finally embrace it.

I have thrived on getting to participate in webinars with colleagues across the USG without leaving my office, attend conferences at Oxford University without getting on a plane, and engage in national conversations on this year's impact on teaching and learning without missing the opportunity to tuck my kids into bed at night.

But, I miss seeing faces. I have been surprised to master and enjoy teaching online in a relatively short time frame and to prefer it now over teaching face

to face with the masks, working with students struggling with the lack of structure and engagement in their degrees, and the palpable tension both from the risk of infection or severe disease and the racial tension and polarized division of this election year.

Higher education has had a massive shift and experienced trauma and a collective grief from the loss of 'normal', but my feeling is that if our community remains relatively untouched from the devastating losses and impact of this pandemic, then we will be lucky and I will be content.

It appears it may be years, not months, until we return to normal. In the words of Robert F. Kennedy, "Like it or not, we live in interesting times. They are times of danger and uncertainty; but they are also the most creative of any time in the history of mankind. And everyone here will ultimately be judged—will ultimately judge himself—on the effort he has contributed to building a new world society and the extent to which his ideals and goals have shaped that effort."

Here's to our important role in building a new world society as a result of 2020, the year we will never forget. §

Advising: More Than Registration

By Elizabeth Hutchins
Executive Director of Advising

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), describes the concept of advising as a combination of curriculum, pedagogy, and learning outcomes.

If advising is teaching, what do we want Dalton State students to learn? Students need to know their degree requirements and be able to utilize the tools to create schedules towards fulfilling degree requirements. We want students to identify campus resources and services that assist them in achieving their goals, but there is more. Learning to manage realistic expectations, setting goals and developing decision-making skills are also part of the curriculum. Students need to select majors and programs based on their interests and abilities, and value how an education can help them reach their career goals.

As advisors, it becomes about the relationships. First, we provide a caring, encouraging environment that begins with being accessible and practicing empathetic listening. Second, we make a commitment of excellence to our students and campus community. Advisors motivate students to recognize their potential and meet challenges. Additionally, advisors respect all students, showing them we value who they are with their unique needs and cultural perspectives.

Advising matters for our students and campus.

References:
NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2006). NACADA concept of academic advising. Retrieved from <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resouces>

Image: Reprinted with permission from NACADA www.nacada.ksu.edu §



Navigating Online Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction

By Brooklyn Herrera
Coordinator for Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction

In light of increased online instruction, Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction (SI) at Dalton State underwent various changes to meet student needs. We observed a greater need for study skills assistance and our peer educators to capitalize on employing and developing interpersonal competence.

While math and English generally account for our top tutored courses, our study skills tutoring has risen to account for 37% of our fulfilled tutoring appointments this semester. High-achieving students are visiting our center while expressing difficulty in navigating the online classroom and further seeking assurance. To meet this demand, Tutoring & SI has implemented a new

series for students, called "Uncharted Waters: Navigating your Online Courses." Students can participate in-person, while physically distanced, or virtually. Peer Educators assist students in the navigational functions of Georgia View, Grammarly Premium, and Microsoft Office while incorporating study skills for the online classroom. In addition to assisting students in navigating the online environment, peer educators have discerned a greater need for a sense of belonging, which may be a result of new physical distancing guidelines.

Students visited our center, demonstrating a desire for peer connections and accountability partners, which pushed peer educators to employ greater interpersonal competence. As a result, we restructured our peer educator training to incorporate fostering and maintaining relationships that promote student belonging. According to Hoffman et al. (2002), an individual's sense of belonging is essential in student persistence in higher education.

References:
Hoffman, M., Richmond, J., Morrow, J., & Salomone, K. (2002). Investigating sense of belonging in first-year college students. *Journal for College Student Retention*, 4(3), 227- 256. <https://doi.org/10.2190/DRYC-CXQ9-JQ8V-HT4V> §

Teaching Accounting Online During the Pandemic

By Carl Gabrini
Assistant Professor of Accounting

The pandemic, while stressful, is also providing learning opportunities for me. The most significant challenge I faced was how to maintain the personal contact of face-to-face teaching and learning in the online environment. Through professional development opportunities offered by the USG, I was reintroduced to the practice of reflection. Not often used in accounting courses, I decided it was time to try it in my accounting courses. I consider reflection a process of asking oneself questions about what one heard, read, or listened to. It offers confirmation that one either did or did not understand the material presented. It is more than just mere casual thinking on the material, but a deeper mental exercise.

Most of what I read online about adding reflection to accounting courses focused on adding a reflection paper. That solution did not achieve my desired goal of ensuring regular contact with my students. Instead, I recalled from my service-learning training the use of a reflection journal. I added an assignment worth ten percent of a student's final course grade asking students to submit a reflection post using the Georgia View discussion course tool.

My online courses were designed around weekly modules for students to complete. I asked students to respond to three questions at the conclusion of each week:

1. What did you find most interesting about this week's material?
2. What did you find most challenging about this week's material?
3. What, if anything, would you want more information about from this week's material?

I provided an example of how I would respond to each of the questions so they would have an idea of how long a typical response might be and what sort of

feedback they might consider providing. My goal each week is to read and respond to the posts by Monday night.

Thus far, the assignment is achieving what I hoped it would, but not without challenges. I often struggle to get all the reflections read by Monday night. I began by responding to each individual post, which proved time consuming and of limited value. I learned students were not going back and reading my responses, so I changed my strategy. Instead of individual responses to the reflection posts, I wrote weekly email messages to the class. I would note the most frequently mentioned items and respond with thoughts or study aids. I only sent individual responses to students that communicated unique questions or challenges. This proved easier to accomplish and more effective as I learned students did read the emails. The semester is not over, so I have not had a chance to reflect on the impact of the reflection post assignment. What I can share is it has made a difference to me by preserving personal contact with my students, even online. §

The COVID 19 Pandemic: A Student Life Perspective

By Amber Lesicko
Associate Director of Student Life

The COVID 19 pandemic halted all plans for the spring semester. Students were sent home to learn in a virtual environment, employees were sent home to figure out how to work in a virtual environment, and chaos ensued around the world. It felt like we were in a tailspin trying to figure out which way was up.

As a professional in student affairs responsible for engaging students outside the classroom, it was a priority to create engagement opportunities in this new virtual world. Student engagement outside of the classroom is critical to their development in a number of ways. Student engagement also leads to more academically successful students. In order to fulfill the mission of Student Life and the Dean of Students Office, a number of staff worked tirelessly to create virtual programs for students, change processes, and approach our work with a new level of flexibility.

One thing that has become abundantly clear is just how important student affairs work is to our students. They thirst for connection with peers and employees

on campus, they desire an educational experience beyond their academics, and they rely heavily on the number of free resources we provide on campus like health services, food sources from the café and The Birdfeeder, counseling, and peer education. They also benefit from programs like Career Week to improve their job readiness skills and social experiences like a Netflix Watch Party where students have a chance to escape the chaotic world that surrounds them even if for just a short time. I have found this time to be imperative in understanding exactly what it means to serve our students. It is not our job to serve students on campus, it is our responsibility to serve students, regardless of where they are. §

Teaching in a Pandemic: Through the Eyes of a Criminologist

By James Wright
Chair, Department of Social Sciences

To say that times have changed is an understatement. As a criminologist, we are trained to deal with change. For us, change is inevitable. We try to prepare as best as we can for those changes and make necessary adjustments.

Change, from my 20 plus years in academia, seems to come in cycles and revolves around different issues (political, social, environmental, etc.). I entered my first year in the professorate during the 2000 presidential election recount. This represented change in our voting process and arguably marks the beginning of the modern partisan political era. I remember vividly where I was and how my students reacted to the

events that occurred on September 11, 2001. We used class time to debrief and sort through what was occurring in our country in real time, while setting the stage in preparation for change. I remember sitting at home on November 4, 2008 and witnessing change. Barack Obama was elected the 44th president of the United States. This change signified progress and symbolic acceptance of racial diversity and tolerance in America.

The change we experienced in 2020 (and continue to experience) is different than any other. We have never experienced life in a pandemic. The change has altered many aspects of our lives. We've had to alter how we interact with others and how we move and navigate within social settings. We've had to mask up and deal with change in our mental and physical health, and in our professional lives.

The change resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic is evident here at Dalton State. Despite the negative circumstances the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to our campus, I am prouder now than ever to call myself a Roadrunner. I am extremely proud of my Social Science and History

faculty. They have shown up to work, have taught their classes and serviced our students. They are involved in various campus-related activities and committees and have fulfilled their obligations. I am proud of my colleagues who continue to work through the difficult challenges this pandemic has presented to provide the best educational experience possible for our students. I am extremely proud of our students. They have weathered the storm. They have adjusted to the change they were presented with: moving virtual in spring 2020; adjusting to a fully online summer 2020 class schedule; then moving to a "flexible" schedule for fall 2020. Our students still demonstrate a desire to learn and a commitment to their degrees.

Change is inevitable. A person's ability to adjust to change in the midst of challenging situations is the best measure of that person's potential for success. I see the Roadrunner family making necessary adjustments to the changes we've experienced as a result of this pandemic. I am confident we will experience brighter days as we continue to adjust to change. §

Information Literacy Takes CenterStage: A Faculty Fellow in Action

By Amy Burger
Librarian

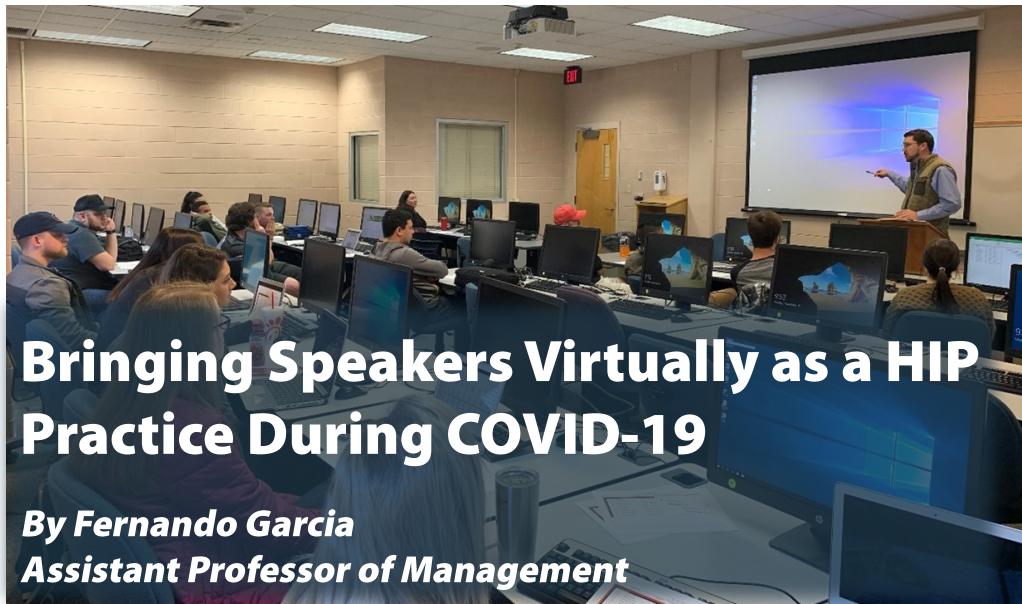
As one of the college's Faculty Fellows, I had the pleasure of offering five workshops to faculty during the fall semester, all of them relating to information literacy. The term "information literacy" includes the set of skills and abilities that enable people to find the information they need, to be critical consumers of information, and to use information ethically.

With the unrelenting deluge of information coming from various media,

information literacy is more important now than ever before. It's a critical component of the redesigned general education curriculum, and is pretty widely encompassing, too. As a result, the workshops I offered covered a range of topics: copyright for online teaching, integrating information literacy in the classroom, organizing your research with Zotero, designing a survey for research, and empathy in instruction.



For those who were unable to attend, the workshop recordings are publicly available on the library's [Facebook page](#) and are listed in the CETL's GAView course. To be added to the GAView course, send me an email at aburger1@daltonstate.edu. §



Bringing Speakers Virtually as a HIP Practice During COVID-19

By Fernando Garcia
Assistant Professor of Management

Making a connection between what is taught in class and applying this in a work setting is an important element for increasing the relevance of course content. In fact, Dalton State's HIPs Course Redesign Rubric includes a component to 'Apply and practice in real-world setting' and provides a suggestion to operationalize it by, for example, facilitating guest speakers.

The Project Management course, MNGT 4380, prepares students to manage projects and incorporates speakers as a HIP practice. Students learn the theoretical foundations of project management, develop their quantitative skills, and practice using Microsoft Project software, a specialized software widely used in the industry. Project managers are invited to join the class to discuss practical applications of project management concepts and real-work applications. The classroom interaction between the speaker and the students unveils the practical relevance of this course, and also reassures that the gained knowledge can be applied in the industry. In addition, speakers help us encourage our students to pursue the CAPMii industry certification.

COVID-19 changed how we approach teaching. In order to bring our speaker to the classroom, we moved the session to a virtual format supported by Microsoft Teams. Prior to the meeting, students and the speaker were invited to join the

meeting. Since I allow students to join our face-to-face sessions via Teams, they had no problems joining the virtual session. To test the sharing and displaying capabilities of Teams and to ensure going live on time, the speaker and I met 10 minutes earlier. As a moderator, I introduced the speaker to the class and provided a session structure that included Q&A at the end. The speaker discussed relevant topics in project management such as the application of project management software (Oracle's Primavera P6), outsourcing project work, RFPs, leading vs managing projects, and building high performing teams, all of which were drawn from past and current projects.

Students actively engaged in the Q&A. Interest on how to prepare for future career paths, the importance of a degree in the field, what employers in the field are expecting from graduates, and succession plans for project managers were addressed. Students asked questions using their microphones or typed their questions on Teams' chat area. The tone and engagement of the virtual interaction evidenced that we could maintain a high-quality HIP practice in times of COVID-19. §

The Masked Singer

By Ellie Jenkins
Associate Professor of Music

I never thought that I'd be attempting to teach music with a mask on.

Converting Music Appreciation was fairly easy. I just needed to rework my lectures so they didn't include singing. Studies show singing to be one of the riskiest activities for potential contagion, so I try not to sing at all, and definitely don't invite students to join me.

Music Theory, and especially Aural Skills, is a different matter. Aural Skills is a specialized class for musicians-in-training that develops their musical ear—their ability to translate notes on a page into sounds, and vice versa. A big part of this training is singing, not for performance, but to correctly sing melodies and harmonies without first hearing them. It's very challenging, and can be quite daunting for students even during "normal" times. I thought about taking this class completely online, but decided that students need the energy in the room from their colleagues and myself.

We tried going outside, but that proved too noisy. We've settled on singing in the classroom, always with masks on. Luckily, a friend of mine is a seamstress who volunteered to make "singers' masks." These masks are constructed in a sort of 3D design that allows the mask to not touch your mouth and to not get sucked into your mouth when you take a deep breath, while still providing protection. I can sing when needed with freer airflow.

When I told my friend what a difference the mask had made, she stepped up and made masks for my entire Aural Skills class. We're limiting the time that we spend singing, and I've restructured the class so we end class with singing rather than beginning with it. Every day, I remind students to remain vigilant. I never thought that the secret to a successful semester would be the right mask! §

International Guest Speaker Exchange as a HIP practice

By Carolina Hammontree, MBA

COVID-19 changed our lives significantly, and, as any organization around the world, the Wright School of Business (WSOB) at Dalton State College (DSC) adapted to its changing business environment. Technology allows us to increase our creativity and build international relationships with other business schools. The WSOB is committed to using innovative instructional practices to improve students' engagement and awareness of the global environment and business issues. Because cultural intelligence is a vital skill for business professionals, I seek high impact practices to enhance the global mindset of my students, like real-life business cases and international guest speakers.

Last summer, in my international business class, I began a project with a business professor from our sister AACSB business school in Lima, Peru, The Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú-CENTRUM (PUCP). The project created a simulated working environment where my students represent American leaders working for a transnational corporation that wants to expand to South America. Since the beginning of the fall 2020 semester, my students, with the support



of our librarian Amy Burger, started researching the political, economic, infrastructure, competence, and cultural differences between the United States and Peru (Hill, 2008; Srinivasan, Stank, Dornier, & Petersen, 2014). Professor Miguel Cordova joined my class as a consultant from Peru, helping students understand the country, and the issues they must consider when doing business in Peru. We enjoyed an excellent session of questions and answers in a supportive multicultural environment. Professor Cordova and some of my business students joined the class virtually, while the rest of the class was on campus.

In exchange for Professor Cordova's work in my class, I was a guest speaker in his supply chain management class, in which I taught International Business and supply chain in Spanish.

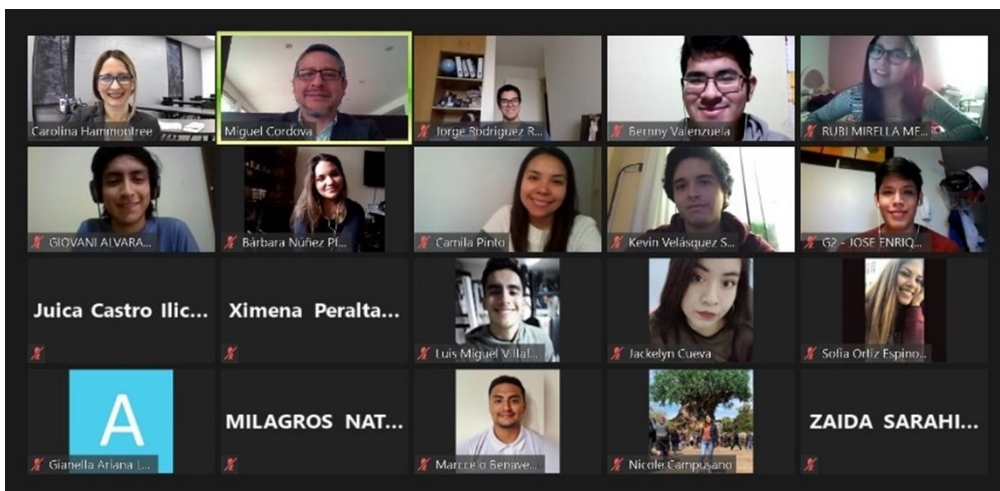
The international cooperation between DSC and PUCP will continue in Spring 2021 when Professor Cordova and I collaborate on a project where our students work on a real-life business case together to enhance their cultural intelligence and international network. This partnership between DSC and PUCP opens new opportunities for our students and faculty, including international webinars, student and faculty exchange, research, co-teaching, faculty research, undergraduate international symposiums, and more.

A HIP where students are exposed to international business situations enhances their learning experience. According to Schmidt-Wilk (2009), "learning is a process of making connections" (p. 6). Through this partnership, students connect what they learn in class with an international business, getting instant feedback to inform their decision-making process.

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Hill, C. (2008). International business: Competing in the global market place. *Strategic Direction*, 24 (9).

Schmidt-Wilk, J. (2009). Reflection: A prerequisite for developing the "CEO" of the brain. *Journal of Management Education*, 33(1), 3-7. §





Reflections on Leaving the Academy

**By Ben Laughter
Lecturer**

“To take something you love and teach it to people about whom you care and see them respond is to experience joy!”

I am not certain where I first encountered this quotation, but it rings true for me, always has.

Fall 2020 is my last semester at Dalton State. I am retiring. I am about to turn 70. I started in 2006, as an adjunct in the School of Business teaching Business Law. Then, I added Business Ethics and became full time faculty. Prior to that, I spent 25 years as an in-house corporate attorney, including 15 years at Shaw Industries as Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary. In 2001, Shaw Industries was acquired by Warren Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway. That summer, I was at a business executive’s meeting in California. The presenter was Ken Blanchard, the author of *The One Minute Manager*. Blanchard challenged the group to look beyond “success” to doing something

“significant” in our respective careers. As a result, I decided to pursue teaching at the college level.

I spent more than two years teaching Business Law and Leadership Skills at Georgia Tech’s School of Business. Then, the opportunity to teach at Dalton State opened up.

During my time at Dalton State, I worked under three Presidents: Burrans, Schwenn and Venable, and three Deans: Mayo, Johnson and Helms. But, what I will miss most, as I retire, will be the students.

I often tell people about the joy of being in the classroom. I ask, “Can you imagine having a new audience for all my stories and all my jokes every semester?” I introduce the Business Law class by telling students that the first day on the job, the boss expects you to know “something.” I follow that up by telling the class “Listen closely. I am going to teach you at least 25 ‘somethings’ people will pay you to know.” This is followed by an extended story called “A Conceit in Micro Economics and Business Regulation in the United States,” which is about competing lemonade stands in front of my house.

If you look at my lecture notes, you see marginal notes like “Tell the Rudy Manke story,” which is about the value of getting a good education. In the lecture notes from another class, you would see “Tell the Becky Jo Jenkins story,” which is about how the actions of one person in the group can enhance the reputation of everyone in the group. You would also see marginal notes that say, “Tell Mr. Shaw’s favorite lawyer joke” or “Tell Mr. Shaw’s favorite accountant joke.” Humor can be used effectively to emphasize a point.

I also strive to give the students advice on how to be successful in the workplace, as below:

- Speak truth to power—The boss will want to hear the truth, preferably early and from someone inside the

company.

- Dress for success—Look at how your boss’s boss dresses and take your cue from that. You do not want your boss’s job. You want your boss’s boss’s job. Always be looking two steps ahead.
- Be principle centered—Know what you believe and be able to articulate what you believe. Always be true to your own principle-centered nature.
- Communication with management—Remember, management may not be all that smart; small words, short sentences.
- Find your voice—You must get comfortable speaking in front of any size group. You do that by being over prepared for any meeting you are leading. Preparation is the key.
- Leadership is a practiced art—You have to develop your own leadership skill set; your personal “toolbox.” Different leaders have different styles and all can be successful. Try different options. Then, keep what works for you and discard what does not work for you.
- Never stop learning—You can learn from anyone at anytime. Respect everyone’s opinions and ideas. You may be surprised at how other people view the situation, good or bad.

I will miss the collegiality of working with the faculty and staff at Dalton State, both across the campus and particularly within the Wright School of Business. It is with a modicum of regret that I leave the academy at Dalton State. Since I am retiring, I get to keep my Dalton State email account. That will allow me to continue to keep track of the successes I know you will all experience in the years to come. §



Sim Lab

By Amy Burger
Librarian

On October 22, I accompanied my daughter Nancy to the emergency room. She'd been feeling under the weather, with a near-constant headache and had been unable to keep any food down. At first, I figured it was stress—she's a full-time college student—but her symptoms seemed to be worsening, so we decided to be safe and see if the hospital could help. Once there, a team of skilled nurses assisted us in determining that she had contracted bacterial meningitis, and provided excellent care to alleviate her symptoms and begin treating the illness. It wasn't all smooth sailing, though. At one point, Nancy experienced a convulsive seizure,

but the nursing team was right there to help, and even accompanied us when she was transferred to the ICU.

While it may sound like a traumatic experience, I was out in under two hours with no lasting emotional damage. And I haven't seen Nancy since, because I don't have a daughter; she's a high-tech manikin used in the School of Health Professions' simulation lab to help students learn patient care in realistic scenarios. I volunteered to play Nancy's mother, and sim lab coordinator Shanon Windom voiced Nancy using a built-in microphone that allowed her to express her fear of needles and questions about

how long she'd be bedridden.

Nancy's ordeal was recorded, and, once the simulation was complete (when the patient was transferred to a new department), the team of nursing students sat down to review the footage and determine how well they worked together, what they did well, and what they could have done better.

The sim lab has several manikins that let students get hands-on experience in patient care. These "patients" can be assessed using medical equipment students will find in real clinics and hospitals, and can even receive intravenous treatments and injections. But rarely does a patient come to the hospital alone, especially someone as sick as Nancy, and so the sim lab needs volunteers to play family members.

My favorite singer Florence Foster Jenkins once said "People may say I couldn't sing, but no one can ever say I didn't sing." Regarding my time in the sim lab, I can say that I may not have been able to act, but no one can say I didn't. So for any aspiring actors, especially those who worry about having to memorize lines, I'd recommend lending your talents to the sim lab. To find out which dates and times are available, contact Shanon at swindom@daltonstate.edu.§

Changes in Wellness

By Anne Loughren

The pandemic changed how Dalton State students, faculty, and staff interact. Online teaching, virtual meetings, programming for on-demand and virtual platforms, and learning from an online and/or social media platform has become the norm since the pandemic hit last spring. The pandemic also changed how students, faculty, and staff communicate with each other on a

personal level to share experiences, to reach out for help, and to engage in well-being. Everyone's way of working and learning was turned upside down. However, with change, positive things can happen.

At the beginning of isolation, many students, faculty, and staff began to work on their well-being. Isolation gave our community a chance to experience a slower time, to re-energize. People were walking more, hiking more, participating in my fitness and yoga classes for the first time, experimenting with cooking, and engaging with their family. Pets were happy. Owners at home all day meant

more and longer walks for both human and canine. People were being active with their wellness. This was exciting!

The excitement began to diminish as consequences of isolation began to show. Consequences included increased stress, anxiety, and depression. DSC has done a great job maintaining some form of normalcy in how we interact. But fear and uncertainty are on the minds of all. Until the pandemic ends, find what forms of interaction, in-person and virtual, from the Dalton State community that you can to remind yourself that you are not alone, and you have support. As it is said, This Too Shall Pass. §



Nursing Perspectives on Recent Changes

By Donna Bledsoe
Associate Professor of Nursing

For the Nursing Department dealing with the cataclysmic changes of the last semester, which blew like a tornado into the current semester, I share these thoughts. Like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, we found ourselves caught in a whirlwind of change. We were assailed with information fraught with decision-making risk and competing needs and demands.

Unlike Dorothy, we had no yellow brick road for our journey. We were compelled to educate students, ensuring that they become safe, competent, and compassionate nurses in circumstances never yet encountered. We had been thrust into a world without hall-way buzz sessions or face to face meetings, a world where the nuances of communication were now veiled behind a camera or a mask. Our new normal became virtual meetings and strategizing at home among children of all ages, both two and four-legged. Like the scarecrow, we desperately searched for our collective brain. What were we to do?

Our greatest asset has always been highly motivated faculty and staff, dedicated to student success. Educators and their administrative assistant focused on the task of creating a new teaching and interaction paradigm. Since we previously incorporated hybrid elements such as recorded lectures into our courses and made extensive use of D2L/Georgia View, including electronic submission of assignments and use of the gradebook, we recognized these as advantageous! We were able to quickly add virtual components to our courses to replace simulation and traditional clinical.

Another factor which aided our transition is that most nursing faculty were already allowing students liberal text messaging of faculty in addition to other methods of communication. Students found this supportive and helpful in decreasing anxiety, especially in a global pandemic.

For students, there was fear, of COVID-19,

yes; but, there was fear related to how this situation was going to impact their dreams of becoming a nurse. Several questions became critical: How will clinical requirements be accomplished since students were suddenly banished from healthcare facilities? Will this delay graduation? Will I fail the NCLEX because of a virus which I may or may not contract myself? All this produced a high level of anxiety among students, which many verbalized to faculty. To the credit of our high-achieving students, they, too, successfully made the transition to this new interaction paradigm.

In summary, I believe that, like Dorothy, the nursing department built a supportive team among its fellow adventurers. Although fear and uncertainty have become features of our daily lives, we face these unbelievable challenges with a “can-do” attitude. We choose to believe that defeat is not an option since the stakes are so high for our students and for the health and welfare of the community we serve. §

A Professional Development Opportunity of a Different Type

By Barbara Tucker
Chair, Department of Communications

When college faculty think about professional development, we usually think of our disciplinary knowledge or our classroom performance. This makes sense: We teach students our subject; we are evaluated on that role, and we have committed our professional lives to it. We attend conferences, webinars, workshops, and brown bags.

However, there are professional development opportunities outside this realm, especially in communication and leadership. What if there were an international organization with a 96-year history and 16,000 local units, including a

robust infrastructure for professional learning? What if you could be involved in a club to improve speaking in public settings, to lead meetings with confidentiality, and to network with professionals outside of academia?

There is such a place: Toastmasters International. Toastmasters offers hands-on experiences to be a more confident, persuasive, and connected speaker.

You might say, and rightly so, “Barbara, you’ve taught public speaking for a long time, you’ve written about it and studied it for as long. Why do you need a public

speaking club?” I joined for three main reasons: networking in the community; adding credentials; and improving my non-academic and non-sectarian speaking skills. For most of my life I have either spoken in class, at conferences, or in church. I wanted to learn to speak to audiences outside of those realms. I was also intrigued by the contests, which go to the International Level.

I recommend Toastmasters to my fellow faculty and staff at Dalton State. You can ask Jerry Drye (local Lingo Masters President), Cathy Hunsicker, or me if you have questions. We can connect you with our club or one of the many others in the area.

Toastmasters provides a safe, structured place to improve these skills, meet others, learn about your community, and obtain recognized credentials.§

The Silver Lining

By Sarah Shope
Part-Time Professor of English

The pandemic looms over the world as a dark ominous entity; yet, flickers of silver slowly emerge to bring hope in the worst of situations. When the virus arrived in Spring 2020 and all physical contact halted, many of my students were briefly thrilled. Of course, none of us realized the gravity of a pandemic and just saw it as an extension of Spring Break. Students were promptly caught up in family dynamics and internet/computer access logistics, and a few of them absolutely panicked. Our beautiful small Gilmer campus life did not emerge again throughout the semester, but nearly all students managed to complete their courses via online delivery. Fortunately, I had been forced into online teaching years ago at UGA, so I was prepared to help students make the adjustment.

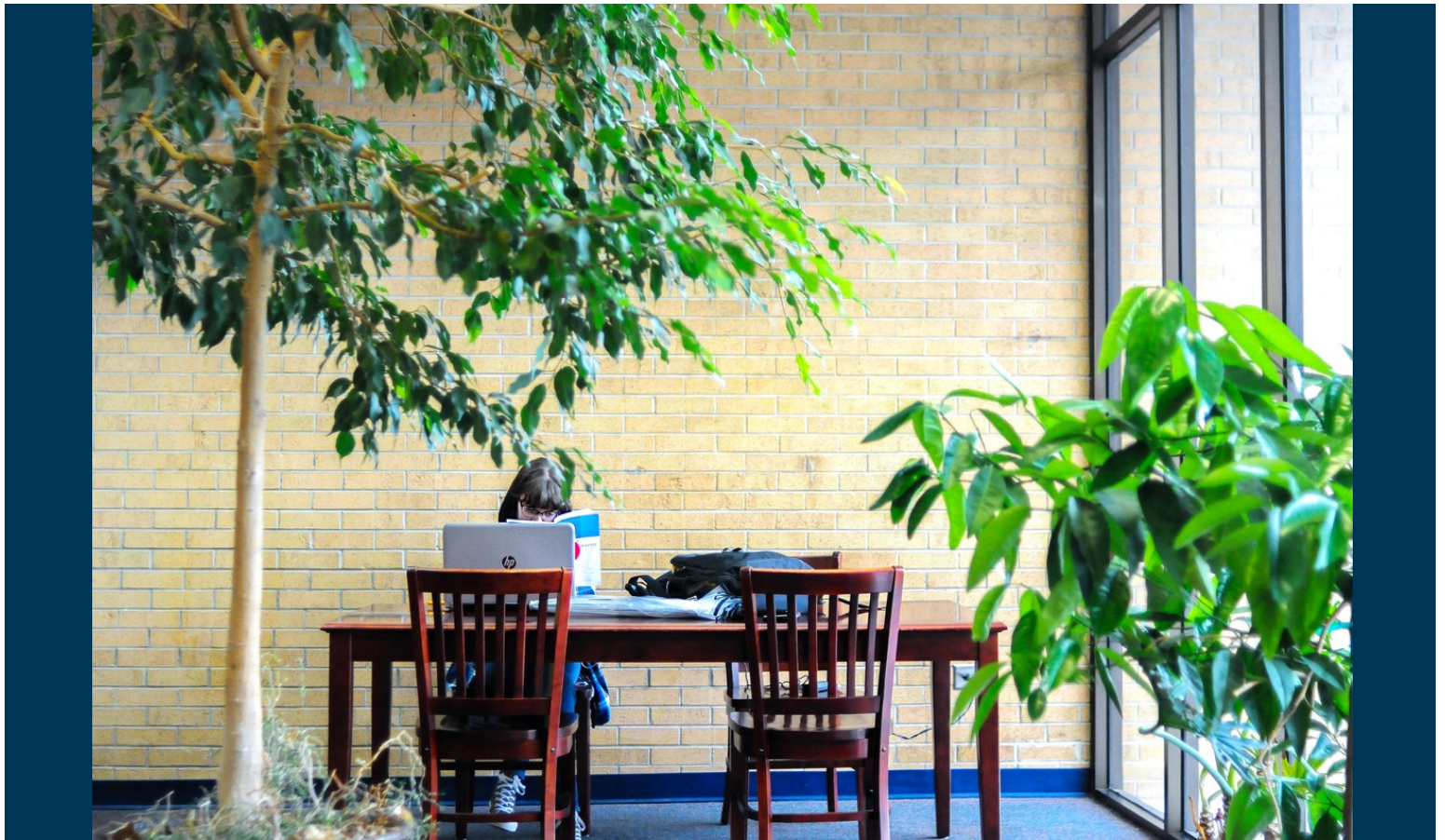
Virtual teaching requires that we keep the focus firmly on the learning process

and on how to make the subject matter engaging. It requires extra attention to how students take in new material and to deepen their knowledge of things they already know.

Of course, the joy of face-to-face interaction is not there for the student or for the teacher, but students manage to interact one way or another and teachers manage to design lessons that are motivating and that pull students deeply into the learning process. That silver lining was and still is a sight to see. Some students are gaining stronger skills in analysis and writing because many of the unnecessary distractions are gone. Many students are gaining much more autonomy as they must rely on self-motivation. Teachers are discovering more about intrinsic motivation and how to tap it in students.

Because I had the good fortune to teach second-language students for many years and to do teacher training in that field, I am highly aware of the significance of comprehensible input and scaffolding for all struggling as well as high-achieving students. That plays out well in the planning of online lessons for the literature that I teach and for all other subjects. It requires using more visuals and practicing the art of talking to and with students via audio.

Now in the fall, though life is gradually coming back to the Gilmer campus, I have continued in full online delivery due to my health. The teaching has become a lifesaver for me. After many decades of classroom and hybrid teaching, I am once again highly motivated to discover new techniques to enhance the delivery of learning. My work did not need to end due to a heart attack or a pandemic. Life goes on, and we will all continue to learn. My hope is that I am passing that epiphany on to my students. Good can be found in all situations. That is the silver lining.§



Library Updates

By Amy Burger
Librarian

Roberts Library has experienced several changes since the spring semester. While some of these, like one-way entrance and exit routes and increased cleaning and sanitization, are temporary, others, including our new front desk and improved entryway, are permanent. Such permanent improvements are the beginnings of the library's second renovation. Originally completed in 1972, the building was updated and expanded in 2002 (you can see a metal line on the floor marking the building's original footprint).

This most recent round of physical changes to the library started with the Bandy Heritage Center's move from its second floor location to its current location on the first floor, formerly the library's information commons. The information commons equipment was reconfigured, and shelving moved to

create a new first floor computer lab.

Why is the library making these changes? It began in 2018, when an architecture company conducted a space-use study and focus groups to plan for the eventual renovation of the entire building as part of the college's strategic plan. The consultants drew up a master blueprint for the project, to be completed once Roberts Library reached the top of the list of building renovation projects. After examining the plans, college administration realized that some of the modifications could be achieved by the college's own Plant Operations staff, saving money and improving the building incrementally.

However, it's not just the library building that's undergone adjustments over the summer, but personnel as well. In May, long-time interlibrary loan and government documents librarian Barbara Jones retired after 29 years of service to the college. Then in August, reference and instruction librarian Betsy Whitley retired, having worked at the college for four years. §

Writing Lab Update

By Wei Cen
Assistant Professor of English

As we navigate this unprecedented period of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Writing Lab staff adopted creative ways of tutoring to continue providing writing support to our students. Instead of face-to-face meetings, the Writing Lab offers synchronous online tutoring via Teams and asynchronous online tutoring via email. Students can make appointments through a booking Web page created by the Writing Lab coordinator, or they can email their papers to the [Writing Lab](#) to get written feedback. The online service not only allows students to discuss their writing problems and concerns with our tutors but also keeps students and our staff safe. What has changed is the way we communicate with our students; what has not changed is the quality of tutoring and our mission of producing better writers. §

Dalton State Athletics

By Saif Alsafer
Interim Athletic Director

Dalton State Athletics, along with our campus companions, has seen an unprecedented amount of change in recent times. There have been many changes made to accommodate the safety of our beloved student-athletes mentally, socially and physically.

Of course, there are obvious affects: social distancing, masks, time spent with fellow student-athletes, and adjustments to the way teams practice their respective sports. Another noteworthy impact on student-athletes has been their mental health in dealing with the various changes they've endured. It is evident that the impact of COVID-19 has played a role on student-athletes at Dalton State. How much of this is from changes to their respective sports or changes to their daily class routines is unknown, but the certainty of some impact is evident.

Sport can often be a means of stress



relief for anyone who is engaged in a particular sport discipline. This is no exception for those not participating in sport, as common exercise is also a popular activity for reducing anxiety and stress. Student-athletes are still engaged in their particular sport, fortunately, but the changes in how things must be done has moved us to a new “normal” over the semester. Even something as little as congregating in a locker room before and after practice has been eliminated in keeping with social distancing guidelines. This change may seem small, but locker rooms are where teammates grow closer together.

All of these changes may begin to provoke thoughts in the minds of faculty and staff on providing some reprieve to all of the adjustments made due to COVID-19. This may seem too simplistic, but exercising patience is critical in these times, patience with each other, and, just as important, patience with ourselves. We are all going through the changes of COVID-19 together, and it has been a challenge to us all. Being patient with each other can give the necessary grace needed in times of difficulty. We may find times where that same grace needs

to be extended to ourselves. We all are working hard to make the Dalton State experience the best it can be for all students, and, sometimes, we need to take time to make our individual experience one of value. Along with patience comes perseverance. In trying times, we are tested, and we've been tested this academic year in extreme ways, but, when tested, we must conquer. Perseverance can be the antidote to dealing with our challenges. As faculty and staff at Dalton State, the impact we have on the lives of the students we come in contact with is undoubtedly profound. When these students see us persevere, we are giving them the strength and the blueprint to also persevere.

Many things may be uniquely different about the faculty, staff, and students at Dalton State. However, COVID-19 has given the campus community an opportunity to come together and conquer. With patience and perseverance, we can do it, and we do it together. §

Faculty & Staff Accomplishments

Mathew LeHew, (top left), Assistant Professor Communication, reviewed the book *Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto* for the AEJMC's [Journal of Public Relations Education](#).

Brooklyn Herrera, (top right) Assistant Director for Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction, began her doctor of Education with a focus in higher leadership and practice at University of North Georgia. She will be in the class of 2023.

Ryan Reece, (middle top) part-time professor in English and Communication, received formal notification this week that his script "Illation" was selected as the "Winner - Best Script" at this year's Virginia Beach Christian Film Festival.

Congratulations to the following faculty who will serve as USG Chancellor's Learning Scholars (CLS) for the 2020-2021 academic year: **Dr. Susan Eastman**, (middle right) Assistant Professor of English (second year); **Dr. Catie Clinard**, (middle bottom) Assistant Professor of Psychology (first year); **Dr. Carl Gabrini**, (middle left) Assistant Professor of Accounting (first year); **Elizabeth Hubbs**, (bottom left) Assistant Professor of Social Work (first year); and **Dr. Jeff Stanley**, (bottom right) Assistant Professor of History (first year). The CLS Program was initiated by the USG to provide additional faculty development opportunities at institutions across the state. According to the USG, "FLCs are designed to give small groups of faculty (typically 8-10) the opportunity to engage in sustained, meaningful conversations about teaching and learning with supportive colleagues from across campus. Members will meet regularly throughout the length of the program as they explore areas of interest, leading to changes in their teaching practice. At the end of the program, each CLS and FLC participant should be able to point to a change or innovation they have made in their classroom or on their syllabus to an assignment, activity, or course material as a result of their participation in the FLC."



Faculty & Staff

Accomplishments, cont.



Dr. Alicia Briganti, Associate Professor of Psychology, completed her participation in the 2019-2020 USG Governor's Teaching Fellows Program in the spring. She stated: "My experience in the Governor's Teaching Fellows Program was transformative and inspiring. I fortunate enough to spend three days each month surrounded by top-notch educators from around the state discussing pedagogical tools and techniques that have allowed me to greatly enhance my teaching skills. I was able to immediately implement a variety of innovative methods in my classes. Without a doubt, my participation in this program re-ignited my passion for teaching, and I now have an amazing group of colleagues in my network who continue to share ideas and offer encouragement and motivation even after the program ended. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity, and I'm quite certain that I, as well as my colleagues and our students, will reap the benefits for years to come."

Victor Marshall, Assistant Professor of Management, published his second article in the top-rated academic journal. This article was titled "RIMS: A new approach to measuring firm internationalization." In response, Vic was invited to serve on a panel and co-lead a workshop regarding measuring internationalization at the European International Business Association (EIBA) Annual Conference in December 2020. Vic also accepted an invitation to serve on the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Journal of Ethics in Entrepreneurship and Technology* (JEET).

Dr. Marina Smitherman, Chair of Life Sciences, published a book entitled *Taking Flight: Making Your Center for Teaching and Learning Soar* by Laura Cruz, Michele A. Parker, Brian Smentkowski, and Marina Smitherman was published June 30th with Stylus (VA) and is available on Amazon.

Dr. Jon Littlefield, Associate Professor of Marketing, and Cortnee Young, lecturer of Marketing and Business Communications recently wrote a paper titled: "Retro Branding as a Modern Market Positioning—A Case History of the MoonPie" and presented it at the Atlantic Marketing Association Conference (virtually) on October 2nd. The paper won Best Paper in Track for the Consumer Behavior track at the 2020 Atlantic Marketing Association Conference.

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Email Susan Eastman seastman@daltonstate.edu to learn more or for an individual consultation.

Submit to the Digest!

Faculty members and professional staff may submit any of the following:

- Essay of personal reflection of a classroom incident or phenomenon with an evidence- or theory- based approach to interpreting the incident or phenomenon.
- Updates or interviews related to programs, initiatives, or centers around campus.
- Professional accomplishments,
- Upcoming Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conferences of interest to multiple disciplines.

Submissions should be sent as Word files to journal@daltonstate.edu. All submissions should be accompanied by an image or graphic related to the topic of the submission. Faculty and Staff headshots should only be included with professional accomplishments submissions. Published submissions will appear in the next issue of *Dalton State Digest* and appear on the publication's website. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

Special thanks to Misty Watson for the use of photos throughout this issue of *Digest*.