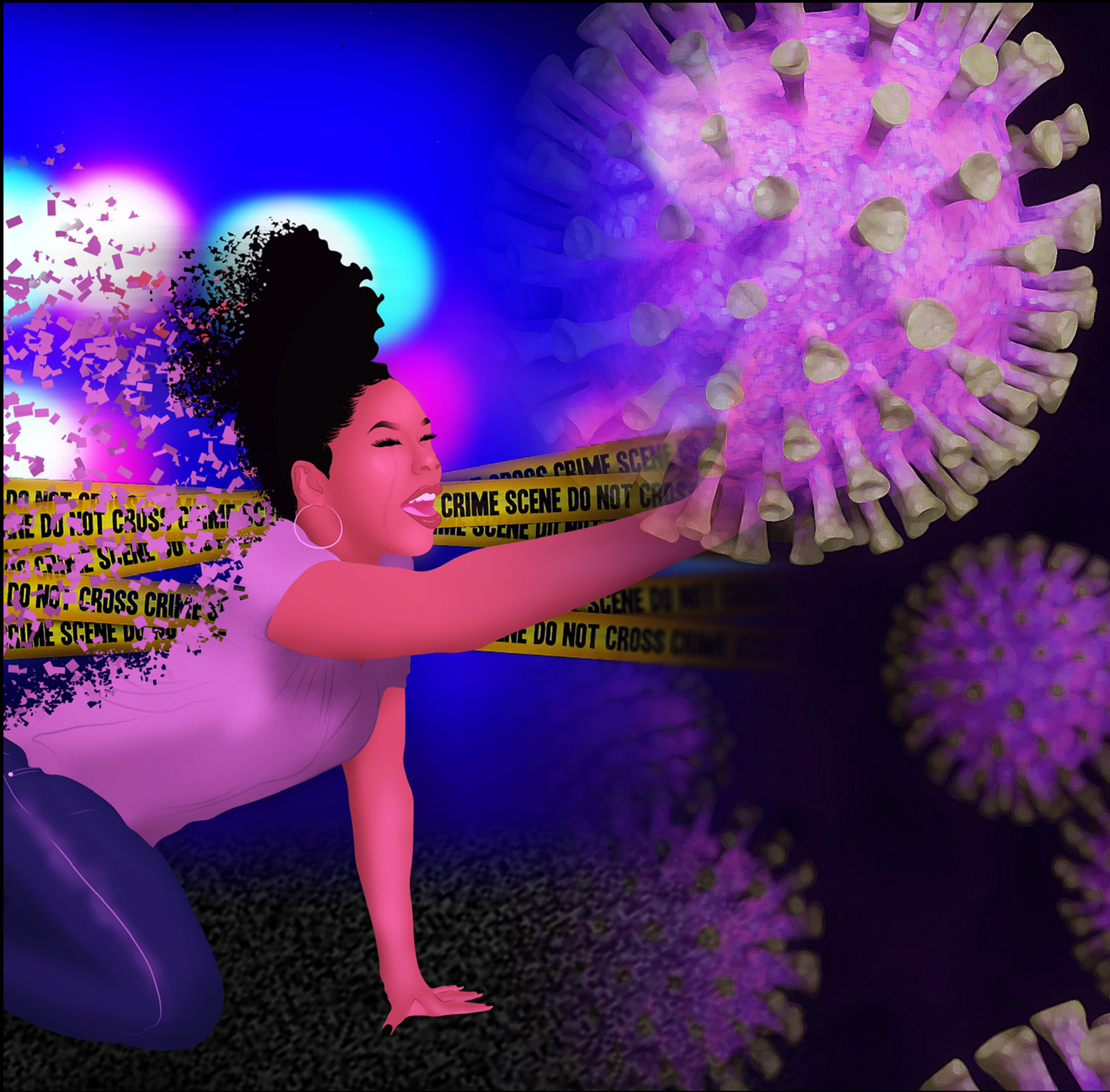


COVID-19 & SOCIAL JUSTICE MEET HEAD-ON

VOLUME IV : SUMMER / FALL 2022



FROSTBURG

STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



THIS ISSUE

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Photos From Top to Bottom:

Maryland Accelerates Program, MAT students with WCPS faculty and staff.

Maryland Accelerates' Cohort II Elementary students wearing AmeriCorps' sweatshirts to show their support as volunteers in the program.

College of Education Spring 2022 Commencement Speaker: Quenten Demps

MARYLAND ACCELERATES: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION



Over 100 people attended the Maryland Accelerates Third Annual National Leadership Conference held in June at Turf Valley Resort in Ellicott City. Maryland Accelerates is a comprehensive partnership between Frostburg State University's College of Education and three high-need, rural school districts. The program was created to improve the preparation of new teachers, address the needs of rural schools and improve student achievement in Frederick, Garrett and Washington counties.

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond served as the keynote speaker for the event, speaking to attendees about the importance of leadership and preparation programs for educators. Darling-Hammond is one of the nation's foremost education researchers and policy analysts. She is the Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education Emeritus at Stanford University and founding president of the Learning Policy Institute.

New York Times #1 Best Selling Author Tiffany Jewell served as the second keynote speaker for the event and spoke on her book, "This Book is Anti-Racist." Jewell educated students on the process of waking up, taking action and doing the work to become an anti-racist.



During the event, President Pro-Tempore for The Maryland Senate, Melony Griffith, recognized Sen. George C. Edwards (in absentia) and Dr. Darla Strouse, Maryland State Department of Education executive director, for their exceptional efforts on the Maryland Accelerates Executive Advisory Board. Griffith also presented Presidential Recognition Awards from Dr. Ronald Nowaczyk and citations signed by Sen.

Ferguson and Speaker Adrienne Jones to Edwards and Strouse.

This year's conference was held in person for the first time since the start of the pandemic and included all three cohorts of students from the program; district partners from Washington County Public Schools, Frederick County Public Schools and Garrett County; University System of Maryland employees; FSU faculty; National Center for Teacher Residencies members; MN Associates; edBridge Partners; and Maryland Accelerates program staff.

Pictured From Top to Bottom: Cohort III Teacher-Residents Shamerra McCoy & Alexis Pate, Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, Tiffany Jewell, and President Pro-Tempore for The Maryland Senate, Melony Griffith.



**Frostburg State University
College of Education**

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

& SO IT CONTINUES

It is safe to say that essentially everyone has been affected by Covid-19 in some way. However, the manner and extent to which the disease has impacted our lives depends upon who we are, where we live, our employment status, our access to healthcare, and the general condition of our health. To date, more than 1 million Americans have died from Covid-19. Given probable under-reporting, the actual number may be significantly higher.

In a recent report , The World Health Organization noted that “poor and unequal living conditions are the consequences of deeper structural conditions that together fashion the way societies are organized.” In the United States, the research to date indicates that a modicum of equity across ethnicities has been achieved in terms of vaccination rates; however, because of a higher incidence rate amongst African Americans with pre-existing conditions (such as diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure), and inequities in access to quality healthcare; the number of Covid-related deaths and serious illness in the African American community – even among those who have been vaccinated – is disproportionately high. This disparity continues to increase. I had thought about changing the title of this publication, but, after reflection, I decided that it should remain “Covid-19 and Social Justice Meet Head On!” The inequities still remain. It’s just that, like a Covid variant, the nature of the inequity is transforming. For example, the Centers for Disease Control has recently published the following data regarding the risk for Covid-19 infection, hospitalization, and death by race/ethnicity:

Rate ratios compared to White, Non-Hispanic persons	Black or African American, Non-Hispanic persons	Hispanic or Latino persons	American Indian or Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic persons	Asian, Non-Hispanic Persons
Cases	1.1 x	1.5 x	1.5 x	0.8 x
Hospitalization	2.3 x	2.2 x	3.0 x	0.8 x
Death	1.7 x	1.8 x	2.1 x	0.8 x

Source: Centers for Disease Control, as of June 24, 2022

This data indicates that while the rate of new Covid cases among African Americans is about 10 percent higher than Whites, the African American hospitalization rate from Covid is 130 percent higher and the death rate from Covid is 70 percent higher (25 Questions & Answers on Health & Human Rights, 2022). As I continue to study and read about the impact of social justice and Covid-19, I am drawn to the most recent work of Maritza Vasquez-Reyes. Dr. Reyes takes the position that, perhaps, in order to address the impact of Covid-19, particularly among African Americans, a human rights approach needs to be taken in an effort to effectively address the crisis. In her paper, Dr. Reyes talks about focusing, not only on the health of our most at risk communities, but also on rights and safety. She suggests that there are at least three basic questions that should be asked in the context of the pandemic, and they should be considered in addressing the impact of Covid-19, social justice, and equity.

What can government and non-state actors do to avoid further marginalizing or stigmatizing this and other vulnerable populations? How can health, justice, and human rights-based approaches ground an effective response to the pandemic now and build a better world afterwards? What can be done to ensure that responses to Covid-19 are respectful to the rights of marginalized citizens during and after the pandemic?

As a counselor, a psychologist, and Dean of a College of Education, I believe Dr. Reyes questions are central to solving the inequity of access, treatment, and quality of life. If we, as a nation, are to eradicate Covid-19 and the likes of it, we must first treat everyone with respect and dignity. Dr. Reyes asserts - and I concur - that until everyone has access to universal health coverage, food security, adequate housing, quality mental health, substance abuse care, and chemical dependency services – under-served populations will continue to bear the brunt of the pandemic.

When we discuss Covid, we must include the issues of equity, justice, and access to health and safety. Finally, as Dr. Reyes concludes, the Covid-19 crisis has served to unmask higher vulnerabilities and exposure among people of color. The Covid-19 pandemic is more than just a health crisis – it is disrupting every aspect of life (family, safety, finances, climate, and agricultural production.) To address the many interconnected issues emerging since the onset of Covid, we must begin working “collaboratively” together so that we will be able to offer an effective strategy towards the eradication of the natural and social pandemic. In the next issue of this publication we will discuss this topic further and do a much deeper dive into the related data.

Source: 25 Questions & Answers on Health & Human Rights. (2022, July). World Health Organization. https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/25-questions-answers-health-human-rights#publications_download

Boyce C. Williams

Boyce C. Williams, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

PREPARING EQUITY-ORIENTED TEACHERS IN STEM



Dr. Jennifer Bishoff and her children (Photo by Studio C Photography)

Dr. Jennifer Bishoff is an Assistant Professor at Frostburg State University in the College of Education as well as the Program Coordinator for the MAT-Secondary Program. She previously taught in Garrett County public schools for over 10 years before beginning her tenure at Frostburg State. Dr. Bishoff has a Bachelor’s in Chemistry from FSU, A Master’s in Chemistry from UNC Wilmington, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration from WVU.

Dr. Bishoff is a mom of three at home, at work she teaches students how to become highly qualified STEM teachers. Bishoff coordinates the Secondary (STEM) MAT program under Maryland Accelerates, a \$ 4.1 million grant program awarded by the US Department of Education to Frostburg State University in 2019. Maryland Accelerates aims to increase the number of highly qualified STEM teachers in high-need and high-rural communities. As program coordinator, Bishoff is working directly with teacher-residency candidates who are preparing to teach STEM in the program’s partner school districts of Garrett, Frederick, and Washington County Public Schools. Maryland Accelerates’ ‘Grow Your Own’ strategy ensures that the most in need school districts are receiving the most highly qualified teachers. In other words, the program ensures that those who need it most will receive the best possible education.

Embedded in social justice is access. The Maryland Accelerates program recruits top talent from across Maryland and surrounding states to become STEM teachers and provides a stipend to them during their residency to ensure that they can focus on developing their skills as teachers. As Program Coordinator of the Secondary Teacher-Residency MAT program with focus in STEM, Bishoff ensures that students in our partner districts have equal access to education by training highly qualified teachers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math fields.



The photos to the left show Dr. Bishoff with two recent MAT-Secondary Maryland Accelerates graduates: Caleb Brown (left) and Dylan Mannick (right). Caleb has been hired as a Computer Science teacher at Southern High School in Garrett County Public Schools (a high-rural school district) and Dylan has been hired as a Chemistry teacher at Frederick High School

in Frederick County Public Schools (a high-need school district). Throughout Bishoff’s two years in Maryland Accelerates she has graduated 5 students who all have become fully certified to teach in the state of Maryland. Most recently, Bishoff has 30 new students in her MAT program beginning in May of 2022. This is the largest group of students that has been enrolled in the Maryland Accelerates MAT program as well as Frostburg’s MAT program in recent years.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PANDEMIC AND A MANIFESTO FOR RENEWAL

BY DR. SUDHIR SINGH

MEET THE AUTHOR

Dr. Sudhir Singh



Dr. Sudhir Singh served as Associate Dean from 2010 until 2015 and Interim Dean of the College of Business from 2015 until 2018, when he was named Dean of Frostburg State University's College of Business. Singh has been a part of FSU since 1992 also serving as the Director of the College of Business Center for Leadership Development and Professor of Finance. Singh has an MBA from Georgia Institute of Technology and a PhD from Virginia Tech.

We seem to be living through the opening line in Charles Dickens' epoch-making novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*; "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

For over two years now since its arrival in early 2020, the Covid-induced pandemic has wrought unparalleled economic and public health challenges on a global scale. As the effects of the pandemic appear to be abating, we offer some reflections from the College of Business on its impact and our collective institutional response, along with some initial sketches of a post-Covid future that we will effect in the service of resilience, inclusivity, virtue, and ultimately triumph.

From the earliest whiff of the contagion and its prospective visit to this campus, all efforts at the University and College levels were focused on ensuring student success and on providing faculty and staff with the needed resources to continue to offer a superior learning experience to our students. Nimbleness and adaptability to a new and unknown reality became the campus' credo.

Pivots from normal operations were designed to ensure: (a) continuity of operations, utilizing the most effectual modes of service to the institution's students, faculty, staff, and all other stakeholders; (b) orderly and timely communication in the face of an unprecedented and highly fluid situation; (c) consistency with federal, state, and other statutory policies and health guidelines; and, above all, (d) safeguarding the health and security of the campus community.

The College, in tandem with the institution at large, took a multi-pronged approach to supporting students. Salient forms of such support included: (a) assuring the

supply of computing technology through loaner laptops to those facing economic or other dislocations, along with internet connectivity, course material, and the like, toward academic progression in an uninterrupted manner; (b) academic accommodations for personal/family situations facing disruption by the closure of businesses and other economic disruptions caused by the pandemic; (c) ongoing access to instructors and academic advisors via remote office hours and classes; (d) a one-time extension of the option of pass-for-credit (PC) and no credit (NC) grades in the Spring 2020 semester in view of the academic disruption to in-person instruction and the resultant impairment in student achievement; (e) establishment of an emergency scholarship fund to provide additional financial assistance to current and prospective undergraduate students experiencing increased financial hardship, in addition to the dispensation provided by the CARES Act Student Emergency Fund

Faculty, likewise, were offered plentiful opportunities to obtain the necessary training to deliver a high-quality academic experience to students in a virtual modality. Ongoing training in the Canvas learning management system, use of web-conferencing technologies, such as Teams and WebEx, continue to be provided. Frostburg's Center for Teaching Excellence, too, has been facilitating many educational seminars towards augmenting faculty capabilities in virtual and hybrid instructional modalities that are likely to stay. Also, while State mandates prevented travel, professional development of faculty, especially in support of AACSB accreditation imperatives, was provided so as to permit virtual participation in discipline-based scholarly meetings and conferences.

In recognizing the importance of celebration of achievement within its community, the College, in lieu of an on-campus celebration of student

achievement, developed and circulated an Honors program to recognize the academic achievements of its students, both in May 2020 and May 2021.

As we reflect on all of the ways in which the pandemic has impacted FSU, an unexpected "blessing" has been the witnessing of a delightful appetite for experimentation and innovation on this campus. As a community, we have been intentional in emphasizing and adopting the themes of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) as core institutional values, with the imperative to animate such values with thoughtful initiatives and efforts on this campus. Harris, Josephson, Kessler, and Landoll (2021) convey the imperative powerfully: "DEI is about collective evolution rather than individual perfection. It is about offering grace to others, acknowledging that we will not always get it right, and staying accountable to ensure we keep moving forward." These are transcendent themes of our times and not mere fads.

Societal recognition of inequities in the workplace along gender, race, and other identifiable and invisible factors, alike, as captured in our differential human experiences, were exacerbated by, and emphatically revealed during Covid to

acknowledge and yield more refined perspectives about privilege, access, and equity.

More broadly, this is also a time when other critically needed conversations are occurring in positing the future of work itself, reshaping our conceptions of the trade offs between effectiveness and efficiency in work settings, recalibrating the balance between work and life, holding oneself accountable, setting high standards of performance that are consistent with organizational goals, and yet, accomplishing disparate goals with a more sophisticated attention to compassion and equity.

On a related theme, and particularly given the sense of isolation and the inevitable dissolution of boundaries between work and home, the need for health and wellness has emerged as a dominant theme as well to which both the academy and the business sector are paying serious attention. Harvard Business Review (October 2021) recently published a compelling piece on the intertwining complexities of mental health issues with DEI in contemporary work settings.

The College of Business, on its part, continues to seize opportunities to offer

curricula that subsumes many such themes, with the launch of a new minor in Diversity Management, in partnership with the Department of Sociology. It also is preparing to offer certificate programs in the areas of diversity leadership, crisis leadership, social entrepreneurship, and human resources and telework management both to working adults and traditional students. Interdisciplinary, collaboration, relevance, and impact on the regional milieu remain our watchwords.

In conclusion, Covid-19 has been a watershed event in the history of this institution and its impact is not yet fully understood or internalized. However, this event also affords us a new and exciting opportunity to harness our individual and organizational capacities for vision, ingenuity, adaptability, and resilience that will enable us to continually perfect our core mission, re-imagine our possibilities, and fuel our path forward.

Embracing the Complexity of DEI | AACSB. (2022). AACSB. <https://www.aacsb.edu/insights/articles/2021/12/embracing-the-complexity-of-dei/>. (2020, May 6).

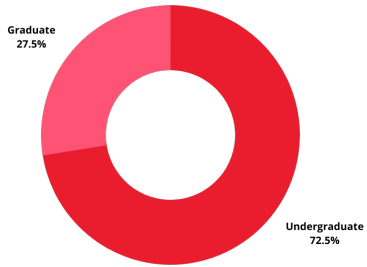
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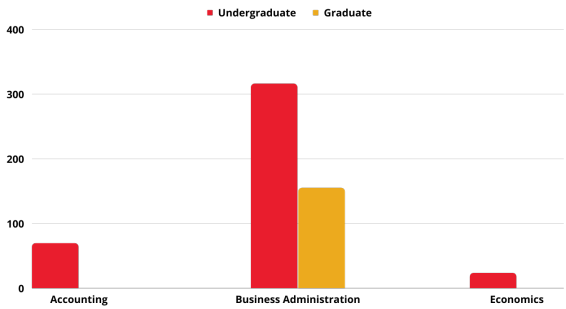


COLLEGE OF BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

College of Business 2021 ENROLLMENT BREAKDOWN



College of Business 2021 ENROLLMENT BREAKDOWN BY PROGRAM



"The College of Business will be the educational destination of choice for students seeking an engaged and relevant career-oriented educational experience and enduring professional success."

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS MISSION STATEMENT

GEN Z,
I HEAR YOU
BY DR. ROBERT MOORE

In early 2022 Associate Dean Dr. Kim Rotruck sat down with Dr. Robert Moore at the local coffee house, Clatter. Dr. Moore used this opportunity to talk about the social and environmental conditions in the context of teaching Gen-Z students. The following is his perspective on these most important topics.

Dr. Kim Rotruck: *There is an adage that goes something like: “If you don’t know where you’ve come from, you don’t where you are. And if you don’t know where you are, you don’t know where you’re going. Please share a few personal thoughts about the importance of history in any policy or practice discussion regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.”*

Dr. Robert Moore: Many today are trying to re-articulate where we have come from and thus where we may be headed. Trying to be assured of the future often comes with its highs and lows. It can be a rather frightening undertaking. I do understand my history. I know it very well. I clearly remember being a child in the first African American family in our suburban neighborhood and my parents receiving mail asking us to leave. This was many decades ago. The road hasn’t been easy, but it is always rewarding.

There were difficulties for sure. Teaching at universities was tough. There were times, during those early years at Frostburg when I shut my

office door and just put my head down on my desk and occasionally cried. There were certainly poignant moments like the time a member of Alpha Phi Alpha, Martin Luther King’s Fraternity, offered to carry my books after class had ended on the third floor of Old Main. I didn’t need to ask him why. I intuitively knew why. I felt deeply the positive, traditional, message he offered me.

Admittedly my memory isn’t necessarily accurate, but I believe I once may have been the only African American faculty person at Frostburg State University, not necessarily the first. Although my dissertation was in social psychology, “the social determinants of group creativity,” I have taught a class on race each semester for the past 24 years.

Life has become more settled. I don’t get asked by students as often, why are you here? The idea that someone who is a minority should work and teach in a rural non-diverse area seemed to be more strange in the past? Although it should be noted that I intentionally chose to live in a student area because I was familiar with college students and less so with people beyond the campus area in various community neighborhoods.

Obama’s election has made me feel stronger. My father being prohibited from living in the Penn State freshmen dorms in the 1940s because he was a man of color seems more distant. I knew what was meant when students asked me, why am I here? I even raised three children in Allegany County.

Gen Z interests me. I often tell students, I may not have heard what you are

listening to but if you play it for me often enough, I will probably like it and identify with it. Our generational differences aren’t that profound. We may not be the same age, but we are the same in so many ways.

I am a boomer. My parents were the silent generation. My generation rebelled against our parents and demanded change. However, my mother was ahead of her generation. Jean Moore attended Hunter College, Phi Beta Kappa, and graduate school Bryn Mawr (circa 1949). She held extensive positions in Model Cities, a Johnson Administration program. She was a professor at Temple University and later held administrative positions at Cheyney and Eastern Shore. It’s fair...They all did their part, my father too, a medical photographer and General Electric employee. She was a professor, radio show host, and high-level administrator at Cheyney and Eastern Shore Maryland. It’s fair to say my mother was a social activist. They both did their part, my father, too. Inequalities and current living situations that were created by previous generations often give false impressions of current inequalities created by previous generations can sometimes give false impressions of current reality lest we forget how it came to be.

We are a society that quickly embraces presumed free will and equal opportunity. The poor and disadvantaged are often invisible. Conclusions about how things came to be are often based on the views of others and not valid experience. Some parents teach their children to be colorblind, although it is hard not to see race once someone leaves the nest and sees vast areas in our society that are poverty-strewn? These areas aren’t

completely the result of present-day situations – but there is a spiraling effect for sure.

I am struck by the fluidity of Gen Z. They seem somewhat less willing to use boxes and labels. This could be a major difference between the boomers and Gen Z. Unfortunately, fluidity can’t be achieved without recognizing where and how the boxes originated. Recognizing the origin of boxes enables good policies to be created that can alter and eradicate existing structures that perpetuate inequality.

My once all-white neighborhood where I was raised is located in an inner-ring suburb of Philadelphia. At one time there were open fields. Now it is densely populated and there are 23 different languages spoken at the public high school I would have attended. I would have been one of three African American students out of well over 2000 students.

Both my parents worked. They had the money to send me to a private Quaker high school. I didn’t want to be “the only one.” Yes, I was scared to attend my public high school. I didn’t want to be part of a situation where I always had to explain myself or listen to fellow students ask, “why did your people do this...”

As alienating as my childhood was at times, and I didn’t dare attend the various neighborhood swim clubs that my friends did, I wouldn’t change where I was raised in a second. I still feel the deep bonds with the area and the people that once lived there. I know and retain their culture inside me.

I can sense a society being built now

on more fluid identities. The irony is that by recognizing boxes and labels change can occur. We recognize our borders to be able to have the opportunity to freely move past them when we decide to do so. Gen Z may be living the dream that many boomers could only wish to have.

We say that parental influence is a huge determinant of a young person’s outlook. On the other hand, much applause to Gen Z as they continue to go past the potentially static visions many of their parents retain. Perhaps we, the boomers, were the theory and they, Gen Z, are the application.

You asked me if various events have stoked the flames. I think the foundation is already there. Events need to be heard first. I’m not so sure that events get people’s attention as much as people are already primed to have their attention grabbed. The pandemic pushed us in the directions we were already headed.

I am a macro sociologist, someone who likes to emphasize that the structure of society often influences social interaction and the need for change. My emphasis tends to be less on everyday interaction that potentially creates larger structures but more on the reverse. I believe structures can create opportunities for new visions and social interaction.

Gen Z, our students see it coming and will be prepared. Gen Z is practicing living what their world demands from them. They practice more fluid identities, thus inclusion and equity because not only is it a better world by doing so, but it is what is needed.



Dr. Paul C. Bernhardt, Associate Professor of Psychology at FSU took some time to reflect on the image created by Robert Smallwood. “Anyone Can Wear The Mask”, originally this Spiderman quote means that anyone can wear the mask, anyone can be a hero. Dr. Bernhardt recalled reading a quote from a comment on the Washington Post at the beginning of the pandemic.

The quote reads “Our grandparents were called to fight WW2 to save democracy. We are being asked to wear a mask and vaccinate to save millions of lives. We can do this, we all can so easily be heroes.” Dr Bernhardt stated “I just really loved the idea of comparing the degree of inconvenience we are being asked to bear compared to earlier generations of Americans.

For example, upon my mother’s death I found she had kept a picture of a young man whom I presume she loved in high school in his WW2 military uniform (taking a knee, no less), expression of love on the back. I think I’m on solid ground to say he never came home. The quote puts it in perspective for me. We are not being burdened a bit compared to them. They stood up for democracy and the downtrodden. Now is our turn to do the right thing, and we have it easy.”

Dr. Paul C. Bernhardt

INTERVIEWS

In the Spring of 2022 Anne Winters, Associate Clinical Project Specialist, conducted interviews with two Frostburg State University students, four student government members, and Frostburg’s Senior Associate Athletic Director. She discussed with them how the social, environmental, and Covid-19 pandemic has impacted their careers, school-life balance, and their ability to mitigate and navigate the challenges that have arisen during the pandemics. In the following pages you will hear from Sydney Kerns, a student in Frostburg’s MAT-Secondary program, Dionne Pellew, an MAT-Elementary graduate, four individual members from Frostburg’s Student Government Association, and Rubin Stevenson, The Senior Associate Athletic Director.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

EMERGING AUTHOR FINDS HER PATH, AS A TEACHER

Anne Winters: *How have your career goals changed throughout your time studying at Allegany College of Maryland and then Frostburg State University?*

Sydney Kerns, MAT-S Graduate Student, FSU Alumni: My career goals have changed significantly in my transition from ACM to FSU. At ACM, I pursued a general studies degree. After graduation, I went forward with the Medical Lab Tech program. However, after one semester I found it wasn’t the right fit for me. I then decided to enroll at Frostburg State as a Health Science major. It wasn’t until I spoke with Sydney Duncan regarding the English program that I realized my true passion. Once I enrolled in the English Program, it was love at first sight! I had always wanted to pursue an English degree, and it wasn’t until coming to FSU that I found the program that aligned perfectly to my overall career goals.

Anne Winters: *What made you ultimately decide to pursue teaching?*

Sydney Kerns: Over my time in the English program, I found myself gravitating toward teaching. I would intently watch my professors give lectures and the unique ways they taught resonated with me. I want to share my point of view and be able to show students the beauty of literature and writing.

Anne Winters: *Has the Covid-19 pandemic or recent social justice events affected your ideas of the future career you want for yourself?*

Sydney Kerns: Covid-19 has proved that teachers are resilient and can adapt to change easily, even if the prospect of such a pandemic is difficult. The drive to continue on and teach students, even through a screen, and still remain strong is very honorable. Social justice issues have only furthered my desire to become a teacher, in order to offer students security and inclusivity in a class room.

Anne Winters: *Thank you so much for answering these questions for today. Before we go, I hear that you have been published at FSU, tell me a little bit about your work for the Bittersweet Magazine.*

Sydney Kerns: I have been writing since I was 10. If I could tell my younger self that by the age of 23 I would be published, I don’t think I’d believe it. My piece was constructed and heavily influenced by a novel I’m working on. I’ve never been much for delving into fantasy stories, but it was received well!

Sydney’s recent published work can be viewed at www.bittersweetmag.com



SYDNEY KERNS

FSU ATHLETICS

EMBRACING CHANGE: PAVING THE PATHWAY TO A “NEW NORMAL”

When you think of athletics you may think of the Saturday night lights, the anticipation of the ever-changing scoreboard, or the blood, sweat, and tears from the hardworking athletes. What most people do not realize is that the love of the game lacks meaning when there is simply no crowd cheering from the sidelines.

Before 2020, no one could have imagined a sporting event being played to an empty stadium or a championship game being canceled without a reschedule date. Covid-19 has made us rethink the unthinkable.

Rubin Stevenson, Senior Associate Athletic Director for Internal Operations, recently took time out of his busy schedule to speak with the College of Education about how the FSU Athletics Department is confronting the myriad challenges posed by Covid-19. Formerly the football head coach who guided the gridiron Bobcats from 1999 to 2007, his teams featured 103 players who earned All-ACFC honors and three who gained All-American status. Stevenson himself earned two Conference Coach of the Year awards.

From his extensive, nearly two-decade experience working at FSU, Stevenson has come to recognize the difference between coaching students and educating staff, a distinction that became even more evident as he navigated the pandemic. “When you are a coach, you can lay down the law; now as an administrator, my job is to constantly remind others to keep the athletes safe,” he said. “I find myself constantly providing updates on the rules that we have to abide by as we get direction from our athletic director, the FSU President, and the Health Department. These rules are always ongoing and ever-changing so I have to try to stay up to date on the different rules.”

The start of the Fall 2021 semester brought a new set of rules and guidelines not only from FSU but the Allegany County Health Department, the State of Maryland, and the CDC, all of which need to be taken into consideration when



Stevenson is educating his staff on the latest updates. The CDC alone released 333 updates on Covid-19 from August 1 to Dec. 31, 2021 (Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), 2020).

Due to the close physical interaction inherent to competitive sports, the FSU Athletics Department has seen some of the most abrupt changes in their day-to-day activities since the beginning of the pandemic. Following the closing of the university and early end to the Spring 2020 semester, all sporting events were canceled. Games were played again, with restrictions, in the Winter of 2021, but it was not until the Spring 2021 semester that spectators were allowed. Attendance was capped at 40 percent capacity.

It is a general axiom of sports that athletes play better before home-field fans, and that holds true at FSU. “The athletes have always been excited to play, but I think they are more excited now that they have their fan base back,” the former football coach said.

Currently, FSU Athletics is operating under the Mountain East Conference (MEC) Covid-19 Protocols and Recommendations for Winter Sports, which aligns with FSU’s Covid-19 policy. Vaccinated student-athletes no longer have to take a covid test the day of each game and are able to participate in sporting events without wearing masks. All athletes, faculty, staff, and spectators are currently required to participate in the FSU Covid-19 Check-In Portal before entering a game or practice. Also, non-vaccinated participants still

must follow a strict testing protocol.

While the many policy changes could serve to deter high-level athletic performance, for Stevenson it has done the opposite. In working to ensure the safety of FSU athletes as his top priority, he has embraced the numerous, ever-shifting challenges associated with Covid-19. “It can be tough,

especially when you have different areas with different mandates that are always changing. Each state has different rules and with athletics we are constantly traveling from Maryland to Pennsylvania or West Virginia, so you are trying to figure out what rules each state has,” he said. “We just try to focus on telling our students to keep the mask on and ensure that they are safe throughout this time.”

Stevenson has not let the constant policy changes get him down. Whether there is a new Covid-19 safety update released every day of the week or not, he will continue working tirelessly to not only keep his student-athletes safe but ensure that athletics will be there to also help students cope with the stress they’ve endured during these trying times.

“With FSU re-opening more facilities like the swimming pool, the weight room, and the cardio room, the students are able to regain a sense of normalcy. It has been great to allow them to have a place to release stress again; so many of them had spoken about how they just had to stay in a single room during the pandemic,” Stevenson said. “All of this is bringing our students back to that sense of normalcy, while ensuring their safety remains my top priority.”

This article was written in the spring semester of 2022 and reflects the current athletic policies during that time. The policies have changed since this article went to press, showing how the pandemic is evolving and policies are ever changing.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). (2020, February 11). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/whats-new-all.html>

TRANSITIONING INTO TEACHING, AS A CAREER CHANGER



DIONNE PELLEW

Anne Winters: First off, I want to thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to sit down with me virtually. Can you tell me a little bit about your background?

Dionne Pellew: I was born in Guyana, South America. Elementary Education was not my original choice as a career path, my original degree was in History from Oakwood University in Huntsville, AL.

Anne: Was it an easy transition for you to move from Guyana to the US as a child?

Dionne: No, it was not at all. I came from a background where there was so much inclusion within my household, my neighborhood, and our school. When I came here, I was surprised to see that the kids in American schools were separated into groups. I simply couldn't understand why they were separated. If I went to attempt to include myself into one of the groups, I was looked at like I was either crazy or that I did not belong there. It was definitely not an easy transition.

Anne: It is baffling how Americans seem to rely on this system of grouping, it is sad

that we find ourselves separating from one another on the smallest of issues. Coming from South America moving to the United States, you have experienced the ups and downs of gun violence and social ills against people of color. Do you feel as if the pandemic has increased these events?

Dionne: I don't necessarily think that there is an increase in violence against people of color. I think that social media and everyone having cell phones has brought these events into light. Yes, there is a history of violence and social ills against many groups of Americans to varying degrees. When the Covid pandemic hit, everyone was mandated to stay home and had an opportunity to stand still and witness these events firsthand. I believe that without the pandemic; these events would have been on the news but not to the magnitude we have experienced. I believe in showing empathy as well as treating everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of their background.

Anne: It seems as if the world and our nation are preparing for the end of the Covid-19 pandemic, do you feel like life is back to normal at Walkersville Elementary?

Dionne: I feel as though I am in the middle on this issue. I have seen some progression on those wanting to move away from the masks, but also have seen a rise of students being tested positive for Covid-19, which is scary. My personal view is that we need to keep these masks

on until we can see the pandemic truly ending. Everyday there is new research and new strains being discovered. I do see that we are in the middle with students, teachers, and parents coming away from the mask wearing; but I don't think we are quite there yet.

Anne: How about safety in regard to exposure, do you feel safer now in Walkersville than you did in the beginning of the pandemic?

"I came from a background where there was so much inclusion within my household, my neighborhood, and our school. When I came here, I was surprised to see that the kids in American school were separated into groups"

Dionne: I think I feel less safe than I was in the beginning due to the class sizing restrictions being adjusted. The class I am currently in just increased to 27 students. The desks are too close together. Originally, we were required to place the student's desks 6 feet apart, then that spacing was reduced to 3 feet. Now, there seems to be no restrictions regarding where our children's desks are to be placed. I noticed an increase in Covid-19 exposure among students and staff, this scares me. Also, I would really like to advocate for smaller classroom sizes. I believed in this pre-Covid. Within the public school system, I am concerned about the classroom sizes. The classroom sizes are just too large,

to provide differentiated instruction and meet students' needs, classroom sizes should be smaller.

Anne: Does Frederick County offer any sort of virtual or hybrid learning environment for the students at the moment?

Dionne: Not that I am aware, I know that when a child tests positive for Covid-19 they do need to attend virtually, but it is instead pre-recorded instruction that the student needs to watch with their parents. After the quarantine time period has ended, they will then return to the classroom and turn in the work from those virtual sessions.

Anne: Do you currently you have any virtual or hybrid courses at the FSU USMH campus for the MAT-E program?

Dionne: I have had a hybrid experience throughout the past year, I have participated in face-to-face classes with Dr. McGee as well as virtual. I think there is a difference in the learning environment, but I would prefer the virtual option. I notice that a lot of other students tend to pull their mask down when speaking, out of habit, and I am very big on being clean. Even before the pandemic I was constantly sanitizing. I sanitize my desk and wear gloves; I realize that people do not wash their hands properly and, in the classroom, setting you end up sharing materials so I would definitely prefer a virtual setting if there was an option.

Anne: In terms of your mentor teacher and your program coordinator, Dr. McGee, do you feel as if they have been sensitive to your life and how it has needed to change during the pandemic? Have they been open to your ideas and understanding?

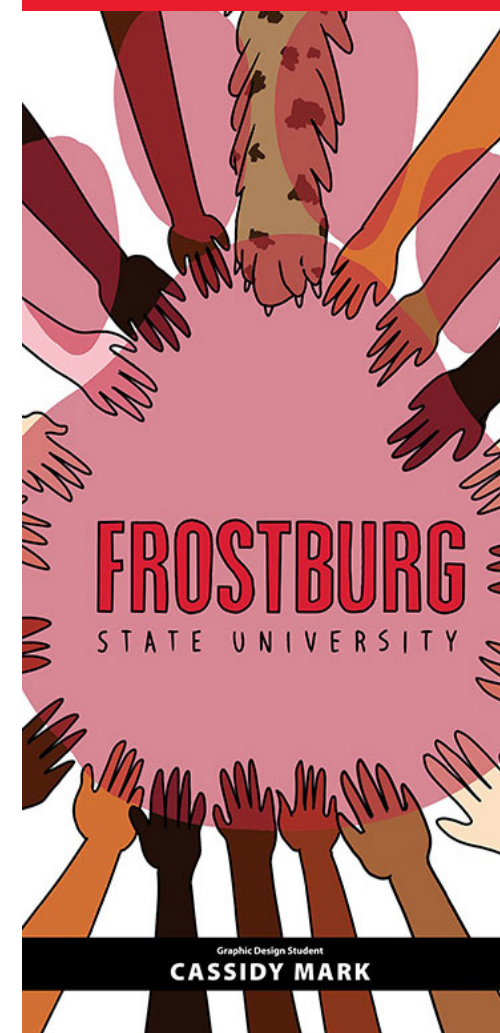
Dionne: Dr. McGee is kind, respectful, and understanding. She cares about everyone in the MAT-E program and want us all to succeed. I absolutely love Dr. McGee; she understands how intense this program is and provides guidance and support. She

is extremely sensitive to changes in my life during the pandemic. She understands why I sanitize my desk and have my own supplies. She is also very responsive, even on her cell phone after hours. My mentor, Ms. Fox, is consistently kind and supportive. From my initial email this previous summer when I introduced myself, I immediately felt her warm welcome. After meeting her in person, my initial view/feeling of her remained. She is an excellent mentor to me and teacher to the students in her classroom. She has truly guided me through my internship with lesson planning, classroom management, assessments, and provided opportunities for me to learn and grow. If I make a mistake she supports and encourages me.

Anne: I remember from listening to you speak at the Maryland Accelerates' Executive Advisory Board Meeting that your main goal is to become the teacher of record. In terms of your career how has it shaped you to want to become a teacher?

Dionne: Growing up, I loved history due to my experience with my social studies teacher in middle school, she was engaging, and I fell in love with how she taught. I decided to major in History in college but was unsure of how this degree would transition to a career. I initially decided to pursue teaching History in middle school, but after one week of interning I knew that this career path was not for me.

Throughout the years I have worked as a secretary at a law firm and even owned my own daycare center. It was not until recently that I finally decided to pursue my career goals and found the Maryland Accelerates Program. In 2021, I started taking classes towards my degree and now am on my way to becoming a certified teacher.



In 2021 President Nowachyz proposed a plan to refresh the campus light pole banners to complement the changes coming to the Frostburg State skyline. Cassidy Mark's design was chosen to reflect the racial inclusion and diversity of Frostburg State.

"My banner depicts the racial inclusion and diversity our University encompasses with its students. I also wanted to show the strength of equality and acceptance to anyone regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or gender. Everyone deserves to feel loved by their community."

Cassidy Mark graduated from Frostburg State University in December of 2021 with a BA of Fine/Studio Arts. Cassidy is also currently the Creative Director at Mr. Toad's Pottery in Lavale, MD.

Cassidy Mark, FSU Alumni '21

MAINTAINING NORMALCY, SANITY, & LAUGHTER DURING THE PANDEMIC

Anne Winters: After two years of living with Covid and major social justice events, what do you think about your hopes for the future of education and social justice?

Lukas O'Brien, Student Affairs Chair, SGA, FSU: I feel as if the future is more pessimistic now than optimistic, especially for those who are preparing to graduate high school. My sister is getting ready to graduate and she doesn't view the pathway to her future in education. I think we are seeing that with our retention rates here at Frostburg as well. We are asking so many questions regarding why that is happening, but it is right here in front of us: its Covid and social justice.

Maden Campbell, Senator, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, SGA, FSU: Education just seems so small in the scale of everything, when you ask high school seniors what they are going to do with their future it just seems like education is not on their mind since there are just too many things happening in the world that is distracting them from getting an education.

Angel Young, Senator, Student Affairs Committee, SGA, FSU: I'm a bit of a pessimist when it comes to "hopes for the future." I don't see much hope in the future of education and social justice. While there is much being done by advocates to foster truthful and inclusive education (e.g., critical race theory, African American and Native American history, etc.) The goals and actions of government at a state and federal level do not align with the goals of those advocating for change. Similarly, while there is much being done to facilitate social justice and social change at a grassroots level, there needs to be state and federal action in order for systemic change to take place, and the way things are now, I cannot see that happening in the near future.

Jasmine Bonomolo, Senator, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, SGA, FSU: Kids are getting affected by the learning environment, working with first graders has shown me that these kids didn't get the foundation they needed to be successful. We're gonna see kids who are behind because of how they had to start the important years. With social justice I don't think a pandemic is going to change that. We've always had the issue and if anything it's only gotten worse because we have a justice system that works against us.

Anne Winters: Have these events changed your view on your major or the career you want to pursue after you graduate?

Lukas: There is definitely mounting pressure on students right now. I have seen a lot of major changes recently, I think some students are dealing with stress in other parts of their lives which causes them to embrace an easier career path or degree during these times.

Mayden: My sister is also a high school senior, she really wants to be a nurse. She still is head-strong in support of this goal, but my mom is thinking this is not the best option for her and hoping she can open her mindset. This is mostly because of all the stress that was put on healthcare workers during covid.

Jasmine: It hasn't. I still want to go into either adolescent psychology or industrial organizational psychology.

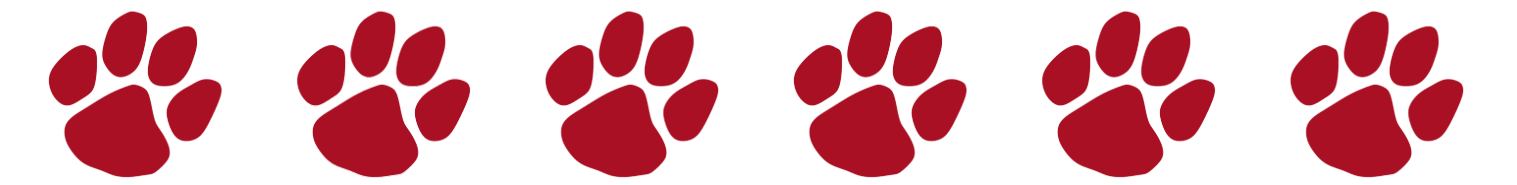
Angel: This has motivated me to pursue clinical psychology as a career after graduation. I would specifically like to open my own practice that specializes in working with minority individuals. While immediate systemic change may not be plausible my hope is that I can make an impact within my sphere of influence so that minorities can feel that they are seen, heard, valued, and that their concerns are addressed.

Anne: Do you feel that gun violence and other social ills against the people of color have increased during the pandemic?

Angel: Yes absolutely. The racially charged rhetoric of Donald Trump's presidency and the biases of the news media in the years



LUKAS O'BRIEN & MAYDEN CAMPBELL



following have facilitated increased gun violence and social ills against people of color AND LGBT individuals. Specifically, that of African Americans, Latinx peoples, and Asian Americans.

Jasmine: I think we see it more because we're in our phones more. It was always happening just a lot more cameras around to catch it.

Anne: In regards to the Covid-19 Pandemic, do you feel as though life is almost back to normal?

Mayden: A little bit, I feel like people have gotten used to wearing a mask now. You wear them everyday, you don't leave the house without your mask, you have a mask in your car. I think that we are not getting back to normal but instead understanding that this is our new normal.

Angel: I feel in some ways life is back to normal; we're able to gather in one place and host events. However, there is a new normal in that we have to take extra precautions (e.g., getting vaccinated for COVID-19 annually and wearing masking in public spaces) to protect ourselves from these variants.

Anne: Do you feel safer now, than the beginning of the pandemic, at student events and organizations?

Jasmine: I am pregnant and I feel like my safety is low due to the amount of un-vaccinated individuals.

Angel: I feel safer at students events and organizations because most of the time rules require participants to wear masks. Plus, I'd like to think that the majority of the on-campus population has been vaccinated.

Lukas: When I first got here for Fall of 2020, I was living at EdWood. During the first week I realized that I just did not feel safe so I ended up packing up, leaving, and switching to fully virtual for that semester. However now I am an RA so I do have a lot of contact with my residents. So, I am still a little afraid, but I think I am less afraid now because there are a lot of people on campus vaccinated and everyone wears a mask now. It is a relief to be here now after all that we have went through.

Anne: As a student, do you feel that with virtual learning, "the digital divide", and access to the internet during covid has hampered the ability for you to learn and be the best student you can be?

Mayden: Last semester I took Math. I am not the brightest soul at math, but at the end of the day I have always passed math, but last semester I did not because it was virtual. I was not planning to take a virtual math class, but the class was changed from in-person to virtual the day before it started. I decided to take Statistics this semester and my professor is wonderful, and I am definitely understanding more now that it is in person.

Lukas: I am in the same boat as Madden with math classes. Last year I had a Statistics course that was supposed to be in person, but at the last minute it was switched to virtual. I wanted to finish it, but halfway through the semester I was so unhappy with my grad that I decided to withdraw. That was my first every "W". I took the class again in person and received an A, it really does show the difference in learning environments when you are in person vs virtual for those tougher classes, like math.

Angel: I personally have not been impacted by the digital divide. I have access to internet and technology.

Anne: Are there courses that you took during the pandemic that were online or hybrid and you feel that had they been face-to-face you would have received a better grade?

Jasmine: Absolutely, 100%.

Angel: I received all As during the pandemic, but not without struggle. I definitely struggled with perfectionism, isolation anxiety, burnout, and lack of motivation. So, it took a lot to get the grades I did.

Anne: Do you feel as though professors are sensitive to how life has changed for you as a student during the pandemic?

Angel: Most, if not all, of the professors I had were sensitive to how life changed for me as a student during the pandemic. At one point, I caught COVID and thankfully I had wonderful professors who were understanding and willing to give me time to recover and get back on track. But I understand the same can't be said for others.

Jasmine: Some yes some no. Some people don't grasp the real fear because there are some professors who don't even believe in the pandemic.

The left portion of the cover page was designed by Natasha Randolph, FSU Alumni '21

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