

# TODAY

Spring 2020

## Maverick Spring

Stories of heartbreak, heroics  
and leadership in the time of  
the COVID-19 pandemic



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**Volume 21**

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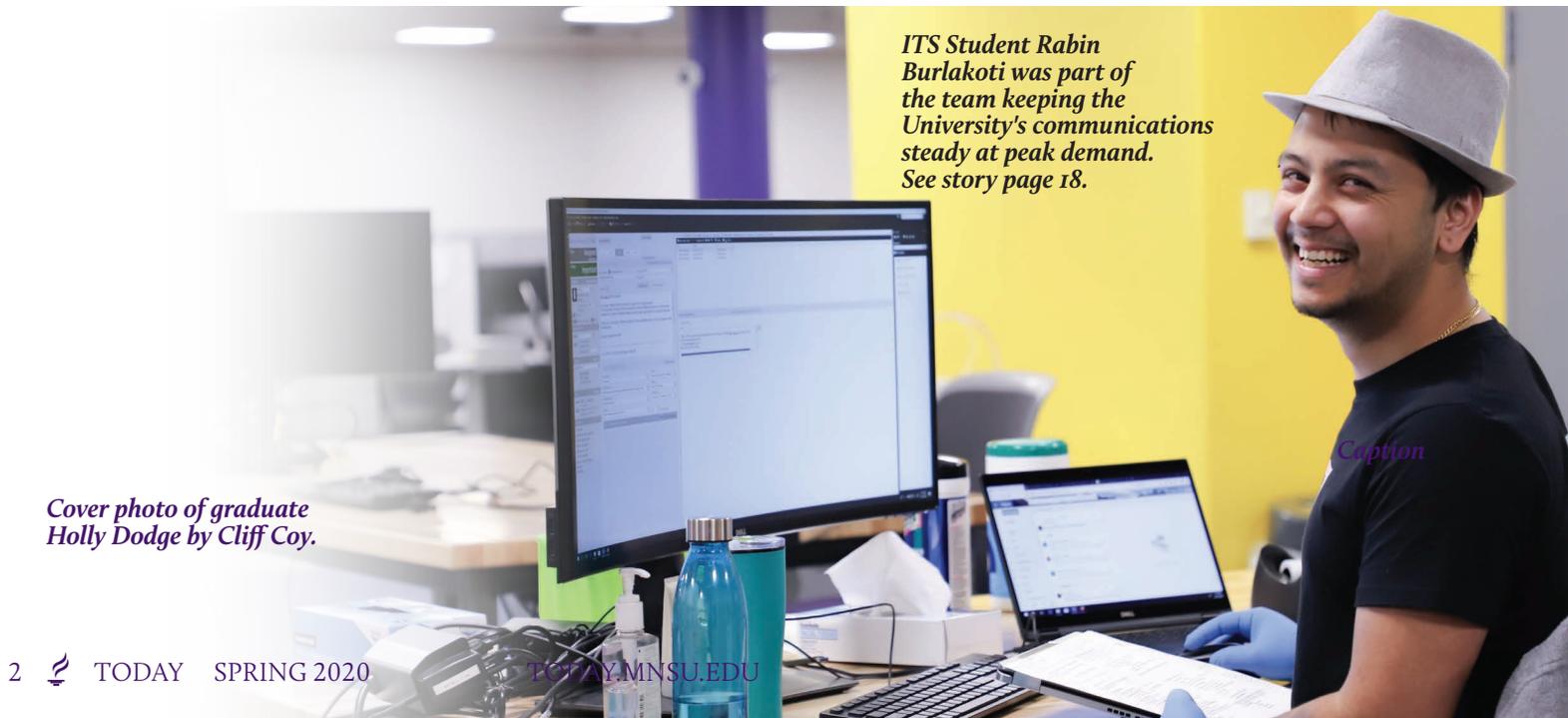
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*Cover photo of graduate Holly Dodge by Cliff Coy.*

*Caption*





**Richard Davenport**, President

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**Richard Straka**, Vice President for Finance & Administration

**Bobby Fleischman**, Vice President for Strategic Partnerships

**Henry Morris**, Vice President for Diversity & Inclusion

**Sheri Sargent**, Chief of Staff

## TODAY

SPRING 2020 ..... VOLUME 21 ISSUE 1  
 EDITORIAL DIRECTOR ..... Sara Gilbert Frederick  
 EDITOR ..... Joe Tougas '86  
 DESIGNER ..... James Mackey  
 PHOTOS ..... Linda Clavel, Mansoor Ahmad, Cliff Coy,  
 ..... Amy Linde, Mark Johnson, Aaron Humble  
 PRINTER ..... Corporate Graphics Commercial  
 WRITERS ..... Drew Lyon '06, Grace Brandt '13,  
 ..... Helen Healy '92, Amber Lundsten '20  
 PRINT COORDINATOR ..... Ryan Schuh '00  
 CONTRIBUTING STAFF ..... Dan Benson,  
 Kim Rademaker '93, Connie Wodtke '91

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**MINNESOTA STATE**

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

## ON MAVERICK SPIRIT IN ACTION

As I consider everything that's happened in the past few months, I could not be prouder to stand with the faculty, staff and students who responded as they did this spring to keep safety as the top priority as we confronted the most significant challenge to this university in its 150-year lifetime.

Consider that within a matter of weeks:

- Faculty quickly and creatively modified more than 3,000 classes to an online delivery format.
- Information Technology Solutions worked day and night to ensure our infrastructure could handle the sudden, seismic demand for online services.
- Students sacrificed not only in-person access to their instructors and classrooms but also the games, club meetings, and time with friends that make up the best memories of college life.
- In real-time response to news of a growing and deadly pandemic, administrators ranging from the system chancellor to every department chair at Minnesota State Mankato communicated action plans quickly and with unassailable clarity and purpose.
- Every Minnesota State Mankato student was contacted, most by phone, to have any questions answered. Those contacts, we were told, reassured students and families that the University was here, concerned and ready to help.
- The disappointment of a cancelled graduation ceremony was lightened by a personalized gift-box and email delivery to each graduate, coordinated by our Advancement Division.

Yet the challenges aren't over for either the University or for the students we serve.

It has been remarkable to see the generosity of our alumni, faculty, staff and friends during this difficult time. By the first week of May, we had raised more than \$60,000 to support students in need during the pandemic. Two-thirds of that came from faculty and staff, who contributed to our MavCares fund during a campaign in April. The rest was given by people like you—alumni and friends of the University.

These next few months will present new challenges, and many of us will face hardships we can't yet imagine. If you are in a position to give, please consider the needs of our students; you can learn more about giving opportunities at [mnsu.edu/giving](http://mnsu.edu/giving). If you find yourself in need, please reach out as well. Our Alumni Association can help direct you to resources, such as the Career Development Center, that may be able to help.

Thank you for your continued support of Minnesota State University, Mankato. We will get through this difficult time together.

# Key Dates of the Coronavirus

A timeline of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 
- Feb. 29** Under direction from Minnesota State Chancellor Devinder Malhotra, President Richard Davenport issues restrictions on overseas travel out of "an abundance of caution."
- March 4** A university webpage is created to share the most up-to-date information on COVID-19's impact on University life. (See story, P. 18)
- March 11** The University assembles a Pandemic Response Team to closely monitor the COVID-19 epidemic and its impacts on faculty, staff and students.
- March 12** The World Health Organization declares the spread of COVID-19 a pandemic, spanning 112 countries and regions.
- Minnesota State Chancellor Devinder Malhotra announces that the schools currently on spring break get a one-week extension, moving the return date from March 16 to March 23.
- Davenport announces that beginning March 23, all coursework at Minnesota State University, Mankato will resume and be delivered through online or alternative instruction.
- March 13** Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz ('02) declares a peacetime emergency and discourages gatherings of more than 250 people. Minnesota State officials announce that on-campus classes for the remainder of the semester will be moved online or to alternative delivery.
- March 15** Walz announces the closing of public schools beginning on Wednesday, March 18 through Friday, March 27.
- Spring break at Minnesota State Mankato is extended to March 30 to allow instructors and students to prepare for the move online. (See the story, P. 12)
- March 17** Davenport directs all University employees who can work from a remote location to do so.
- March 19** In-person commencement ceremonies are cancelled for Minnesota State colleges and universities.
- March 23** Walz goes into self-quarantine when a staff member is found to have the virus.
- Walz suspends evictions during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency.
- March 24** The University confirms that a member of the campus community was diagnosed with COVID-19; The Minnesota Department of Health determines the risk of exposure to the University is low.
- March 25** Walz continues the closure of bars, restaurants and other places of accommodation until May 1.
- Walz directs Minnesotans to stay at home beginning on Friday, March 27 through Friday, April 10.
- April 8** Walz extends the stay-at-home order and temporary closure of bars, restaurants, and other places of public accommodation.
- Davenport announces a University decision to allow students to choose Pass/No-Credit grading for Spring 2020 courses.
- May 9** The Mavgrad2020 website opens, congratulating the spring graduates on what would have been the day of their commencement ceremony. Among the messages is an invitation to a December commencement.

# Winning Ideas in Any Format



The annual student entrepreneur showcase and competition carried on. It was a virtual success.

Ordinarily a big night in the Ostrander Auditorium, the Big Ideas Challenge this spring had some challenges of its own to manage. But the contest continued and the show-down on April 14 yielded not only a winner, but one of the biggest audiences yet.

And everyone had a good view.

The winner of the competition, junior Logan Sendle, received both \$5,000 as the judge's pick and \$2,000 as People's Choice. His business, Lakeshore Potential, provides weed-cutting services for lakefront properties with equipment that relies on a modified rake and rope, not chemicals.

"When I was 8 years old I lived on a lake and I couldn't fish and I couldn't swim off the dock," Sendle narrates in the pitch video shown to judges and audience members. "My dad gave me a garden rake and told me to go fix my problem." The business formally started with his father 10 years ago, and he took it as his own full-time job in the summer of 2019.

Equipped with a wildly expanded version of a rake—replete with blades—Sendle's Lakeshore Potential is a DNR-certified operation that eliminates weeds within a 2,500 square foot area around docks. The potential in a state with 11,842 lakes is huge.

In a novel move for the contest, judges awarded two second-place winners. The second-place finishers, taking home \$2,500 each, were Sam Csizmadia of Csizmadia Lawn Care and Abdelrahman Elkenawy, Kaitlyn Gloege and Alex Shepherd of Hearing Glasses—a project to develop eyeglasses equipped with voice recognition and closed caption-like capabilities to provide text to spoken words.



*Logan Sendle and his lakefront-raking business, Lakeshore Potential, won the competition, which took place online.*

Jared Klingenberg's business, Downed Duck, won the \$3,000 award in the Agriculture/Food/Beverage prize. Other finalists were Steven Rencher of Scritcher and Ajibola and Christina Asaolu of Kefeti.

The six contenders were selected in a process that began in November when applications opened and continued through early February. Judges selected the finalists, who had from March 3 to early April to prepare a full business plan and pitch presentation.

Sendle watched the awards presentation at his home in Mankato near campus. It was as festive as could be, but he had to be further secluded during the awards.

"I had to be in my room alone because we still had to be on the live call," he said. "You had to answer some questions and stuff. But all my roommates were downstairs watching it on TV in the living room."

Advisor/mentors to the students throughout the process included Mark Bietz of Fun.com, April Femrite of Coldwell Banker and Sarah Richards of Jones Metal. Six judges then reviewed the plans and interviewed students.

When in March it became clear the event would need to go online, The Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship helped students make the change from a tech standpoint, all the while trying not to add to any further stress to the young businesses.

"They were resilient and up for anything—true entrepreneurs," said Yvonne Cariveau, director of the CIE. And the event, though online, was an unusual success.

"We were able to accomplish the event at a lower cost and had one of our largest Big Ideas ever. It wasn't quite the same, but it was fun and was hugely encouraging for these young entrepreneurs," Cariveau said.

Sendle said he's relieved the event carried on and had high praise for the turnaround and production.

"I was worried it was going to get cancelled," he said. "But Yvonne and her team did a great job with transferring it online. And it was a great learning experience because I'm sure in the coming season a lot more stuff will be online." 📌

— Joe Tougas

# OUR SPACES



## It's On

On May 4, the University fountain was turned on as a reminder that Minnesota State Mankato is eager to return to business as usual.

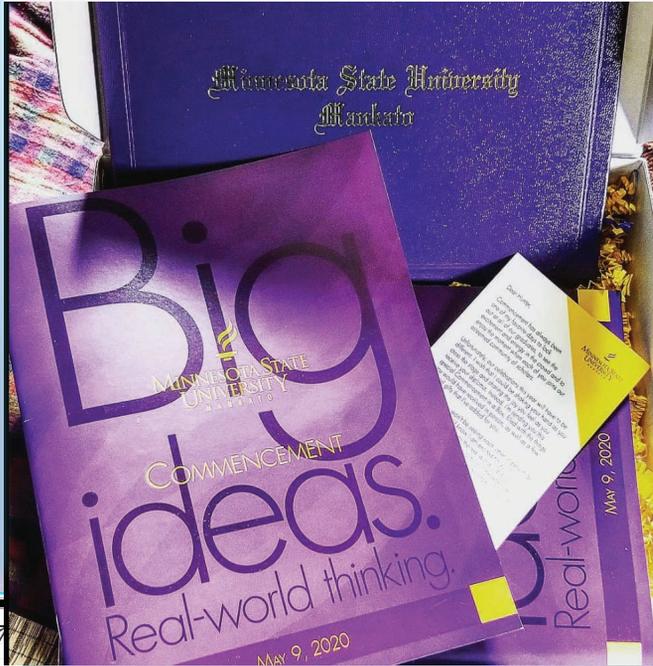
President Richard Davenport wanted it on as a symbol that everything is being done to have open doors come fall semester with safety and well-being at the forefront.

“Even though there aren’t many people around,” Davenport said of the fountain, “it’s what students love about this time of year.”

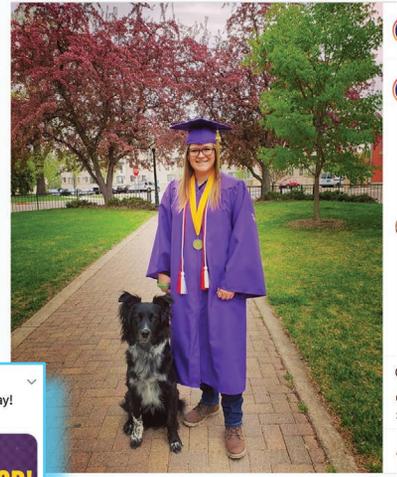
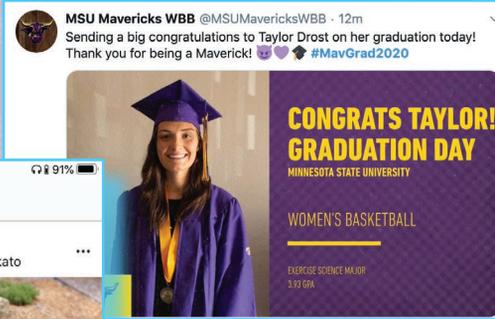
*Photo Illustration by Linda Clavel*



# MAVERICK SCENE



Graduating students took to social media on what would have been commencement day to post scenes from their individual celebrations. See the full story (page 30) on measures the University took to honor and congratulate the graduates.



# STATISTICAL FIRSTS

New numbers brought on by the pandemic.

150

Number of laptops provided to students by Information Technology Solutions.

800

Average number of Zoom daily meetings in April 2020.

20

Average number of Zoom daily meetings in February 2020.

3,033

Classes shifted to online.

334,405

Number of total University-related Zoom meeting minutes used on April 2.

\$61,000

(and counting)

Emergency funds raised among staff for students.

\$500,000

Missed revenue from activities ranging from high school track meets, swim lessons, theater and science fairs.

12,528

Number of students contacted by University staff during stay-at-home.

2,294

Graduates receiving alternative commencement packages during graduation week, May 4-9.

\$6 million

Amount of room and board refunds to students.

\$175,000

Parking refunds sent to students for spring semester.

\$300,000

Travel refunds provided to students for cancelled international travel.

1,400

Faculty and staff who left campus to work at home.

# POWER SURGE

Everything hinged on being connected. Everything hinged on the University's IT Solutions.

By Joe Tougas



*Above: The University ordered 150 laptops for students during the pandemic.*

*Left: A secure pick-up site was set up outside Wissink Hall.*

Before the University went into pandemic mode, its Zoom online-meeting platform was used about 20 times a day. By April, it was averaging 800 meetings a day, with one of those days tallying more than 300,000 meeting minutes.

Handling Zoom was just one of the demand issues that kept the University's 50-plus member Information Technology Solutions staff and 100 students busy as University life went from buildings and classrooms to kitchen tables and laptops.

"We had to put up a whole bunch of other technology that allowed people to use what they did at their home desk, their home office or their home kitchen," said Mark Johnson, vice president and chief information officer of IT Solutions. "They had to really pivot to that. So the team really pulled together and implemented a whole bunch of really unique technology that allowed people to work from home."

While students and faculty were on the extended spring break, during which time they were told classes would resume online, the ITS teams had their work cut out for them.

"We had to figure out how to get all that information pulled together, organized, delivered and accessible to people," Johnson said.

Part of that involved enhancing the existing virtual private network (VPN,) which allows a user to access university networks while away from campus. The ITS team not only expanded the VPN, it created a similar, better system that allowed hundreds of users access. Usage went from 50 people at the start of work-at-home to upwards of 500 by late April.

While programs such as Zoom get plenty of attention nationwide during the pandemic, the trick was to transform everyday work tasks for faculty and non-instructors online, he added.

"Some people had to do things like accounts payable, accounts receivable and they could only do it inside the university so we protect the information," Johnson said. "We had to help them be able to do it outside the university but still protect the information. Some people had to make hundreds and hundreds of phone calls to students which we've never done before. But they had to make it so that they did not have to use their own cell phone—we gave them technology they could use on their computer to make phone calls from the campus, from their homes."

One reason ITS was able to function well for the entire campus was that staff are not only assigned as ITS con-

tacts to various colleges and programs, they're embedded in those programs.

"We call them solutions architects," Johnson said, "people with day-to-day responsibilities inside each organization. ... That is a perfect fit for when this started to happen. I had people deployed all through the organizations, [saying] here's what we're doing or here's where we need help."

When it became clear in conversations with student government that not all students were tech-heavy, that some in fact didn't have laptops, ITS purchased 150 that students could use. The library staff arranged a safe, drive-up pick-up site.

ITS also upgraded its wifi service so that it would be available in parking lot 11 for students who didn't have access elsewhere. "Just all kinds of things to keep learning that we had to look at and figure out," Johnson said.

At the same time, the mission of ITS went beyond the technical, hence the creation of a key component of the University's coronavirus web page: Links titled Keep Teaching, Keep Working and Keep Learning. These linked users to guides for best practices and practical help in the often unfamiliar territory.

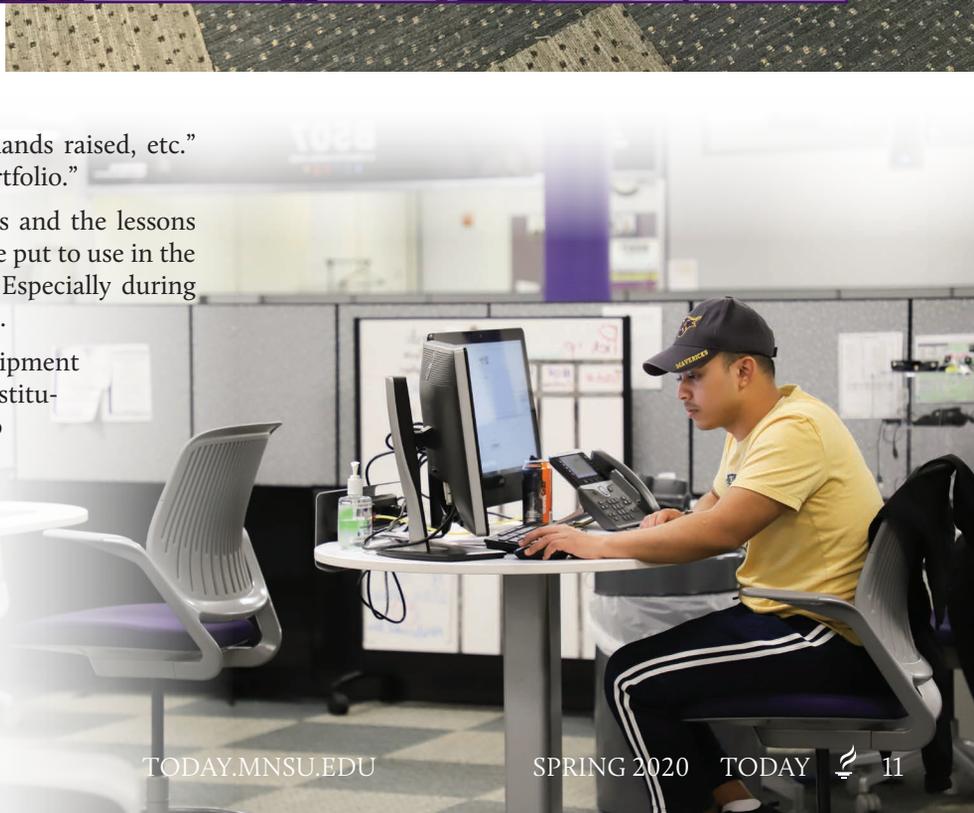
"If you're running a class and you're trying to get 60 people to participate, you're going to need a lot of help—how to get hands raised, etc." Johnson said. "So we developed a whole portfolio."

The extra equipment, the expanded access and the lessons learned in the pandemic response will all be put to use in the campus of the near-future, Johnson said. Especially during what will surely be challenging times ahead.

"We're integrating all these lessons, equipment and insights into how we advance the institution," he said. "We as ITS leaders can also be leaders of the institution. Not in the sense of taking things over, but in creating an environment in which we can pivot and change like we're going to have to." 🍃



*Top: Kristi Bakalyar, Campus Computer Store Director (left) and Cathy Hughes, ACIO for Solutions Delivery, stand with new laptops ordered for students. Middle and bottom: ITS worked around the clock to keep tech running correctly.*



# THE REALITY OF VIRTUAL

In record time, the University had to switch from in-person to online teaching and learning. Things got creative quick.

By Joe Tougas

It was less than ideal. That much was acknowledged by Interim Provost Matt Cecil when he passed along the information to faculty to begin planning going to online instruction in March.

"We recognize that this creates enormous challenges," Cecil wrote of the move to online. "It is going to require creativity and innovation in order to help our students succeed...Our goal must be to create learning opportunities that, while not ideal by any measure, address our students' needs and keep them on schedule for graduation."

As the IT Solutions division went to work ensuring the new work load would hold, hundreds of instructors and thousands of students had three weeks to essentially retrofit their teaching and learning into an online format.

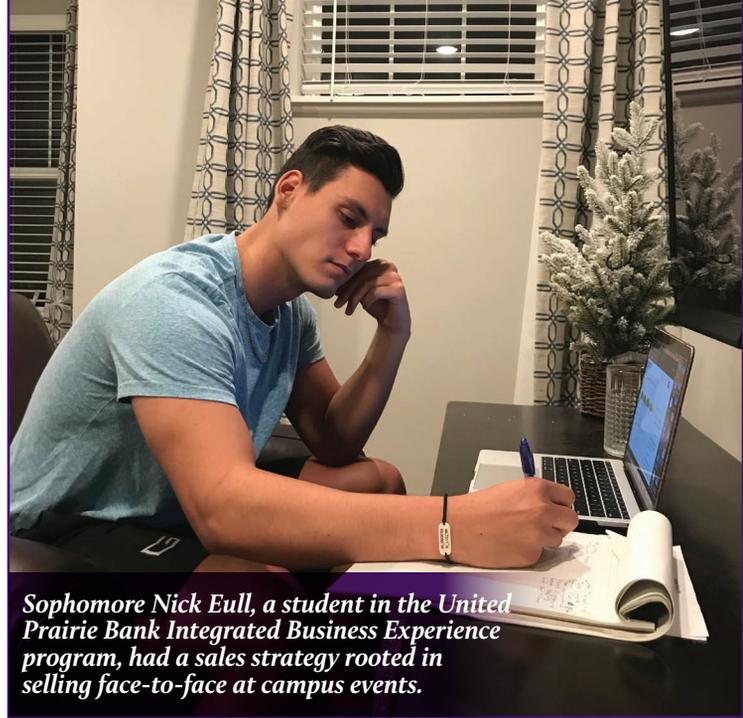
And as the experiment continues into summer, nobody's claiming the situation is ideal. But faculty managed and managed impressively by most accounts.

"It's pretty amazing," Cecil said near semester's end. "Is it perfect? No. Everybody agrees it's not perfect and it's certainly not the experience we want those students to have in those classes. ... That said, we've heard mostly good reviews. Students have told us they think their faculty members are doing the best they can. They understand it's an emergency situation."

## SUBSTITUTE LAB

Ordinarily in her Human Physiology class, Rachel Cohen's first-year students have a fairly fun time measur-

*Biology professor Rachel Cohen's RISEbio and human physiology courses rely on labs that had to be left behind.*



*Sophomore Nick Eull, a student in the United Prairie Bank Integrated Business Experience program, had a sales strategy rooted in selling face-to-face at campus events.*

ing aspects of their own physiology such as respiration and blood pressure. When they no longer had access to the lab's equipment, Cohen had other data for them to analyze at home. In terms of enthusiasm, it was a clear letdown.

"We have student data from previous semesters—so what we've done to move to online is instead of having the students do the fun part, which is the data collection part, they get the data to analyze. So I guess we took the fun part out of lab," Cohen said.

"It's sort of working, but just from what interactions I have had with the students, they don't like it. I don't like it either."

Throughout the early stages of the transition, President Richard Davenport heard daily from students, and his take on the switch was that the sooner the experiment can return to normal the better.

"Initially they were OK with online, but my general sense is they're not looking forward to this in the future," Davenport said.

Cohen's move to online fared a bit better in her RISEbio course designed to give first-year students lab research experience. Without access to labs, students have been using videos provided by the company that produces devices and software used in class. In addition, Cohen has created optional meetings on the Zoom platform with student lab sections.

"They like that," she said. "I think they all feel really isolated so having that aspect added to lab has really, I think, made lab better. The first couple labs I didn't do that for them, and I think it's really helped that we started doing the breakout rooms in Zoom."

The pivot has been a significant one for her, Cohen said, noting the list of to-do items grows longer as she tends to work mentoring research students,

chairing a search committee and staying in touch with hundreds of students.

"I feel every day like I'm barely keeping my head above water," she said.

Davenport knows the feeling.

"I do think it's going to get tiring to continue with all-remote teaching online," he said. "Not only for the students but the faculty as well."

## THE ART OF CHANGE

Art professor Brian Frink tended to grade students in his three drawing classes on their interaction with each other and with him in the art studios. With that missing, he asked them to look inward—and draw what they discovered.

"In this very unique moment in human history, it would be nice of them to reflect what they're going through," Frink said. "So I'm having them do what I'm calling an Armageddon Journal or an Apocalypse Journal and just journaling every day, doing drawings. I set that as a basis for all three classes."

In laying out expectations for his students to journal, he also made sure they didn't sweat grades. Everybody in his class received an A.

"If we do this next fall, and God help us if we do, then I have to figure out a different way to make them accountable for what they do through grading," Frink said. "But it was so sudden and so severe and just kind of BOOM, I thought well, we're just going to move forward and not worry about grading."

## A CHANGE IN BUSINESS PLANS

Sophomore business student Nick Eull is the CEO of Noble Ice, a company he and fellow students created in the Integrated Business Experience. In that program, students create actual companies—involving bank loans and marketing plans and, ideally, profit. Noble Ice produced backpack coolers and other items, and the sales plan was based entirely on selling at campus events.

That plan, of course, wasn't going to work.

"It was hard getting everyone on the same page when everyone's kind of spread out at home, now, and some people are across the country and some people are still in Mankato," Eull said from his parents' cabin in Elk River.

Through Zoom meetings with fellow company members, they re-tooled their sales plan by everybody taking a direct approach with their own contacts—friends, family, anybody—to make sales.

"We were able to adapt," Eull said. "We've had to do a little bit more outreach and a little more work to sell some of them. But we've still been able to make all our money back, paid back our loan and stayed on top of everything."



*Art professor Brian Frink recorded a series of videos to demonstrate his process to his beginning drawing and painting classes. He assigned his students journals.*

## SAM'S STORY

Art student Sam Brown received an undergraduate research grant for a work that wound up being too big to take home. His 6-foot-by-6-foot painting became off limits with the stay-at-home orders.

He's not only missing the work, he's missing the give-and-take of Frink's art class.

"I would interact with other students who probably had total different philosophies on art and total different viewpoints on the meaning behind their art," Brown said.

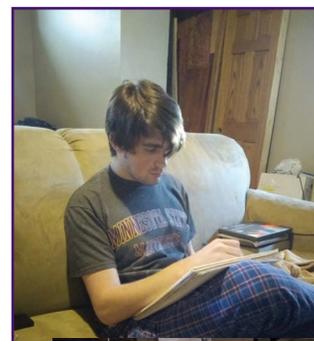
"That mini-culture in that studio spot, interacting with print makers and drawing students, ceramicists, sculptors ... Interacting with all those other art people and people working in those different mediums has gone away and it's just kind of by myself. It's isolating."

Brown is nonetheless creating works—considerably smaller in size than his research project—while finding some fresh work in perspective.

"It feels kind of refreshing in a certain sense," he said. "You get a bit of a moment to slow down, and then just take in life for a little bit."

Davenport stresses that campus is eager to get back to classroom delivery, hopefully in the fall. And he's guessing students will be grateful for the return to hands-on learning.

"The sooner we get back to offering live classes—which I hope will be in the fall, and we're planning on that—it will make a huge difference about how our students feel about higher ed. And they'll probably come back with a much more sober sense of how important their education is." 🍃



*Art student Sam Brown lost access to the 6-foot painting he was working on as part of an undergraduate research grant.*

# Support System

Addressing international student needs during a global crisis

By Grace Brandt



Yamlak Abitew

Hit particularly hard by the stay-at-home orders issued in spring semester were the more than 1,100 international students who not only couldn't return home, but found themselves ineligible for some of the financial safety nets available to their American classmates.

"We have no families here," said Dolly Baruah,

a student from India who completed her undergraduate degree at the University before continuing on to her graduate studies. "Other than the University, we have no other place to go to ask for help."

The majority of international students live off-campus and are responsible for expenses such as rent and utilities. Meanwhile, by law, these students are only allowed to work on-campus, either for the University directly or for its contractors, such as food service provider Sodexo.

But as areas of campus shut down, so did student employment.

The University continues trying to support students in this area in several ways, said Anne Dahlman, interim dean of Global Education. A first step was a commitment to keep paying students' wages for their on-campus positions, such as graduate assistants, even if the students weren't able to continue their work.

For student workers who were employed by University partners, such as Sodexo, and lost their jobs, University administration members came up with another way to help financially: the COVID-19 Community History Project. This project is meant to document individuals' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, using student workers to reach out to people on- and off-campus. It includes archiving diaries, journals, interviews and other documents.

This project provides part-time work for about 200 students who lost their jobs with Sodexo.

The University also recently extended its emergency grant program, known as MavCares, to include international and

graduate students, who were previously not eligible for grants. The program pays up to \$1,000 toward expenses such as rent, bills or other necessities.

The University has been steadily working on fundraising and reaching out to donors. Faculty and staff contributed more than \$47,000 to MavCares during a campus campaign in April. In addition, the University is also working with Mayo Health System and Mankato Clinic to explore possible opportunities to provide healthcare services students if the situation requires.

Graduate assistants from the Kearney Center for International Students have worked as "coaches," each regularly connecting with a number of international students. The Center also hosts virtual social events to offer a sense of connection, and it organized several virtual townhalls, where students had the chance to share both their problems and their suggestions about how to help.

Sophomore Yamlak Abitew is an international student from Ethiopia who works at the Kearney Center. She said that she and her fellow student workers have been reaching out to other international students to ensure that they're aware of what resources are available to them.

These resources include the Campus Cupboard, a food shelf just outside of campus that's run by Crossroads Campus Ministry, and the University's Life Help website, which lists additional resources available to students.

"We've been trying our best to contact students with everything that we need," Abitew said. "[The University] sends out a lot of emails and just makes sure that we're good. I think they're doing a pretty good job at that."

"We're trying to give students lots of different connection points, so that hopefully we can find what they're comfortable with and give them someone to talk to," said Kearney Center Director Jacy Fry. "We want them to come to us if there's something we can help them with. We've got a lot of staff who are here, ready and able to help support these students."

"As of now, there's hope," said sophomore Ashrit Suresh, who came to the University from India. "But I dearly hope that this passes really, really soon, and I can get back to regular studies."

*"We want them to come to us if there's something we can help them with. We've got a lot of staff who are here, ready and able to help support these students."*

Jacy Fry  
Kearney Center Director

# Safe At Home

International students face unique struggles as a campus acts to help

By Drew Lyon

Instead of gearing up for classes, the approximately 2,600 Mavericks residing on campus this spring needed to decide where to hunker down for the final eight weeks of classes.

Most students returned home. But some Mavericks—primarily international students—had few, if any, housing alternatives.

Alim Nigmatjonov faced an agonizing decision. The marketing and international business major spent the school year living in Stadium Heights Residence Community as a Community Advisor. He also worked a part-time job on campus. Nigmatjonov is a native of Uzbekistan, and only the second student from the Central Asian country to attend Minnesota State Mankato. Initially, he contemplated returning home to his parents and younger brother.

“As soon as this happened, I had mixed feelings. Should I go back home or wait?” he said. “I didn’t know what was going to happen.”

He learned the Uzbekistan government mandates anyone flying from the U.S. must self-quarantine upon arrival for two weeks at a remote location. Not a good option, he said.

Nigmatjonov reconsidered. He stayed in Mankato. Hundreds of other students, particularly international students without family or alternative housing in the area, grappled with similar dilemmas. For first-year residents, it signaled an abrupt end to the 2019-20 on-campus living experience.

“We made sure students knew, if they needed to come back, we’ll do everything we can to work with them,” said Nicole Faust, the University’s Residential Life

assistant director for planning, marketing and administration. “We’re still providing services to students and the students have been understanding, but, of course, it’s tough for them.”

The University created an online form for students to complete if they were staying on campus. The University approved all student-housing requests. Nigmatjonov said filling out the form was a simple, quick process. His CA position—one of nearly 70 the University supports—earned him free housing at Stadium Heights; Nigmatjonov said he’s grateful the University allows him to live rent-free at Preska Hall even though he currently isn’t supervising students.

“I definitely feel supported here,” Nigmatjonov said. “I really feel like I was taken care of by Res Life because they are providing us housing and meals. It’s a very safe place here.”

In early April, the University consolidated most of the remaining students to Preska Residence Community to create an environment more conducive to social distancing.

“It’s hard for everyone right now,” Faust said, “because there aren’t a lot of people around and the students aren’t having a lot of one-on-one interactions.”

Nigmatjonov spends the bulk of his weekdays studying and logging onto his computer for classes. For leisure, he plays games on his phone, watches movies and connects with friends. He speaks with his family often.

“They call me too much because they’re quarantined, too,” he said with a laugh.

Throughout the duration of the pandemic, Faust said the University will continue supporting students such as Nigmatjonov. The road ahead is unclear, she said, but no Maverick will be left behind.

“Everyone’s trying their best to stay connected with students,” Faust said. “Everyone wants to do more. We just make the best of the situation—that’s all we can do.” ☺



*Alim Nigmatjonov is a residence hall CA from Uzbekistan.*



*Nicole Faust, Residential Life Assistant Director for Planning, Marketing and Administration.*

# FAMILY MATTERS

A pandemic highlighted the University's care for student well-being

By Joe Tougas



*Amy Staloch was among the staff in Student Success who reached out to thousands of students.*

Owatonna resident Carlie Berg had enough going on during her spring semester.

In her third year of an online business degree, she was taking 16 credits. She and her husband took care of their kids, 3 and 4, and Berg was adjusting to working at home, putting in 60 hours a week for an insurance firm.

When spring break was extended she had questions about expectations and deadlines in in one class, questions that weren't getting answered. And when she received a check-in call from the University, she explained her situation to the caller, who promised a follow-up.

"I honestly didn't expect to get a [return] call from anyone," Berg said.

The following day, she heard from Amy Staloch, Director of Student Success Communications and Systems, who listened to Berg's situation, then contacted the instructor in charge.

"She got in touch with the teacher and my advisor," Berg said. "Thankfully I got an extension from the teacher and then I just ... kind of plowed through that and ended up finishing the class. But she [Staloch] was really, really helpful and just very supportive. Honestly, if it wouldn't have been for her I probably just would have dropped out of the class or taken an F, which is way out of my normal. I'm usually almost a 4.0 student."

## THE OUTREACH

Berg's call was one of thousands made by dozens of faculty and staff to ensure students knew they were being thought about at a time when everybody seemed to have too much to handle.

It was a measure undertaken by the Student Success, Analytics and Integrated Planning Division, led by Lynn Akey. Once it was determined that spring semester would be extended and classrooms would be vacated, Student Success decided it would be vital to contact students and check in.

"We want to just offer some general support, demonstrate care, demonstrate support for them as they're transitioning and then acknowledging that as a campus, we're still here," Staloch said.

"Our primary message for these students was: We care. How are YOU doing?" she said.

It's a similar message to new incoming students, with the University's admissions staff answering questions from curious, sometimes anxious students. Like graduating high school senior Ainslee Hemmen.

Hemmen is the type of student who asks questions. Lots of them. A graduating senior of Rapid City (S.D.) Central High School, she chose to attend the Minnesota State Mankato after visiting twice.

"I just really fell in love with it," she said. "They have a lot of great resources, which kind of got me hooked

*"We know this is weird, it's weird for us, too. But we're giving [new students] updates on how the campus is reacting in real time."*

*Brian Jones,  
Director of Admissions*

and they have advisors on advisors on advisors. You can always get your questions answered.”

When the pandemic hit and the University operations dramatically shifted, Hemmen said her questions ramped up. First about orientation, then about her pre-med track.

“So it stressed me out a little because now I can’t talk to someone in person about this, like how am I going to get my questions answered?” She had by this point already felt a connection with the admissions team, which remains in touch with her.

“I get weekly emails from my admissions person,” she said, “weekly emails from them about what’s going on with the university and who I can call if I have more questions.”

She’s used the option frequently.

“I usually called the [admissions] office, and then they connect me to department heads in the pre-med department, or a biochemistry person. It’s all inter-connected and they know good people to talk to who know their stuff and who help you out.”

Hemmen never had to wait long for her questions to get answered, she said.

“Besides having to wait until a regular business day to get my questions answered, I could call whenever and get my questions answered immediately.”

Hemmen’s experience is the one that Brian Jones hopes to replicate while recruiting at a time of national uncertainty about everything, from the family to the fate of the nation.

When you find yourself recruiting in a pandemic, you deal with it directly.



*New enrollee Ainslee Hemmen of Rapid City, S.D. said her questions about fall were all answered quickly and contact with admissions was constant.*

The message to prospective students: “We know this is weird, it’s weird for us, too,” Jones said. “But we’re giving them updates on how the campus is reacting in real time and giving the opportunity for them to ask questions.”

“We’ve really been focusing on projecting how the university is caring for our current students, how our university is responding to a public health crisis and doing right by our students first.”

On-campus visits are a missed opportunity,



*Director of Admissions Brian Jones.*

although two years ago admissions invested in a virtual tour of the campus through a company called YouVisit.

Further, admissions staff are talking with prospective students via the Zoom meeting platform with PowerPoint links to everything from housing to inspirational Maverick videos for use in those conversations.

“So there’s one person presenting, and one person responding to questions in chat,” Jones said.

Jones said Admissions took steps to ease anxieties in a number of ways, including eliminating a May 1 deadline on enrollment decisions and not requiring SAT or ACT testing from incoming freshmen.

“So students who weren’t able to take that ACT test they planned on taking in April, we’ll consider them for admission based on their school transcripts,” Jones said.

The personal calls made to current students revealed a lot about them as well as how she views her job, Staloch said.

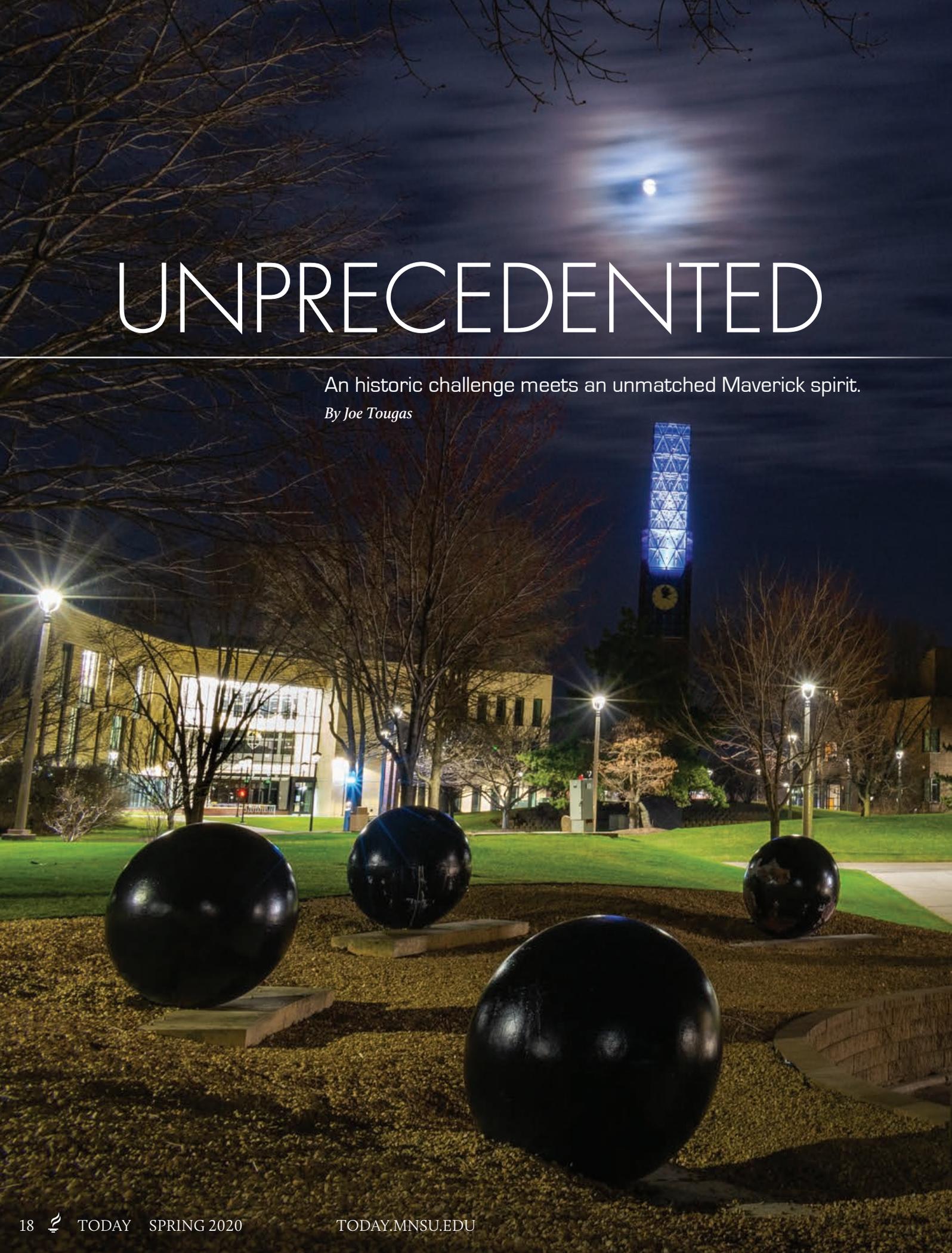
“Our professional roles aren’t going to be the same over the next few months, and I honestly don’t know if they’ll be the same going forward,” she said. “We’re getting a new perspective of where our students are at in their development, but also just in their day-to-day identities and their lives. We’ve got a lot of students going through a lot of transitions.”

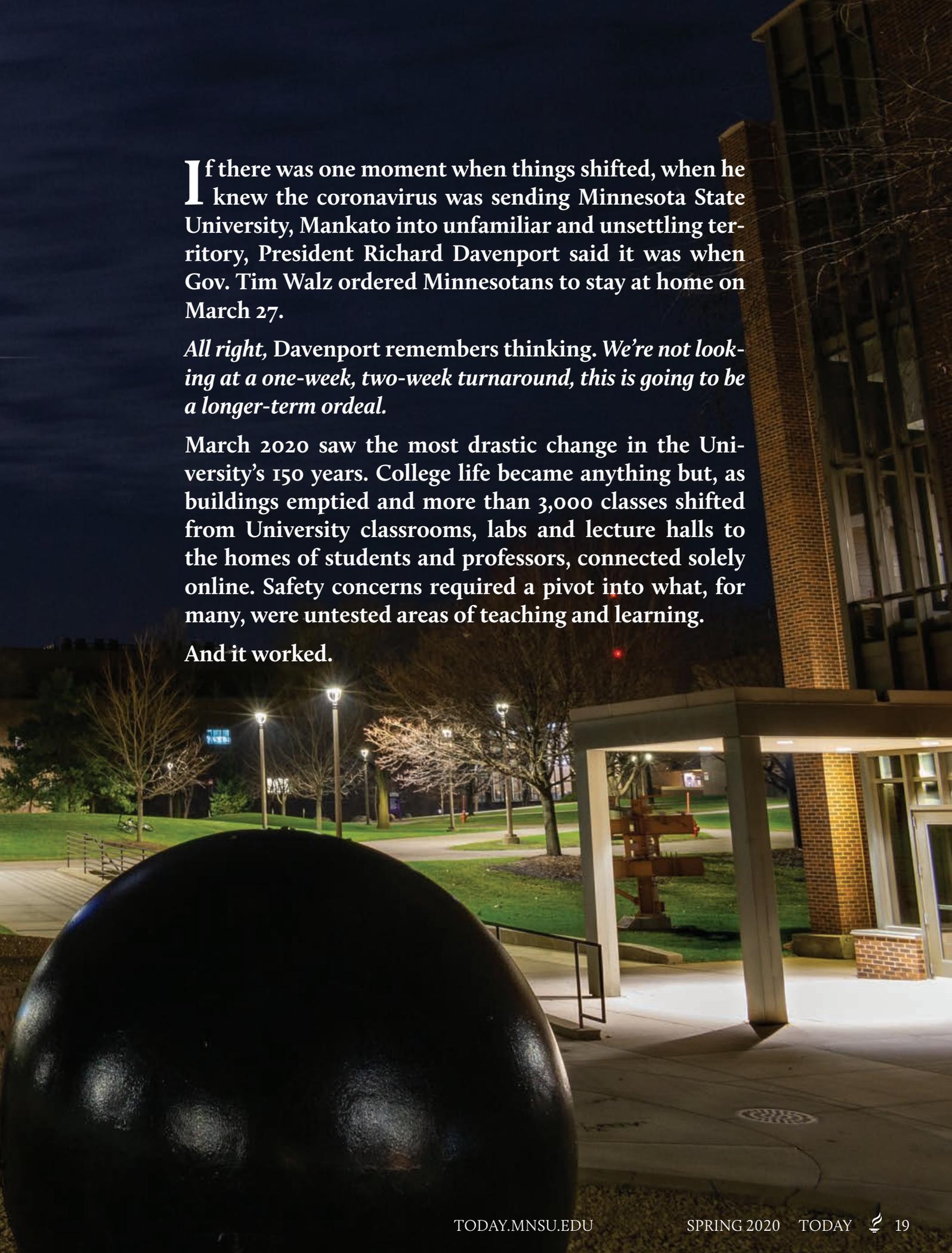
“I think as a campus, as a department, as a division, as a person, I’m going to look at how our students are coping in a holistic sense even more as we move forward.”

# UNPRECEDENTED

An historic challenge meets an unmatched Maverick spirit.

*By Joe Tougas*





**I**f there was one moment when things shifted, when he knew the coronavirus was sending Minnesota State University, Mankato into unfamiliar and unsettling territory, President Richard Davenport said it was when Gov. Tim Walz ordered Minnesotans to stay at home on March 27.

*All right, Davenport remembers thinking. We're not looking at a one-week, two-week turnaround, this is going to be a longer-term ordeal.*

March 2020 saw the most drastic change in the University's 150 years. College life became anything but, as buildings emptied and more than 3,000 classes shifted from University classrooms, labs and lecture halls to the homes of students and professors, connected solely online. Safety concerns required a pivot into what, for many, were untested areas of teaching and learning.

And it worked.



*President Richard Davenport at his home's dining room table, which serves as his work station away from campus.*

It worked with a speed and cohesion that astounded most anyone accustomed to the ordinarily slow pace of change when it comes to university policy and practices.

"It was an amazing experience to work through," said Rick Straka, vice president of Finance and Administration. "Basically, in a period of seven business days we took the majority of this university virtual."

Anxiety and confusion reared, to be sure. Yet, as always, Maverick spirit prevailed.

Blocked out of the art studio, senior Sam Brown's undergraduate research grant project involved a six-foot-by-six-foot painting he no longer could access. He scaled down his work and kept creating.

Nick Euell, a student in the Integrated Business Experience (in which students create actual, real-world businesses), found his start-up stuck with new products he had intended to sell at campus events in the spring, all of which were cancelled. He Zoomed his business partners and established an alternative sales plan focused on family and friends. It worked.

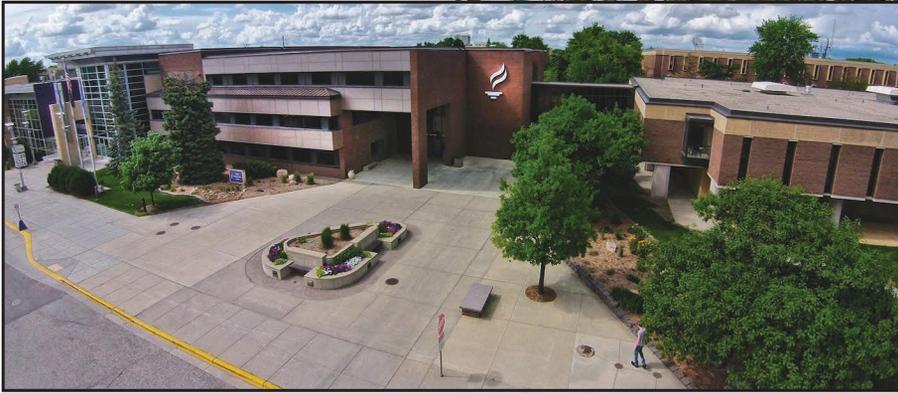
Biology instructor Rachel Cohen had to figure out how the first-year students in her biology research course were going to fare in lab units without access to a lab. She had students analyze existing data and arranged for online lab team meetings.

Similar situations—and unique solutions—popped up daily, as keeping students, faculty and staff safe during the pandemic became the primary goal of University leadership.

Within a matter of weeks, Davenport and the Minnesota State system went from communicating caution to making announcements about extending spring break, ending in-class instruction and having faculty and staff work from home.

"There was hardly any time to think about it. It had to be done," Davenport said. "I don't think anybody commiserated about it, because it was something that was essential. It's like a tornado warning, you don't think twice. You just move ahead for the safety and well-being of all our staff and students."





## PRIORITIES

When the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus a pandemic on March 12, the University assembled a pandemic response team with representation from administration, student housing and health services.

“We started to have these conversations that now seem quaint, about how we may need to do this or that,” said Interim Provost Matt Cecil.

“And next thing you know we’re all working from home.”

Appointed by Davenport to the Interim Provost position in January, Cecil was just two months into his new role of when he was confronted with how to help guide the University’s response to the pandemic.

“Luckily I’d been here for four years, so I knew the players, I knew who to work with and how to work with people,” said Cecil, who had been the dean of the College of Arts and Humanities before the appointment. “But yeah, it was a little bit of a shock.”

A communications professional prior to his academic career, Cecil’s work suddenly involved announcing work-from-home directives to faculty and making sure to keep communication channels open. Cecil worked on empathy and problem-solving with staff and faculty while Davenport addressed students, families and the larger campus community, including alumni and donors.

Lindsey Beyer, director of Web Marketing, was charged with creating and maintaining the University’s COVID-19 web site. The site has been live since March 3, serving as an immediate source for information regarding the University’s response to the pandemic. It grew quickly from a page to a rich and interactive site that invites questions and provides guidance for effectively navigating online learning.

“They’ve been working around the clock to figure out the best way forward,” Beyer said of University leadership, “and to get people answers not only as quickly as possible, but answers that really address their needs.”

KMSU, the university radio station operating out of the Alumni and Foundation Center, took on several new responsibilities under direction of station manager Dwayne Megaw—a commercial radio veteran who joined the University in July 2019.

“We tried to step it up from both perspectives, from serving the geographic community, southern Minnesota, but also the campus community as well,” Megaw said. “Because we were in a state of emergency we needed to let folks know what was going on.” The station airs Gov. Tim Walz’s daily press briefings which often include officials in emergency management, health and economic development.

“It makes sense to air that on a daily basis, because you get all of the information delivered in one place by the people who know what they’re talking about,” Megaw said. In the early weeks of the transitioning, Cecil was a weekly guest on staffer Karen Wright’s morning radio show.

“It was great to be able to have him on in his calm, cool and collected demeanor passing along the information that was vital for students to figure out what was going on,” Megaw said.





*Cancellations of events on campus—from concerts to science fairs—resulted in an estimated \$500,000 in lost revenue.*

## STAYING IN TOUCH

Once students were no longer on campus, an early goal was to contact each one to offer support. That task fell to the division of Student Success, which recruited staff from around the University to make calls, take questions and work to get them answered. Within a month, every student was called.

Lynn Akey, the vice president of Student Success, Analytics and Integrated Planning, put out a campus-wide call to staff asking for help in a goal to call and talk with every student.

“We were inundated,” said Amy Staloch, the communications director for the division. More than 60 staff from various walks of campus life pitched in to call students with a message: We’re here.

“We may physically not be in the same space, but we’re going to take the time, and we’re going to show you that we want to make sure that you feel like you’re still connected and being part of the Maverick family,” Staloch said.

Davenport said he was contacted daily with questions from students—many of whom were pleasantly surprised to hear back from him, he said.

“We look at their problem and say OK, we’re going to figure this out,” Davenport said. “We don’t wait for two days. We do

it almost immediately, and I think it gives some sense of relief and confidence in the families that are sending their sons and daughters here.”

*“It’s one thing to have something on paper. It’s another thing to actually implement.”*

*– President Richard Davenport*

## PLANS IN PLACE

The University had emergency protocols in place for a range of crises including pandemics, Davenport said. It was a helpful framework, he said, but it was also just the beginning.

“It’s one thing to have something on paper. It’s another thing to actually implement,” he said. “From day to day we had continuous

reports from the [Minnesota State] system office and recommendations, and it really fell heavy on the shoulders of the administration, faculty and staff to make this happen.”



*Tim Lind and Shelley Pierce of KMSU’s morning radio show “Shuffle Function.”*

The President's cabinet, the pandemic response team and the deans and department heads all worked in concert, Davenport said, understanding the decisions they were making were those of life and death.

"The health of our students, faculty and staff and others—that was foremost in our mind when we began," he said.

As the largest four-year institution in the Minnesota State university system, Minnesota State Mankato played a key role in the system's decisions, Cecil said.

"They know the big picture very well, but we know what has to happen on the ground for these things to be functional and viable, and that's where I think our campus has had a lot of influence," he said.

Davenport added that he met regularly with system Chancellor Devinder Malhotra and his cabinet.

"The reality is we aren't in this alone, we're part of a major team," Davenport said. "Chancellor Malhotra has really stepped up to the plate, offering his leadership and his intelligence and making sure he involved all of us in trying to come up with solutions."

## SHARED LOSSES, NEW CELEBRATIONS

In terms of the campus community's collective heartbreak, it seemed nothing would top that of the Maverick men's hockey team being denied the chance to play for the NCAA championship. The Mavericks were set to play in the WCHA conference semifinals at home when the NCAA called off the season due to coronavirus concerns.

But the March 19 announcement by Davenport that spring commencement would be cancelled was even more profoundly disappointing for many at the University. A team led by Vice President of Advancement Kent Stanley put together a plan to help make graduating students feel special even if they couldn't walk across the stage as they had expected.

Boxes containing congratulatory Maverick-themed gifts were assembled and sent to each of the almost 2,200 graduates. While no one claims it's any substitute for the real thing, a message of congratulations was nonetheless important to send, Davenport said. Equally as important is a special invitation to the commencement ceremony planned for December.

"To me it's saying we know what we have in mind for you right now in no way could equal the real commencement, but we really want those students to feel they're welcome back in December," he said.

## A NEW AFTERWARD

Fall enrollment numbers will reveal the pandemic's financial toll on the University. There's little doubt enrollment will drop, Davenport said, although some creative thinking continues to help counter it. Initiatives such as offering a full semester of online learning to international students, generating scholarships for underrepresented students less likely



Student Rabin Burlakoti with ITS.

to rebound financially and offering classes in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area for students who live in or near the Twin Cities are a few of the ideas discussed to shore up enrollment and serve students.

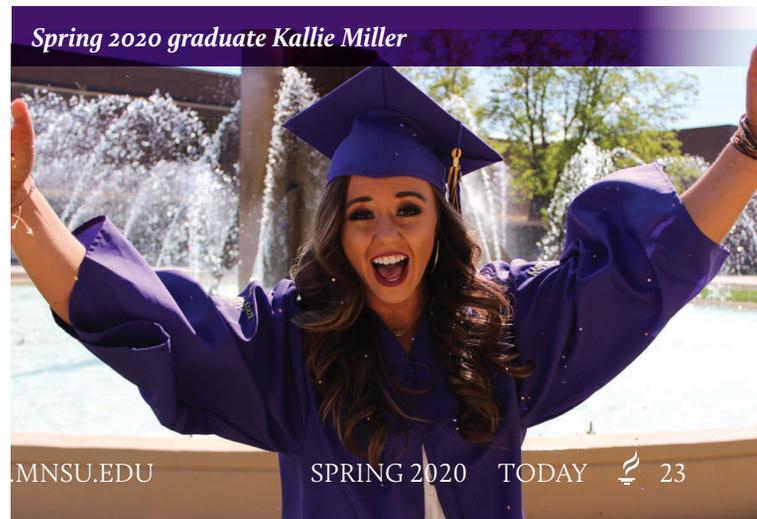
Before the crisis hit, summer and fall enrollment looked promising. Summer enrollment stood ahead of the prior year's summer numbers, and indicators for fall looked good. Straka said the University was ahead in intent-to-enroll statistics as well as residence hall room deposits. "There were a number of things that were looking very positive for us," he said.

As many await the fall numbers to better gauge what happens next, the experience thus far in this unprecedented process has provided many at the University with a new appreciation of how much can be accomplished under extraordinary, if not historic circumstances.

"It does say a lot about our university," Davenport said. "I think it makes a very strong statement that we work together for the well-being of others. I think that's one of the reasons that our institution has been doing so well over the years."

From his parents' cabin in Elk River, sophomore Nick Eull managed to have his IBE business' sales turn a profit—even with weeks left in the quiet semester. He had enthusiastic praise for the business instructors and the University's leadership overall.

"The university itself has reached out with any help they can," he said. "The whole point of it is a real-world experience. And this is the most real-world experience I could think of." 📌



Spring 2020 graduate Kallie Miller

# CLASS NOTES

## 1950s

**JANET MORRIS FAVRO RIACH, '51**, Faribault, MN, is retired after teaching for three years and working as a bookkeeper for Humphrey Mahl, Inc. She continues to do general office work two mornings a week.

## 1960s

**SUSAN (JOHNSON) RADLOFF, '66**, Austin, MN, is a private string instructor with the MacPhail Music Center in Austin, MN. She also has retired from the Austin Public Schools.

## 1970s

**JOHN KELLING, '73**, Des Moines, IA, published his book "Hope is a Weapon", a fictional account of what family and friends endure when a soldier is deployed.

**TOM REDMAN, '75**, Victoria, MN, retired after 41 years as the park and recreation director for the City of Chaska. During his time as director the Chaska Community Center and the Chaska Curling center were built. He now serves as chairman of the Bountiful Basket Food Shelf.

**CHARLES PAPPAS, '75**, Plymouth, MN, is the vice president, operations for StrategicSource in Bloomington, MN.

**GARY BLOOM, '75**, Pass Christian, MS, had his poem The Blood Brain Barrier published in Kaleidoscope: Exploring the Experience of Disability through Literature and the Fine Arts.

**MARK ANDERSON, '76**, Wimauma, FL, retired as a civilian GG-15 with the Department of Defense after 40 years with the U.S. Air Force. He plans to return to college to learn Spanish and other subjects. He also plans to help his wife, Jan, raise guide dog puppies for Southeastern Guide Dogs in Palmetto, FL.

**GARY WILLHITE, '77**, Crookston, MN, is a Polk County Commissioner. Prior to this he was Crookston's mayor.

**MARK BOMBLATUS, '79**, Fort Worth, TX, is a comptroller with Grace Brown Development LLP. Prior to this he taught high school mathematics for 21 years and worked in the aviation field for 20 years before that.

## 1980s

**SHARON BLAISDELL STEIN, '80**, Owatonna, MN, is an assistant manager at Hy-Vee.

**EDWARD STOKES, '84**, Chandler, AZ, has been with Arizona Tile for 32 years. Prior to this he was in Flagstaff, AZ, managing a Sherwin Williams store.

**SHAILESH CHOPRA, '86, '88**, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, is a businessman with Happy Umbrella.

**PAUL GOETTL, '89**, Lutsen, MN, is a controller with North Shore Health in Grand Marais, MN. This is a recent change from the hospitality industry for him.

## 1990s

**JENNIFER HILDEBRANDT, '91**, Minneapolis, MN, was selected for the Loft Literary Center's Mentor Series in creative non-fiction. The series gives 12 emerging Minnesota writers the opportunity to work with six nationally acclaimed writers.

**CAROL CASTLE, '94**, Minneapolis, MN, recently created Wrestling 4 Life, a program to help stop the suicide "epidemic" of first responders. Through this program she looks to give first responders coins with the number for Safe Call Now—a program geared toward helping first responders.

**ERIK ANDERSON, '95**, Stroudsburg, PA, is the vice president of sales for Generac Power Systems, based in Waukesha, WI.

**KENT SYVERSON, '95**, Willmar, MN, wrote and co-directed an Easter play titled The Critics.

**DAVID RAND, '95**, Castletwellan, Northern Ireland, is the owner of Computer Help Northern Ireland where he travels the scenic countryside helping people fix their computers systems. Prior to this he worked as a technical writer and software developer.

## 2000s

**JASON KENNEDY, '02**, Beaumont, CA, recently was promoted to Makerspace Project Supervisor at Moreno Valley College.

**MICKEY RITCH-COLLINS, '05**, Superior, WI, is the assistant director in the Educational Success Center at the University of Wisconsin-Superior. She earned her Ph.D. in Leadership in Higher Education.

**ASHLEY JAY-PLATZ, '07**, Iowa City, IA, is the deputy clerk for the City of Iowa. She is pursuing her International Clerk Certification because she enjoys working in the public sector. She married her wife in September 2014.

**ERIN (PALMER) RUHLAND, '09**, Waconia, MN, is a program manager with UnitedHealth Group in Minnetonka, MN.

**ZANE HAUCK, '09**, Portland, OR, is a research scientist with ZRT Laboratory. He earned his PhD in Pharmacognosy and moved to Oregon where he enjoys his work.

**MICHAEL PETERSON, '09**, Verona, WI, is a mechanical engineer with the Sierra Nevada Corporation in Madison, WI, where he is working thermal and environmental control systems for the SNC Dream Chaser cargo resupply vehicle that will be used to bring experiments and supplies to the International Space Station.

# 2010s

**BRIAN VOLKMANN, '10**, St. Paul, MN, recently was recognized as a 2019 CFO of the Year with Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union.

**MADLINE GREENE, '12**, St. Paul, MN, is a content manager with Apparatus GBC in Minneapolis.

**JENNY (MEYER) OSVOLD, '14**, Council Bluffs, IA, is the director of student life at Bellevue University in Bellevue, NE. Prior to this she worked for five years in the Residence and Student Life Department there.

**BROCK THAEMLITZ, '14**, Lakefield, MN, was given the Rising Star Award, which is given to top performers who go above expectations at Eide Bailly LLC.

**COLTON WITTE, '18**, New York NY, is a founding partner of 10,000 Lakes Publishing, which focuses on education and the environment, in Chaska, MN. He also works on and captains boats for the Manhattan Yacht Club in the New York Harbor area.

**YASMEEN BLACK, '18**, Waconia, MN, is a probation agent with Blue Earth County in Minnesota.

**ANNIE KRENIK, '19**, Cleveland, MN, was one of 15 media professionals nationwide selected to participate in the 2020 PBS Digital Immersion Scholarship Program, which helps stations improve their digital efforts. She is a TV producer at KSMQ in Austin, MN.

**TAYLOR OLIVO, '19**, Montgomery, MN, is a licensed social worker with the Minnesota Masonic Home in Bloomington, MN.



# IN MEMORIAM

## 1930S

Bernice L. (O'Brien) Peterson '32, '56

## 1940S

Luella Mona (Silliman) Feil '42

Avis Bernice (Jacobson)  
Van de Braak '42

Alicia Johannah (Hultquist) Morning-  
star '43, '69, '79

Maurine Melita (Meyer) Penny '43

Marion Genevieve Johnson '46, '64, '70

Lois Emma (Beyer) Matthies '46

Evelyn Mabel (Wood) Mikes '46

Harriet Mae (Saathoff) Wixcey '46, '74

Virginia May (Griffin) Wunder '46

Frances Viola (Bakk) Muir '48, '74

Margie Lavonne (Castle)  
Brosseau '49, '64, '68

## 1950S

Eldon Victor Hegstrom '50

Billy Eugene Lichtenstiger '50

Charles Irving Mundale '50

Joanne Gretchen (Klomps) Rone '50

Donna Mae (Himmelman)  
Southwick '50

Phyllis Irene Toft '50

Leilah A. (Cyphers) Anderson '51, '70

Maurine Ann (Meyer) Burke '51

Gloria Opal (Soderholm)  
Frederickson '51, '58, '67

Patricia Kathleen (Sexton) May '51

Caryl Jean (Ebeling) Morton '51

Dorothy Bernice (Ellingboe) Olson '51

Lewis Ivan Sheffer '51

Charles Vincent Zupfer '51

Vernon Arthur Berglund '52

Marsha Jane (Werhan) Hartle '52

Doris Ann (Griffin) Jones '53

Mary J. (Rippel) Kriewall '54

Aloys Delton Eichers '55

Dorothy Mae Hazel (Ballard)  
Meyering '55, '66

Richard James Niss '55

Maurice Lee Oehler '55, '56

Juanita Helen Wessels '55

Lois Carol (Huso) Anderson '56, '59

Dale R. Dickie '56

Joyce Evelyn Malcolm '56, '58, '67

Don Roger Ortley '56

Myrna Mae (Louks) Pirsig '56

Robert W. Schulz '56

Kathryn Lucille (Carr) Budach '57, '60

Marlo Thornwell Flo '57

Herbert Edward Geiger '57, '65, '72

Alvin Darrell Hohenstein '57

Ethel Nelda (Helms) Nodland '57

Eleanor Wilhelmine (Lehmann)  
Schrapp '57, '61

Gladys J. (Prosch) Southward '57

Donald D. Stewart '57

Barbara Lane (Cowan) Turpin '57, '72

Carolyn LaVonne (Griffiths) Wyatt '57

Ronald James Banke '58

Ronald L. Borchert '58

William J. Dorn '58

John Dwight Fritz '58

Virginia Mae (Olson) McGraw '58, '59

Roy Armond Minter '58, '62

Thomas George Musser '58, '61

Robert Dean Sherwin '58

Richard Iver Frandle '59

Beverly Jean (Monahan) Gendreau '59

Lowell Richard Glynn '59

Shirley Ann (Bergerson) Halling '59

Betty Ann (Schultz) Kreisel '59

Wilbur Earl Laffrenzen '59

Donna Marie (Kasa) Mathre '59

Delores Arlene (Jaeger) Phelps '59

Robert Leonard Sexe '59, '64

## 1960S

Donald Albert Becker '60

Donald Allen Behl '60

David B. Forrey '60

Dean Richard Kalash '60, '66

Richard Charles Williams '60

Donald Delbert Ahlstrom '61

Jeanne A. (Merrill) Burnison '61

Joseph Micheal Burns '61

Paul Horace Cooper '61

Thomas Allan Costigan '61

Kathleen Nancy (Denham) Glawe '61

Barry Dean Maxson '61

Norman Gene Snuttjer '61

David Robert Evans '62, '68

Clarence Edward Hartman '62

Howard Tyrone Heitzeg '62

Arla Fay (Yonkovich) Hertz '62

Dennis Arnold Holmen '62

Leonard Stanley Killen '62

Kenneth Kumm Moore '62

Ronald Gene Roslansky '62

Janet Claire (Neubert) Schultz '62

Donald Willard Sneller '62

Darryl A. Vilt '62, '71

Joseph Michael Abdo '63

Alice Ann (O'Connell) Backen '63

Seth Victor Beckman '63

Malcolm R. Brandt '63

Victor Ray Gilbertson '63, '69

James Winfield Hayden '63

Terrance Dean LaDuke '63

Philip Joel Markert '63

Maxine Ellen (Wittwer) Otto '63

Gerald James Prescott '63

Thomas Henry Rykhus '63

Betty Jane (Zeyen) Zeyen '63

Edward Merle Blackstad '64

Roberta Ann (Grams) Gruen '64

Byron Glen Spear '64

Patricia A. (Reedy) Allen '65, '81

Harvey Andrew Hanel '65

Gary L. Hudson '65

Kevin Victor Jones '65, '67  
Audrey Kay (Born) Karmgard '65  
David Eugene Nelson '65, '71  
David Anthony Newkirk '65  
Ruth E. (Hagemeister) Peterson '65  
Alvin Charles Storvick '65  
Joan Jeanette (Bremseth) Sween '65  
Gerald Peter Tjernagel '65  
Carl Edwin Anderson '66  
Michael Iwan Anderson '66  
Eugene Harold Brandt '66, '79, '82  
Carolynn Lee (Swensrud) Duncan '66  
Bonita Jean (Hanson) Hanson '66  
Wilbur James Hollnagel '66  
Patricia Kay (Campbell) Krueger '66  
ElRoy Edwin Kuglin '66  
Thomas Lawrence Murphy '66, '71, '77  
James Alfred Neisen '66  
David Robert Palmer '66  
Archie D. Paulson '66  
Robert A. Ridley '66, '68  
Carol Ann (Olson) Rohrer '66  
Eugene Edward Sellner '66  
Terrell L. Sohre '66  
Larry Lee Amdahl '67  
Barry Owen Bliesmer '67, '69  
Stephen Lloyd Byrd '67  
Mary Louise (Wilson) Donkersgoed '67  
Lawrence DeLane Hollenbeck '67  
Leland J. Jensen '67  
Elizabeth Ann Lindell '67  
Gary Andrew Lunt '67  
Thomas Kenneth Meyer '67  
Curtis Jene Volz '67  
Vickie (Martin) Bielke '68  
Dianne Sue (Mitchell) Hanenberger '68  
Barbara Susan (Slette) Henderson '68  
Richard S. Little '68  
Mary Ann (Rice) Meyer '68  
Phyllis Evelyn (Dahmes) Posz '68

Oral Irene (Larson) Shoff '68  
Sharon Louise (Bergstrom) Swenson '68  
John Michael Unrau '68, '72  
Sherry Anne (Grassit) Albertson '69  
Ardell Ray Bowman '69  
David Merle Jackson '69, '71  
Lowell M. Johnson '69  
Edsel L. Lenius '69  
Myron Ralph Meier '69  
Irene K. Morrison '69  
Betty L. (Sontag) Roettger '69  
Hazel Verdell Sandsmark '69  
Rebecca Lynn (Olson) Schilling '69, '89  
Dale Edward Spoerry '69  
Harold Randolph Toth '69  
Thomas J. Waldron '69  
Donald Peter Wilmes '69  
Sharron R. Withers '69

## 1970s

Alan Wayne Budahn '70  
Steven B. Fluegge '70  
John Russell Hedges '70  
Catherine Rose (Ourada) Hewitt '70  
Wayne Marlin Johnson '70  
Jerome Stephen Kehret '70  
Kenneth Michael Leander '70  
Laurel Diane (Wigand) Penn '70  
Bruce Robert Peterson '70  
Richard James Ratcliff '70  
Joy Diane Schulz '70, '81  
Luverne Marion (Schaefer) Adams '71  
Ronald Dean Arndt '71  
Donna Lupkes (Lupkes) Bergner '71  
John Francis Cobb '71  
Dewey E. Collyard '72, '71  
Peggy Ann Gilles '71  
James Charles Hardy '71  
Ken G. Heiple '71  
Olga Frances (Navarrete) Jondahl '71  
Dallas Jerry Kreps '71

Robert Lee Maire '71  
Margaret Elaine (Kanne) Pribyl '71  
Timothy Turner Price '71  
Byron J. Reed '71  
Michael Kerry Van Guilder '71, '73  
Robert Orville Blint '72  
Dennis Klaus Burgess '72, '88  
Carol Agnes (Jutz) Doering '72  
Mary Elizabeth Donovan '72  
Donald Harry Grages '72  
Wayne Arthur Gruenhagen '72  
James Harold Jensen '72  
Adele R. (Stegner) Krans '72  
Timothy Lee Kupcho '72  
Roy A. Lindquist '72  
Gary Lee Milbrath '72  
Mary Joan (Trutnau) Moe '72  
Robert Harold Nielsen '72  
Gary Lee Stephen Pehrson '72  
Leroy Daniel Pflaum '72  
Neil R. Prescher '72  
Myrna Florence Wright '72  
Terry Clayton Barnett '73  
Robert Mack Carr '73  
Harlene Iris (Williams) Frohling '73  
Craig Clifford Knedler '73  
Michael Allan Rogers '73  
Elaine Mary (Kalis) Wanzek '73  
Douglas Lee Albright '74  
Betty Jean (Snyder) Blaylock '74  
Thomas Jon Browne '74  
Robin Gene Curtis '74  
Miles Austin Davis '74, '82  
Elizabeth A. (Stauffenberg) Evenson '74  
Thomas Mark Granum '74  
Heidi Louise Habel '74  
Donald Henry Kaler '74  
Tordis Lorraine (Keith) Peterson '74  
Patricia Jane (Anderson) Palm '74  
Edward Lloyd Rasmusen '74

# IN MEMORIAM

Daniel Anton Schwabe '74  
Katherine Ann Sevcik '74  
Marcelle Terese (Devitt) Hoffman '75  
Robert Walter Jacobs '75  
Gregory Wilfried Meers '75  
Anne Marie (Williams) Nibbe '75  
Polly Jo (Hiebert) Schiltz '75, '80, '05  
Sharilyn Jean (Moser) Seter '75  
Patricia Quinn Borowski '76  
Bradley Benedict Fouks '76  
Melvin A. Hauge '76  
Lorene R. (Kapla) McArtin '76  
Anne Ellen (Glady) Mrotz '76  
Rozanne Marie Mae (Keister) Severance '76,'83  
Ross Wendell Gabriel '77  
Michael John Heim '77  
Gregory Leroy Reinhart '77  
Leslie Binshyang Soong '77  
Edward J. Bloom '78  
Jone M. (Kiefer) Knutson '78  
Boyd C. McLarty '76, '78  
Julie Lee Wakey '78  
Karen Ann Erickson '79  
Larry M. Fisher '79  
Cheryl Beth (Johnson) Foley '79  
Joyce Elaine (Johnson) Kopet '79  
Wade Leonard Malwitz '79  
Terry Lee Seeman '79

## 1980s

James Joseph Barta '80, '91  
Charles John Biedscheid '80  
Kevin Jerold Schulz '80, '83  
Douglas Brent Bushard '81  
Patricia Mary Emerson '81  
Kay Lee (Larson) Nelson '81  
Victoria Jean Sweet '81  
Theodor Robert Thomas '81  
Paul Carl Bogenschutz '82  
Ingrid Irene Josephson '82

Pamela Kay Traphagen-Lowry '82  
Samier Hamed Fechter '83  
Donna Mae (Norlund) Holmgren '83  
Stanley Cleveland Johnson '83  
Robert Reece Clark '84  
Shirley Marie (Brehmer) Johnson '84  
Kathryn Ann (Siegle) Meixl '84  
Leilani Lynn (Meyers) Williamson '84  
Lois Ann (Christensen) Schoeneman '85  
John Emil Vozenilek '85  
Mechthild I. Becker '86, '91  
LeeAnn Janet (Luedtke) Beinke '83, '86  
Geraldine M. (Markley) Drewry '86  
Loren Randolph Christenson '87  
Bridget Marie (Timm) McCarthy '88  
Mark Winfield Brunsvold '89

## 1990s

Carrie Christine (Laabs) Bakken '90  
Julie Ann (Duncanson) Henry '90  
Dennis Irven Holtegaard '90  
David Ellsworth Rynearson '90  
Sherry B. (Kapplinger) Seeman '90  
Jerome Cletus Ahles '91  
Michelle Lee (Mueller) Wanke '91  
Monica Ann (Neiman) Hill '92  
Angela Jean Kaul Paulsell '92  
Norman Wayne Niesen '92  
Jon Oscar Swanson '92  
Nancy Kathleen (Warrant) Miller '93  
Trisa Mae (Holloway) Scott '93  
Jennifer Sue Tarras '93  
Charles Edward Balek '95  
Marrett Dale Grund '95  
Helen Kae (Nelemans) Carlson '96  
Raymond Wayne Hobbs '97  
Harold Erwin Perkins '97  
Emily Suzanne (Lindell) Wiens '97

## 2000s

Eden Elizabeth (Petron) Kalk '01, '02  
Jodi Lee (Paquin) Markworth '01

Robert Prasert Wolter '01  
Iveta (Melnika) Evison '02  
Cherlyn Raye (Sutton) Glann '02  
Jennifer Louise Cattnach '03  
Elizabeth Lyda (DeWaard) Rigby '03  
Jerome John Huettl '05  
Megan Joy Pavot '05  
Jessica Ann Mazur '07  
Leah Marie Schilling '08  
Erin Rae (Maurer) Schnabel '08  
James Michael McGarigle '10  
Everett Anthony Rachko '14  
Joel Gregory Schiebout '14  
Kelsi Adele Spencer '18

## FACULTY & STAFF

Carl Dennis Anderson  
David L. Cole  
Patricia Jean Coon  
Wayne Davis  
Madison Hubert Fruit  
Betty Ann (Palmer) Goff  
George Earl Green  
Margaretta S. Handke  
Gary L. Hudson  
Shirley Marie (Brehmer) Johnson  
Roger Delmar Kregel  
Lance Jerome Leipold  
Arthur Levin  
Dorothy Jean (DeGroot) Lindsay  
Nancy Kathleen (Warrant) Miller  
Charles Irving Mundale  
Patricia Jane (Anderson) Palm  
Harold Erwin Perkins  
Kenneth W. Pontinen  
Orville George Ruud  
Wayne R. Sandee  
Eugene Edward Sellner  
Donna Mae (Himmelman) Southwick  
George R. Stoops

# FRIENDS

Charles J. Dahlke

Charlan K. (Swale) Freundl

Janet Louise (Brown) Heise

Theodore William Miller

Charles Edward Powers

Mary Therese (Beauchamp) Winter

Bette Arlene (Outland) Wortman

# SPECIAL DELIVERY

Almost 2,300 graduates received gift boxes by graduation day.

## An alternative commencement includes an in-person promise

If you could multiply Maggie Knier's heartbreak by about 2,000, it would give you an idea of the task the University took on to lighten the disappointment of a cancelled May 9 commencement ceremony.

Knier, along with five others, had been slated to give a commencement speech, hers for the College of Business. Having been home schooled and missing out on a high school graduation as a result, the business graduate was devastated, she said, at missing her college ceremony.

"I had a trip to Ireland cancelled. I had all these things canceled. But commencement is the biggest thing," she said. "I've shed tears over it."

### Sending Congratulations

Soon after the March 19 decision to cancel commencement, University staff, in a measure led by Vice President for Advancement Kent Stanley, made it a mission that this graduating class would not feel passed over.

In a teaser campaign, the University in April began sending emails encouraging graduates to keep an eye out for something special in the weeks ahead. More emails followed. Social media posts with vague photos of some sort of purple and gold boxes were posted.

Then, on the week of May 4, 2,300 individual boxes were sent via U.S. Mail to all seniors who had applied for graduation.

The package was a "Commencement in a Box," and contained a number of mementos for the big day. Included in the box were personalized greetings from President Richard Davenport, gifts from the University and the Alumni Association and a diploma cover.

"We understand how many are heartbroken and disappointed, because they've worked so hard to get to this point," Davenport said. "This was a small token of our appreciation of their hard work."

In addition to the postal delivery, the 2,300 students were emailed a 70-second congratulatory video personalized to



where the recipient's name appears in it three times. On May 9, Graduation Day morning, the University launched a special website dedicated to the graduates, listing all of them along with videos of the commencement.

"I appreciated the effort the University went to in order to put together commencement in a box and the online graduation website and it definitely made it more special than it would have been without," Knier said, "but obviously nothing can really compare to the actual, real-life commencement ceremony."

Graduates were also encouraged to post photos of themselves with the #mavgrad2020 hashtag for sharing on the University's social media and web site. Similarly, University faculty and staff were encouraged to use the hashtag to offer congratulations and messages to the graduating class.

"It ended up being a pretty fun day all things considered," said Holly Dodge, an English graduate who had also been selected to give a commencement speech.

"Minnesota State Mankato went above and beyond to make this day special and to make every graduate feel important and seen, especially during a time of great isolation," Dodge said. "I was lucky enough to be joined by friends this morning via Zoom. We watched the personalized videos Minnesota State Mankato created and there were a few happy tears shed."

### An Invitation to the Real Thing

The most vital component of all the mailings was the invitation to the upcoming December commencement ceremony. Spring 2020 graduates have been encouraged to sign up to walk in the ceremonies that day.

"For me," Provost Matt Cecil said, "the guiding principle is to provide the [mailings] so people can have a special day, but also a promise that we will provide them in the future with a really special day.

"That's my hope, that we give them the moment to walk across the stage that they deserve." ☞

Joe Tougas



# ALUMNI UPDATE

Please list any career changes, awards, honors, marriages, births or memorial information you'd like to see in TODAY in an email to [today@mnsu.edu](mailto:today@mnsu.edu) or [msuupdates@mnsu.edu](mailto:msuupdates@mnsu.edu). Due to publication schedules, your news may not appear in the next issue. Class Notes may be edited for length and clarity.

MAIL: Editor, TODAY  
232 Alumni Foundation Center  
Mankato, MN 56001  
FAX: 507-389-2069 E-MAIL: [today@mnsu.edu](mailto:today@mnsu.edu)  
ONLINE: [today.mnsu.edu](http://today.mnsu.edu)  
Update your contact information online: [mnsu.edu/alumni/update](http://mnsu.edu/alumni/update)

## ABOUT YOU

Name (including maiden) \_\_\_\_\_  
Nickname \_\_\_\_\_  
Graduation year(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Major(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Degree(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Preferred email \_\_\_\_\_  
Professional title or position \_\_\_\_\_  
Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

## ABOUT YOUR SPOUSE / PARTNER

Name (including maiden) \_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse/partner \_\_\_\_\_  
Graduation year (if Minnesota State Mankato graduate) \_\_\_\_\_  
Professional title or position \_\_\_\_\_  
Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
Employer's address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Work phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How may we share the information you've provided to us here (contact information will never be shared)? Check all that apply:

- Print version of TODAY     Online version of TODAY     On University social media sites



The time of COVID-19 has us all reflecting on what's truly important in our lives. As you consider the role Minnesota State Mankato has played in yours, be it your education, career, friendships, memories, we ask that you support the University and its students with a gift.

Two key areas of need are our Emergency Grant Program for students and Scholarships for fall 2020.

The MavCares Emergency Grant Program helps students facing unexpected financial needs. At no time in our recent history have so many students faced such need.

The need for scholarship dollars will be greater than ever this fall as sources of income for many students have shut down. Nearly all University scholarship support comes from individual donors, most of whom are alumni.

To give or to learn more, please visit [mnsu.edu/greatestneeds](http://mnsu.edu/greatestneeds). Any gift is greatly appreciated not only by our Maverick students, but the world they will affect and improve with your help.

*Players in the Minnesota State Mankato Maverick Machine performed together in a video compiled by former member Andrew Grabowska and released in April. To find it on YouTube, search Maverick Machine Rouser.*

