

LCC remains committed to service despite changes

By Rolando M. Rael, PhD

President, Luna Community College

As we continue to fight the spread of COVID-19 not only in our state but around the world, we find ourselves grappling with challenges few of us could have imagined just weeks ago.

At Luna Community College, we have had to make significant adjustments to our operations, but as a college we remain committed to serving our students and our communities. We will do what we can to ensure that our classes and support services remain accessible and vibrant, enabling students to keep pursuing their higher educational and career goals.

A brief overview of what is under way at Luna:

The college has transitioned most of its classes to a distance learning format, providing instruction and support online. Online tutoring services have been expanded to help students succeed in these classes and overall. We will work with those classes unable to transition to an online mode of delivery, keeping the best outcomes for students in mind.

The Office of Recruitment and



Admissions continues to accept and process online applications and transcripts as we look forward to the Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 semesters. We remain in contact with applicants throughout the process and refer students to academic advisers upon admission to the college. Recruiters are staying in contact with prospective students, parents, counselors, and reaching out to those in the communities we serve. Those who are interested in learning more about what the college has to

offer are advised to visit our website, luna.edu, and to contact our Recruitment and Admissions team (see website staff directory). We will be happy to answer your questions and help you take the first steps toward beginning your Luna experience.

The Office of Financial Aid continues to process aid for the current academic year and preparing files for the upcoming year. The office

MORE: See Page 6



While only a few "mission critical" employees remain on campus during the COVID-19 "stay-at-home" orders, most faculty and staff are working remotely to provide instruction and support to students.

Luna community takes time to reflect

The following is a sampling of written reflections shared by Luna Community College students, faculty and staff as the community and indeed countries all over the world deal with the global pandemic COVID-19.

Francisco Apodaca, STEM: In considering how this extraordinary event has impacted and changed my life, it occurred to me that what I had considered to be normal a month ago may never return. The isolation from work and others may get back to some semblance of what we considered normal will never be "normal." The head

of NIH, Dr. Anthony Fauci, said that he wished that we never shake hands again. That simple act of touching and grasping another's hand, which a month ago if you didn't would have been thought as socially unacceptable, may actually revert to the exact opposite. Have we flipped a perceived social norm on its head? Being a social person, this is a hard nut to swallow. In our setting at LCC, I enjoyed standing in the hall greeting students as they arrived for class, doing a fist bump and saying "Good morning; have a nice day." My "normal" routine may not be normal anymore. Sitting close to my fellow

directors and instructors may require "social distancing." When we gather at meetings, will we have to remain seated at least a seat apart? From all indications, we may have to change how we interact with each other from now on for fear of another epidemic. In reading on another time of respiratory disease, the Great Plague, it took society a couple of generations before they would travel very far from their homes; people feared a resurgence of the dreaded disease. Will we never get back to hugging friends? I had hoped to work at least a couple of more years, since I feel that I am close to retirement, but that thought may have

A thick fog permeates the city of Las Vegas on a recent morning, as shown in this view from the Luna main campus. Many in the campus community miss the scenic vistas as well as interacting with fellow students, faculty and staff.



changed. I may want to continue isolation, living on a self-imposed “island” away from society. I fear for my children and grandchildren. Will they ever have what I had when I was growing up: social interaction, meeting people, traveling and seeing all in person, not a virtual digital world? Flying in an airplane or taking a train may never be en vogue again. Distant lands may really become “distant lands” too far and too dangerous to travel to, not because of crime or war, but because of fear of disease.

Has this event changed me and my family? Unfortunately, yes. We may never be “normal” again. Education may never be “normal” again; maybe we are truly becoming a virtual society where isolation is the key to life.

Angelique Arguello, Wellness Center:

As I spent Easter Sunday all alone, I couldn’t help but reflect on the current situation. I woke up early Sunday morning, watching my boyfriend as he

got ready to head to the Las Vegas Police Department. I couldn’t help but think about everything that I was going to miss out on. Getting ready for the delicious meal my mother prepared, helping hide the eggs for my little nieces and nephews, sitting on the couch, watching a movie with all my babies as they eat their entire basket of candy. Instead I spent the day all alone, I received a video call from my brother and all the kids with my mother and father in attendance as well. I spent the entire day emotional; I couldn’t help but think of those less fortunate and who do not have families. Not often are we able to switch views with someone else, but during this time we’ve been given an opportunity. We are able to see what we take for granted each and every day. Spending time with your family, going to the grocery store with the shelves packed full of goodies, going to work, going to the gym, getting a haircut, or something simple as going to a movie theater. We are so caught up in our

everyday lives that we never truly appreciate anything anymore; it’s all expected or it’s become the norm. We have been given this special lesson now, and I hope it helps us all to not take anything for granted and appreciate all that we have and all that we have been given. I pray during this time God helps us all heal and become better than what we were. I pray God helps me become better and heal.

Kimberly Baca, Humanities:

Occasionally in life we lose sight of who and what is important to us. Our lives are so busy and fast-paced that we may forget to call our mother, father or siblings. Other times we are too occupied with ourselves that we forget to be kind, considerate and loving to one another. Life is too short to lose sight of what is most important to us. We forget that our behaviors, good or bad, have an impact on others. A smile instead of a frown makes a difference. A “good

MORE: See Page 7

College Scorecard:

The U.S. Department of Education’s College Scorecard has the most reliable data on college costs, graduation and post-college earnings. Visit collegescorecard.ed.gov

Tuition hike approved

Plan will keep Luna tuition low while supporting college growth

By Dave Kavanaugh

Luna Community College

The Luna Community College Board of Trustees on April 14 approved a plan that will gradually increase tuition rates while keeping the college one of the most affordable in the nation.

By a 6-1 vote, the board approved a plan that will raise tuition by 6 percent each of the next five years starting this fall, in the 2020-21 academic year.

While most other colleges and universities have raised tuition rates every year, Luna has avoided increases over time. In recommending the increase, Luna President Dr. Rolando Rael said the additional revenues will help the

college continue to fund quality instruction and service while keeping costs relatively inexpensive for students.

“We want to keep building strong programs for our students that give them every opportunity to succeed,” Rael said, “and this plan will help support that mission. At the same time, it remains important to us that a Luna education stays affordable for all.”

The cost per credit hour will go from \$38 to \$40 (in-district) this fall under the plan approved by the board. The out-of-district rate will go from \$41 to \$43 a credit hour, while the out-of-state rate goes from \$91 to \$96 a credit hour.

Among the other business addressed in the April 14 meeting, the trustees discussed budget recommendations and the adoption of new board policies. Trustees unanimously approved Policy 1600, which specifies annual training for board members, helping them more

fully understand their roles and functions. The board also agreed to establish an ad hoc committee to review board policies, with representation from administration, shared governance and the board itself. The board tabled action on Policy 1520, sending a couple of proposed changes back to shared governance for review and approval. Policy 1520 would designate a specific place for representatives of various campus constituencies to participate in future trustee meetings.

Due to the restrictions on public gatherings imposed by state government in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the April 14 meeting was held with only four board members physically present on campus; the other three board members participated via teleconferencing technology. As with other Luna trustee meetings, it was available to the public via live streaming on the college’s YouTube page.

Summer registration on tap soon

Luna Community College

Luna Community College plans to announce the release of its Summer 2020 schedule of classes — with registration to follow — in the

coming weeks.

While the campuswide shift to online classes and services (mirroring that of other schools across the county) has delayed the

schedule release, the plan is to hold summer session starting June 8, even if it means remaining online for the time being. More details will be announced when available.

Providing protection

Luna's Mary Duran uses talents to help with mask shortage

By Dave Kavanaugh

Luna Community College

Although COVID-19 has forced most Luna Community College employees off campus, that hasn't translated into a lot of down time for Mary Duran.

Duran, the administrative assistant to Vice President Kenneth Patterson, has devoted much of her spare time to hand-crafting protective facemasks for the community and beyond. At the start of the week, she'd made more than 100 masks using scrap material and fabric, and she'd begun work on several large orders for home health care providers in both Las Vegas and Albuquerque and a local nursing home.

She's made masks for workers at a Santa Fe nursing home as well.

Duran said she is not alone in stepping up to provide this community service – with masks and other personal protective equipment reported to be in short supply nationwide. "There are many other people from our community who are making them as well," she said.

But she is undoubtedly one of the most prolific in her home-based operation. The masks have personality, too, featuring everything from Betty Boop to Harley Davidson to the New Mexico flag. One design has Psalm 91, which may be viewed as an especially appropriate biblical verse for the situation at hand.

Duran has been sewing since high school, when she took her first lessons, and her creative talents have continued to grow since then.

"My husband bought me my first sewing machine in



Luna staff member Mary Duran uses her trusty sewing machine to craft protective facemasks, which she has made for health care workers and others in the community and neighboring cities. Duran has been sewing since the 1980s.

1981, and I still have it," Duran said. "And that's the machine I still use today. I really started to sew more in 1987, I think. I was inspired to make my kids little Halloween costumes and costumes for other events they were in."

"My biggest creations are cooking aprons," she said, "(but) I tell people that I can create anything they can imagine up."

That has expanded to include pillows, Christmas stockings and other goods in addition to the aprons, and a shop in downtown Santa Fe displays and sells Duran's creations to the public.

"Once the COVID-19 (started to spread), I told my daughter I should start making masks," Duran recalled. "I got the idea from a friend who is a nurse and said her mom made her a mask for every day of the week. She

MORE: See Page 6

Changes

Continued from Page 1

is functioning remotely and remaining abreast of changes in financial aid. We encourage our current students and future students to complete the financial aid application at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Those needing assistance or having questions for financial aid are asked to contact us at finaid@luna.edu.

The Office of the Registrar is committed to providing compassionate service to our students and responding to requests in a timely fashion. In the best interest of the health and safety of our future alumni and the Luna family, the college made the difficult decision to postpone this year's commencement ceremony. The office assures our graduates and their families that we are proceeding with the degree-awarding processes as normal, so we ask students to submit their applications for degree and graduation clearance forms to our office. The college will notify graduates and the community of a possible rescheduled date for commencement. The office is working to finalize the class schedules for Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 and will inform the public when these become available for registration.

Several other services are also being made available remotely. E-mail is recommended; a full directory is available at luna.edu/directory.

On behalf of the entire Luna team, I thank you for standing strong in the face of the extraordinary challenges we are dealing with in this pandemic. I am confident that by adhering to the precautions as recommended, we will soon overcome this public health threat and return to normal. Until then, please know that Luna will do its part to combat COVID-19 even as we maintain our educational and service missions to create opportunities for you.



Betty Boop is just one of the themes Mary Duran has incorporated into the hand-crafted facemasks she's been making for others.

Duran

Continued from Page 5

posted a few videos of different ways to create a mask. I cut and sewed a few 'til I mastered the one best for me. And so I began."

The first set of five masks went to staff members of a local restaurant. The most recent are part of a large order requested by area health care providers.

The masks serve a valuable function in preventing the potential spread of COVID-19, in that they provide a layer of protection from the user's exhalations. They also may help keep wearers from touching their own faces, thus decreasing the potential for introducing the virus to themselves.

"My goal is to help as many health care (workers and others) as I can with the simplest – a respirator mask," Duran said. "It may not be perfect, but it's created with love."



A climb up Holman Hill offers majestic views of some of the beautiful Mora valley, an important part of the Luna service area.

Continued from Page 3

morning” instead of silence makes a difference.

The coronavirus came fast and with little warning. This virus has slowed the world down and has created an unimaginable amount of pain, suffering and heartache, but in the midst of all the pain, hurt and heartache, there is hope. Hope that we can come together and be kind, considerate and loving toward one another the way humanity was intended to be.

Rick Baca, Humanities: For you and I, our social script is being rewritten. The self-imposed quarantine didn’t allow me to say goodbye to the world I once knew. Our lives have been forever altered. I won’t be able to shake another person’s hand. It may not be safe to give them an *abrazo*. I’ll be timid about wanting to go to the movies. This is the reality of the new normal. What will my classroom now look like?

Will the students have to sit 6 feet apart? Will we now have to disinfect our classrooms after every class meeting?

Will we have to wear facemasks forever? As part of their registration, will the student be given a semester supply of face masks?

Will distance education have a major role in the new normal? Many students I’ve talked to in my virtual classroom tell me they prefer a face-to-face education. They find relief in seeing their classmates and the professor, because for them, that’s where learning really occurs. To interact with live human beings is invigorating for them. However, that rule may not be part of the new normal.

No matter what, I’ve seen Las Vegans demonstrating their best in their interactions with me at the store. Mask or no mask. They’ve been kind. Asking me how things are going. Putting a smile on my face with their beautiful New Mexico humor, stories and kindness. I have a tremendous admiration of our

college leadership. They, like everyone else, are doing the best they can. I can’t even imagine their challenges.

So now, all of us have to re-imagine a new world. We will need to recreate our civilization. I have hope, though, that God will show us the way, but we have to do the lifting. May the force be with you!

Nathan Baker, Humanities: These are interesting times, but they do not suffer from a lack of information. The breadth of each news cycle is enthusiastically attended to on a constant basis, and the enlightening effect of which swaddles us into a vaguely outraged stupor that is more felt than articulated. And it is in this informed state that we find ourselves reduced to childhood inadequacies, our rudderless ships awash against a vastly empirical and generalized offing. Everyday we awaken to a newly baffled world.

MORE: See Page 8



“There’s a palpable and immediate nostalgia for the small things we’ve lost to this virus ...”

Nathan Baker
Humanities instructor

Continued from Page 7

And during this bafflement and global pandemic, the thing that I find myself ruminating on is the fleeting identity of magnitude. What did magnitude once mean and in what form do we find it now? Size, as I think of it, was once a convenient measure to refer to things of large and small statures by assigning a correlative rating of perceived measure and importance. “It’s big” and “It’s small” are universal descriptors, after all. But recently, it feels as though large things have become small things, and small things have been repurposed as necessary things. Let me explain. There’s a palpable and immediate nostalgia for the small things we’ve lost to this virus: our social moorings, office chatter, quick handshakes, a hand touching a hand, a hand touching a face, a laugh wide and abandoned, negligently opening a car or convenience store door, the nifty “If-you-need-help-ring-here” bells, waiting

rooms with beat-up magazines, traffic and honks, airplane engines, and the softly distant dance of bodies moving around other bodies, going somewhere. Tenderness — that’s what I’ve relearned to associate with the descriptor of small. “Small” is in fact the magic stuff of social intimacy, which has always been more subliminal than cognitive. The once mundane and quotidian habits we engage in consistently are some of the most necessary social acts we each participate in. Too, I must confess that I’ve missed the big things, the invisible infrastructures that made our humanity a hub of convenience and entertainment. I miss baseball, I miss movie theaters, the toothy barroom smiles, the board sales rep and inscrutable car dealer, the vacation browsing, flight availability as a stand-in for personal freedom, a news program that isn’t limned by a causality count, the concerts, the protests, our American primary season, the federal electoral cycle, and all those national

Easter parades that made me feel so patriotic. I feel like a vast swath of the flag was cut out with these lacunas, and I’ve missed all these things firstly in the three-dimensional and secondly as the comforting concepts that large entities represent. But, large or small, there are lessons that we as a society, culture and world are figuring out in real time. Perhaps a recalibration of what our values were, are, and are going to be is a necessary criterion for moving forward. Perhaps we deserved to be reminded of what real value consists of, of how fragile our collective place is in the complicated world. Perhaps our realization of our neighbors both near and far will bolster our sense of camaraderie and human purpose. In the remediation of our global fabric, we need to practice reciprocity, appreciation, care, and a word that has been null and void in our national conversations: stewardship.”

Lita Bernal, Business: Thursday, April

9, was set aside by the president of Luna Community College as a day of reflection concerning what the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 has done to change my life and what this pandemic has done to change the world... or at least my world made up of those things that are closest to me that I allow myself to think about.

The president, being reserved, as is his usual manner, demonstrated his ability of being a highly astute individual when he ordered a day of reflection on the eve of a religious holiday (April 10-13).

Some may say, "Ah, more days off!" or myriads of other comments a lady or gentleman does not dare to put in writing. I believe that the president's intention of the day of reflection was not merely his way of tacking on another day off. He's the president; he could have granted the extra day off with just those words "Have an extra day off." The astuteness came in ordering the reflection of what really is personally important to each one of us. This is but some of what has been heavily on my mind...

March 24 was the first day that I was allowed to work from home because of the threat that the coronavirus posed to not only me but the world. Days later, today, the tally of coronavirus infections grows, and the death count from the virus also rises. We now have a change of the world we know as academia before the pandemic started just a short time ago.

As they say, "This too will pass!" The virus will peak, less infections and death will occur and then...we pick up the pieces and try to return to normalcy. What is that normalcy going to look like? Is everyone expecting that normalcy to be exactly as we left it before we departed the campus to work at home? I say that the world normalcy,

specifically the Luna Community College normalcy, will never be the same. Normalcy is now a matter of perspective, and we should not expect things to be the same as when we left the campus weeks ago. Each of us will have a different perspective of what the pandemic did and meant to us personally, what the pandemic really was, when the pandemic did the most damage, where the pandemic affected the most people, and yes, even why the pandemic came when it did and why it didn't leave sooner.

I can't help feeling a deep sense of pride as the day came closer for Luna to shift gears and move out of the normalcy we all knew of just being able to be on campus. None of us knew what day we were going to be ordered to move classes online nor did we know what day we were going to be ordered to work from home, but we knew it would happen at some point or at least we thought it would be ordered. Even though the order had not been given, the preparation was astounding to watch. The president was doing presidential things, the vice president was carrying out the orders handed down to him by the president, the directors were supporting staff and faculty in the preparation for transition from face-to-face to distance learning. Faculty and the supporting staff, equally, were "in fifth gear" preparing should the order happen. When the order finally came, LCC was ready!

This is indeed where the sense of pride comes in. With all the hustle and bustle by everyone on the campus, not once and not in any single activity were the students forgotten or not planned for. Each planning phase at all levels always asked the question, "How will this impact the students, and how do we support them?" The amount of work

that happened in those preparation days and the days since has been nothing short of astounding.

As devastating as the virus is, somehow, we must all dig deep inside of ourselves and find something positive from this experience. To my LCC family, which includes administration, faculty and all supporting staff, I would say that we have met the challenge of doing everything we could in whatever capacity it was to take care of each other and support one another in ways we never thought we would or could. We all knew ultimately each and every student was the priority. Truth be told, each one of us had different levels of anxiety going on, which included different levels of being scared of something we could not see nor knew how to fight against. But still...amidst all the organized chaos, our students who are very much a part of our extended families continue to be our priority. We understand we needed to remain strong because no matter how scared we were, the students are even more scared of not only the virus but now dealing with their new normal.

It is with deep pride within my heart and soul that I am able to say I'm proud to be just a small cog in the wheel we call Luna Community College because we have met this challenge head-on together. We now know we can take our entire campus, turn it upside down, shake it a few times, then upright it again and emerge from one teaching mode to another and make it work. I don't believe at the end of the semester success can only be measured by statistics of our courses that were affected, but the success, or at least part of that success, will be in the stories told how LCC came together to support each other.

MORE: See Page 10



Continued from Page 9

Stay safe and healthy, and we'll all see each other when we get back to normalcy in whatever shape and fashion that may be and whenever that may be.

Clarice Bonney, Vocations: I was asked to reflect on how COVID-19 has impacted my life. Of course the obvious answer would be to complain how hard life has become because we cannot be freely out and about. Life has been a bit more of a challenge. I have a very close family member who passed during this time, and we were not allowed services, and the burial had to be watched from the vehicle. I think that's when reality hit about the severity of the situation. Yes, I know aisles in the store are more empty than we are used to, but there is still food. We just have to be a little more creative and thankful that our little town still has enough for all of us. In every negative situation some positive always has a way of making its

presence. Being that we must stay home, we have been able to get more family time without outside distractions in the way. It's not often that we get this amount of time with our children without having to rush off to sporting events, school or work. I think we need to embrace this time, for it is rare. Not being able to hold class could have been one of the negative impacts but with the governor closing schools and extending us the right to teach or learn from home, this made its way into the positive category. Our school acted quickly in helping us align our curriculum with an online school-based platform that allowed us to continue teaching. All in all, this situation is not ideal, but if we work together, respect and follow social distancing, buy only what we need, enjoy time with our kids, and show patience, what we call our normal lives will be back before you know it.

Cindy Branch, Student Services: Life is short, and this has truly been a time to reflect on the little things. Tissue paper? Really? No, more like family time, baking for my family, and things I never imagined. I learned that my mom, 83 years old, enjoys and is very good at painting. I have heard stories of how in her days, it was not pursued because it wasn't important. And today we encourage arts for mental growth in ourselves in youth. My mom broke her hip in November and went through many challenges that we now share: freedom to come and go, visit with others, and walk Walmart whenever we want. As she says, "Welcome to my world." Every day is a challenge, but I know now that it is also a blessing. As many people are laid off or losing their businesses, I am still working remotely. Renee and I have been extremely busy as have many of you. But the struggle could be so much



“Every day is a challenge, but I know now that it is also a blessing ...”

Cindy Branch
Student Services counselor

worse. The ability to help students has been rewarding. Our jobs are rewarding and fill my heart. I don't like to see students struggle but truly intend to do my best.

Every day is not so positive. And there are days that my family and I want to run or take a break from each other. But I could not imagine life without any of you. My youngest granddaughter was born during this time. And we are all trying to keep her safe. My biggest heartbreak is not holding her and the fear that she won't know me. But God has a plan, and he will give us plenty of time to make up for this. And he gave us FaceTime. Ha ha!

Seeing our community come together to help each other is the best!
God bless all and stay safe!

Geno Castillo, Vocations and STEM:

Over 100 years ago our great nation and the rest of the world suffered a devastating pandemic that resulted in over 50 million deaths worldwide. This



Geno Castillo, who doubles as director of Vocational Education and an instructor in STEM, works from home.

was known as the Spanish Flu of 1918. Now, we are facing another pandemic known as the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). This pandemic has greatly affected all of us. We must think positively during this cataclysmic event. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and we will get through this together. It has affected me a great deal. I thank God

for everything He has given us, and I am more appreciative of everything than before. I have the greatest appreciation for all health workers, which includes our doctors and nurses who are battling this virus in the frontlines of this war. Also, an appreciation for our sanitation, police and fire departments, EMTs, grocery store workers and all other essential workers. As education leaders, we must continue to give our students a high-quality education and be there for all our faculty, staff and students. I look forward to getting past this pandemic together with all of you and making Luna Community College even better.

Alicia Chacon, Student Services: As the days pass and I reflect on how this pandemic has changed my daily routine, my life and affected my work, I think it has had its ups and downs — ups to all of this chaos is that it has made me realize that I need to be more organized and have a better back-up plan, which I

MORE: See Page 12



“It has made me reflect more on lost time with family and friends ...”

Alicia Chacon
Student Services specialist

Continued from Page 11

always thought I was and was prepared for just about anything but came to find out that I was not, and I had let my guard down somewhat to my own health and safety. I am a cancer survivor, and I recently hit my 10-year mark (which is supposed to be the out-of-the-woods stage in illness talk), although one who has cancer is really never out of the woods. I had put myself in a place where I was cautious of my surroundings with people who were sick because of my weak immune system due to numerous chemo treatments that weakens your immunity, The downside to this is that of course adjustments to work and my daily routine have been a little hard to get used to. I will admit I have realized that it has also made me reflect more on lost time with family and friends and how I have become too busy or involved in non-essential things, and at any given time something like this could happen, and I think that I am not alone in saying



Alicia Chacon models a mask while in quarantine at home.

that we become so comfortable in our environments that one does not think of a pandemic ever happening. I know for myself I have thought of the “what if” and “what would we do,” but never really has it happened since 1919 with the Spanish Flu and all of this has put me in a place of knowing that life is short, and at any given time our lives can be over; they can change and be disrupted in a way that we are all caught off guard. I am very grateful and appreciative to the LCC directors for allowing me to work from home to continue providing services to the students of LCC and for their efforts in keeping all staff members safe and healthy.

Antonio Chavez, student: The current events have been a different experience for me. Being a high school student, I am stuck working at home. Even with the shutdown, my life has not changed, for I live outside of town and do not go out much. I do have to adapt to my situation

of one to have a hotspot for my only source of internet. Plus the heartbreak of not properly seeing my friends again for a proper goodbye. It been a different experience and kind of creep to go out if I need to. I hope this thing passes soon and everybody stays healthy.

"M.C.," employee: The year 2020, COVID-19 has taken over our lives. We are now in the middle of a new normal. The new normal for me has been that I have been given a new task, "work from home." Work from home seems like it would be an ideal situation. Everyone dreams of "work from home." I know I did.

Living in a rural area does not fend well with the work-from-home concept. Reliable internet is not always accessible. I have had to travel all over to find reliable internet.

There are many other challenges that have come forward during this time. But I am thankful to be able to see and visit with most of my family.

I am one who was always stopping by the store on the way home and going to Santa Fe or Albuquerque once a month. The shelter-in-place order has made me feel enclosed, and I feel like I have anxiety. Very thankful for being in a rural area, as there are no confirmed cases in (my) county as of this date.

Masie Estep, student: In this time of social distancing due to the coronavirus pandemic, it has been a surprisingly pleasant personal reprieve from the somewhat hectic schedule that comes from being a college student. This pandemic has allowed us, as a culture, to slow down and get back to what really matters. Like being aware of our health, our mental wellbeing and understanding that we share the same fears and concerns around the globe.



Masie Estep's dogs enjoy the bonding time quarantine has meant for the household.

For my family and myself we have been healthy but we have still been affected. For example, my brother, who lives in California and has a small family business, is unable to continue the local events that keep their business humming. Both my mom and sisters have been temporarily laid off for the time being, and just the other day it was my nephew's fifth birthday but instead of celebrating together in person they had a virtual party over Facebook. As for myself I have also been laid off from my job at UWC where I worked in the kitchen, cooking and baking for the 300 students and staff members. It was a sad time having to end the school year so abruptly, but it was necessary because the students needed to fly home quickly to be with their families before traveling came to a stop. They were able to have a quick impromptu graduation ceremony and said quick goodbyes before being bussed off campus. As for my personal schooling experiences at Luna, it was also an abrupt transition to going fully

to online learning. We left for spring break and were not able to come back onto campus. Not able to say goodbye to recently made classmates, fellow student senate members, not even being able to check in face-to-face with teachers so we could talk about what was expected for the rest of the spring semester. Even though there has been a lot for us students, teachers, and stuff to adjust to, we have done an excellent job with keeping our goals at the forefront. My classes have kept up their demanding rigor and stayed on track so that we can complete at the end of this semester all while being able to give us support through virtual tutoring for those few questions that may arise. The coronavirus has been a rude awakening of how quickly our daily schedules and plans can be interrupted. I hope for continued diligence in doing our part to stay at home as much as possible, wash our hands, and to be considerate to the daily struggles the world is facing. A big thank you to all the doctors, nurses, first responders, volunteers handing our local meals, and all other essential workers at this time who are making a huge sacrifice to be in the public and do an amazing job at helping us through these uncertain times. Hopefully this will help us heal quickly from the virus and help us all learn that our closest circle is all that truly matters. Take care of yourself, families, and check on your friends at this time because by doing so we can make this time a little bit more meaningful.

Sierra Fernandez, Nursing: I've felt and thought a variety of things during COVID-19. Even though we've been asked to self-isolate, I believe I'm not alone in many of these thoughts or

MORE: See Page 14



“It’s important to always look at our situations in a positive light and draw whatever good we can from them ...”

Sierra Fernandez
Nursing advisor

emotions. I’ve felt confused, scared, relaxed, helpful, helpless, patient, even “essential” sometimes. Although I know I am not alone in this whirlwind of a time, I know that many are having very different experiences and shifts in everyday reality. We are all in this together, but our circumstances are all different. I am lucky to be in the situation I am in. I am grateful. I’ve been thinking a lot about what others are going through. Some of us are learning how to home-school, others are binge-watching TV, some students are taking their first online course, business owners may have had to shut their doors, while others may be realizing how important human contact is. Some have family or are suffering from COVID-19 directly. Whatever our new reality is, this time is much harder for some. I’ve been thinking of what things will be like after all of this. Some things will be better, some worse. We don’t

have control over much, but can do our best to make the most of all of this. I am hoping the majority of us will come out of this with new and improved perspectives.

Although what we’re all experiencing now is different and unknown, I think it’s important to always look at our situations in a positive light and draw whatever good we can from them, whatever that may be. Again, I am grateful that I am able to reflect in such a way. None of us know what the future looks like, but I’m hopeful that we may take what we’ve learned from this time and ensure our futures benefit. I also know that I am not alone in being part of the work that continues. Hang in there; we got this!

Ashlyn Flores, student: A lot has happened, both good and bad, during this quarantine. For starters, I lost my job within the first week of New

Mexico’s outbreak. It’s really unfortunate, but it’s not the worst thing in the world. Despite not having a stable income, I have learned to appreciate the people and things around me. Due to this, my thinking process has changed dramatically. I learned to not care about the things in life that are not important and focus on the things that I can not take back. I have spent more time with my family than ever due to the fact that I don’t have to be anywhere at any time anymore. This quarantine has also given me the opportunity to strictly focus on my academics. For that, I am grateful. Overall, I am very thankful that my friends and family, along with myself, are healthy and doing good. As a result, I will never take them, or anything for that matter, for granted again. You never know when “the last day” is going to be so, you might as well enjoy every day and everyone while you still have the opportunity to.

“I have made it a point to contact my family regularly, especially my elders, if nothing more than to say I love them ...”

Martin Garcia
Admissions specialist



Jesse Gallegos, Public Relations: This past month or so, I have done something I rarely do, and that is to see who I really am inside. I have realized what is important and what is not. I think that this separation that we are going through will make us stronger as a whole. Think about this. You see five 1-year-old babies. One is white, one is black, one is Hispanic, one is Asian and one is Native American. All five are dirty, crying and hungry. Who would you help first? There is only one right answer. My hope is that we can all put God first in our lives. If we do this, everything else will take care of itself.

Martin Garcia, Admissions & Recruitment: The pandemic, though harsh and devastating to many has had a profoundly positive effect on me. During a time when uncertainty and doubt are the new normal. I see and hear of many people, including those around me, getting impatient and letting their anxiety and stress get the best of them.



Martin Garcia said prayer and reflection has helped him gain perspective in recent days.

For the first few days, I found myself heading down this same path, frustrated and already tired of the situation as it was, not sure how I was going to make this working-from-home situation work, and for how long. As I griped internally,

I felt all the feelings that I mentioned above intensify with each passing moment. At the end of that day, I changed my typical routine, and instead of going from working to getting some air outside or sitting on the couch watching the evening news, I went to the solace of my bedroom and sat down and prayed. I was not praying for anything in particular; I just thought that it couldn't hurt. This non-routine act calmed me. I have since taken more time and devoted it to prayer. As the days went on and I continued to hear the stories about innocent people succumbing COVID-19, I began to consider what I was praying for. I concluded that I was praying not only for the victims and their families, but also for the health and well-being of my family, friends, and that of the community of which I was born and raised. My mentality and demeanor went from that of impatient, anxious and stressed to calm and relaxed. I have

MORE: See Page 16



“I have
reconsidered
what is
important and
what isn’t ...”

Mary Jensen
Student

Continued from Page 15

made it a point to contact my immediate family regularly, especially my elders, if nothing more than to say I love them! This whole crisis has reaffirmed for me two very important things. The first and most important is that I am forever grateful to my parents, my grandparents, and my family for instilling and building the faith and belief in God that I have; second, there is nothing more important than family!

Sherry Goodyear, Humanities: The fear of COVID-19 has changed the world overnight. Each day, drastic modifications to what we are allowed to do are leaving people wondering how many more freedoms can be lost in lieu of decisions being made by government officials trying to stop the spread of this pandemic. Many countries have embraced the concept of “social distancing,” which has resulted in schools being closed, people working from home, and individuals foregoing

gatherings with their family and friends. Other sadder results are the people who have lost their “non-essential” jobs as plenty of mom-and-pop businesses have had to close the doors on their restaurants, boutiques, beauty salons and countless other businesses in order to comply with the “new normal.” While the reaction to the virus has left many house-bound and fearing what will happen next, others have chosen to make lemonade out of lemons. One such example is that of bakers creating toilet paper-shaped cakes. As most people know, a reaction to COVID-19 and the resulting “shelter in place” rules is that toilet paper has been flying off of store shelves, leaving many to wonder where their next roll will come from. The result: many bakers and bakeries jumped on the toilet paper-cake bandwagon creating new incentive to buy cake, sales of which had plummeted in response to fear and the need to stock up on essentials, of which cake is not one. Some bakeries have literally gone from bankrupt to

booming based on the decision to make cake look like rolls of toilet paper. Who says the pandemic has taken away everyone’s sense of humor or ability to adapt? On April Fool’s Day, the announcement was made that masks, which had previously been considered optional, are actually really helpful in preventing the spread of COVID-19, and that even a bandana or fabric mask could be used. The result? Anyone with a sewing machine and a little fabric could churn out homemade masks and sell them to their less crafty friends and neighbors. I personally know a woman who sells these masks for \$5 each, and so far has made \$205. She isn’t getting rich, but at least she might be able to pay her utilities this month. COVID-19 has literally changed the world as we knew it, and most likely, there will be other far-reaching and unpredictable changes to come, but hopefully, the ingenuity and humor people everywhere are showing in the face of these crazy times will help us through the challenges we will face

when this is all over.

Trinity Herrera, student: This pandemic has affected me in ways I would never expect. Being a student athlete, I have always been constantly active in the classroom and in the gym. I am a person who is always on top of my work and on schedule. Now that I have all of this free time, I find myself being very indolent. I am not a person who watches TV, but recently I think I have watched every movie on Netflix and most shows. I think this has been the most free time I have ever had and I have reacted to it in a very poor manner. I have recently taken a new approach during the quarantine by starting a workout routine, doing chores around the house, and getting on track with all my school work. It is really hard to adjust, especially because it is something I am not used to, but I think this could be a good thing. I can add more activities to pass time like basketball drills and setting drills. I feel like this could turn into something positive, I could work on bettering myself more and find time to relax.

Tycie Jackson, Education: Two months ago it was business as usual. I was sitting in committee meetings, laughing with my colleagues and working toward the goal of a positive HLC visit. I could not have dreamed that by the middle of March we would be facing work from home orders with schools and businesses all over the United States closed down. From one week to the next, our lives, and I mean worldwide, were changed. New routines had to be established, new ways of interacting publicly, new ways of communicating and teaching, new precautions for shopping, food shortages nationwide, and on and on. Fear and anxiety gripped

the nation. I am grateful that, by nature, I gravitate toward positive. Beautiful moments have come from this trial of uncertainty. Words cannot express my joy in being able to be surrounded by the people I love the most. We have laughed together, prayed together, hiked, biked and run together; we have cooked together, sang together, struggled through school lessons together, and bonded in a way that the busy non-coronavirus world never allowed. The greatest realization I have had, though, is the experience of unwavering faith day after day. I continue to look up and trust that there is a greater plan. I don't need to understand everything in order to experience peace and joy. I often remind my children, family and friends that they can't control what is happening, but they can control how they choose to respond. I will continue to choose the things that bring hope, peace, love and light, and I will continue to share that message with those who need to hear something positive and uplifting. "Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light." — Albus Dumbledore

Mary Jensen, student: During these crazy times, I have tried my best to not let the virus stress me out. I think that this is a wonderful opportunity to work on myself and build new hobbies. My life has not been affected as much as it may have affected someone else's. I am a sophomore in high school so I am only missing prom and end-of-the-school-year events. This has definitely made me adjust my everyday life. I actually feel a lot more calmer though some are feeling really panicked. I have reconsidered what is important and what isn't. Mine and my family's health is the most

important. I feel like this experience has made me more thankful for the little moments and life's little details. I can go to bed without stressing about tomorrow. I feel a huge weight off my back.



From delivering his own classes online to helping daughter Faye with her own online learning, Jason Killian has embraced the challenges of quarantine.

Jason Killian, Humanities: If you told me at the start of this year we would be doing all schooling online. I probably would've laughed. But this is the reality. I now prep my classes. And help my daughter get ready for hers. I sign into my classes. And sign her in as well for hers. Upon reflection, it is incredible how much can change so fast. Yet still be the same at every age. Our students join K-12 and us instructors all face similar issues. From trying to figure out how to submit a math worksheet online to changing a practical, hands-on exam to some form of digital. We're all facing unique challenges. But we will overcome them.

MORE: See Page 18



Continued from Page 17

Renee Maestas, Student Services:

During this COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine I have come to realize many things, such as what is important, what is not so important, and that anything is possible.

I've seen the beauty in the kind and caring ways of individuals who have given freely of themselves, going to work at high-risk jobs to save the lives of strangers or provide food products; people giving things such as toilet paper, sanitizer and meals to individuals who may not otherwise have. People who have donated their time and energy to make masks and have gone shopping for individuals who could not get to the store.

I have also realized that anything is possible when people work together. Like the wonderful staff at LCC who worked fast and furious to get all the

online courses together to serve our students, working together as a whole for the greater good. This pandemic has also made me more cognizant of life's everyday little blessings and that the world is full of kind, caring, and resilient people. I also believe that during times of crisis it is a choice to see all the beauty and kindness in the world.

Leslie Marquez, student: This pandemic has affected me by having to do all my college classes online instead of face to face. I feel that I have been struggling in my face-to-face classes. I would have usually had human anatomy and physiology II along with pathophysiology face to face, and I feel online just isn't the same as having face-to-face lecture. On another hand I have grown closer with my family during this quarantine. All of us in the household are practicing social distancing and have had no contact with anyone other than going grocery shopping and going to

and from work. It's been hard to just stay home and do nothing else. I miss my life before COVID-19 and have learned not to take anything for granted because it can be all gone in a blink of an eye.

Moses Marquez, Recruitment & Admissions:

We are all going through a traumatic experience. Trauma is "too much too fast." Which is what we are going experiencing — we are tired, we are afraid, we are overwhelmed. The whole world seems upside down. Change is coming. Survival is pushing it.

Life and work during the COVID-19 pandemic are unusual, uncertain and unpredictable; it is now more apparent than ever that we must work together to get through it.

Hopefully it will be more sensible than saving a year's supply of toilet paper in our closet.

“It is important that we, the Luna family, continue to support one another ...”

Michael Montoya
Financial Aid director



Amor Martinez, student: I’m a dual credit student. Recently I have become more cautious with the spread of the coronavirus. When the virus first started affecting people I was not very worried because it was not in New Mexico yet. I had the mentality of thinking that the flu killed more people than COVID-19 did. I just thought that people were making such a big deal out of nothing.

When it hit New Mexico I was surprised but still not worried. My family started to get worried and were more cautious. They did not want me going out anywhere because of the fear of me getting the virus. I understood that they wanted to keep me safe, but I didn’t want to stay home all the time. I listened to them and stayed home anyway. When I first started to think this was serious was when they canceled school for the remainder of the year. It was very crazy to me to think that I would not be going to school for the rest of the year.

Now I take this seriously and take precautions to keep my family and

myself safe. I just do not like staying home all the time. I know I am keeping people safe by social distancing, but I miss my friends and going to school. I love my family more than anything but I can’t stand them anymore. I’m going nuts but at least I’m staying safe. I hope people are taking this seriously and are trying to social distance to stay safe and healthy.

Patrick Mellon, Business: The pandemic and resulting changes have affected all of us in some way or another. Here are some of the positive impacts as I see them:

- The coming together of the community to handle such a crisis
- People have become more tolerable of each other and appear to be a little nicer
- The learning experience of working from a home office
- Less congestion on the roads and in stores

While there are positives, there are also some negative aspects:

- Multiple types of communication

breakdowns amongst employees and / or teams, leading to less efficient and effective working relationships and progress hindrance

- The home office working environment might not be a fit for all employees
- Public panic resulting in product shortages, fear of any contact with others, and other related issues
- Public services deemed non-essential shut down

• Many people have lost their jobs, causing economic hardship

In summary, I personally believe this experience will lead to stronger communities and will also serve as a valuable lesson to apply in any related future events.

Michael Montoya, Financial Aid:

During these unprecedented times, our lives have been turned completely around. We can no longer visit loved ones in person, we must remain 6 feet apart at all times, and go out in public with protective equipment. This

MORE: See Page 20

“I’m proud to be just a small cog in the wheel we call Luna Community College because we have met this challenge head-on together ...”

Lita Bernal
School of Business director

“Through this I believe we are seeing in people what we never saw before ...”

Andrea Ortiz
Student

Continued from Page 19

pandemic has taught me patience, the importance of telling people you love that you love them, and most importantly how to never, ever take life for granted. This difficult period in time has shown me the importance of taking time to smell the flowers and cherishing the small moments that we often bypass. It is important that we, the Luna family, continue to support one another, provide the best education to our students and most importantly we continue to “create opportunities.” COVID-19 is a deadly virus, but together as a college, state, and nation we can overcome this pandemic and rise up! In addition, I encourage each of you to check on your neighbors, family, and friends. Also, I ask that we support local businesses, as these small businesses are what make our communities thrive.

Serena Nickell, student: This quarantine has definitely given us things to complain about, but we need to look at the bright side. One bright side is we have more time with our families; I know for my family this was very exciting. We have done so many activities together during the last four weeks we have been self-distancing. I

have an exceptionally hard time staying home because I am very social, and most of the time my friends are what make me smile. This quarantine has helped me learn to find other things that make me smile. My family and I have started the process of cleaning up our yard and preparing to grow a vegetable and flower garden. Normally this is one of my least favorite things to do because I have the worst allergies. While they are still horrible, I look at the bright side. I’m outside getting the sun I need; I’m making my mom smile because it’s one of her favorite things to go; I’m not inside bored, rotting my brain with my phone screen. This garden has been very rewarding, and I can’t wait to see the beauty that is to come. That’s my positive point of this situation, and I have many others and hope to find more. I thank the people who are out there fighting this disease, the people helping to find a cure, and everyone in between. I know it’s scary because my dad is out there almost every day; thank you.

Brenda Ortega, Education: “I’m sorry, I don’t want to bother you. I know you’re busy...” is the comment I generally hear from my loved ones. It has always made me a bit uneasy. Even though I knew

that I ought to spend more time with my family, I tended to commit myself more to my job and to the community. On the bright side, now I do have time to serve my family. No one would argue that the current state of affairs due to the rapid spread of COVID-19 is dire. But we have to look for the light at the end of the tunnel. Because of my faith in God, I believe that things always work out. Though I do fear the very real possibility that someone I love could fall victim to the virus, I am so grateful to have this time to help and be with them. I have spent a lot more time at home and a lot more time communicating with my loved ones. I’ve been very productive with my job duties and have gotten a lot of other things done that I’d put off for a while. I love the slower pace that has been imposed upon me. Nevertheless, I miss my workmates, the preschoolers and being in my office. I miss church, the priests I regularly visit with, especially Father George, my bandmates, and all of the fantastic people whose paths I cross on a regular basis. I am a very happy person; thank God. I know that whatever happens at the end of this, I will still continue to do my part to make this world a better place. For me, “Alone Together” is okay for now but “Together Together” is much better. I’m looking



forward to getting back to the real normal.

Andrea Ortiz, student: As individuals, we have always had the ability to decide whether or not to leave the house, to spend our time with family and friends. Sometimes we even decide that staying at home will be just what we need for a weekend or an afternoon after work. Suddenly we are forced to do just that, and it turns out it is no longer as pleasurable as we have experienced before. Through this pandemic, the experience goes back and forth from being enjoyable to feeling like a prisoner. My family and I spend all day at home, trying to figure out what new we can do to entertain ourselves. My way of thinking has been different, I cherish what we have in the house, the small things that keep our routines comfortable and steady. I no longer allow anything to be wasted, as it could be the last we have of something for a while. I try to help my kids understand that this pandemic is very scary but don't want to scare them. I want them to know they are now a part of history,

history we will all be talking about for years to come. These are the memories they will share with their families one day. My priorities in keeping my family safe through all of this has resulted in anxiety and fear. Fear that my kids might personally be infected by this virus or myself or my husband. My anxiety has caused me to overthink the possibility of what might happen if any of us do contract it. Although fear and anxiety are impacting our stay at home, we can find the good. My kids and I get to spend each and every day together, playing, reading and enjoying the cuddle sessions in our pajamas. I am able to make full meals and enjoy them with my kids every day. We have much-needed time spent together that we did not have before. We now have time to reflect on what is most important: family. We have, as a family, decided that this time will give us the opportunity to learn more about one another, our abilities and our interests. We have realized now that it's the little things that matter most, not having to eat out every night, not watching sports or hearing about what vacations the celebrities are taking. We

have come to realize that we don't have to spend money on objects or go to the movies to have movie night. Instead of watching sports, we have discovered our own athletic abilities; we have endless laugh sessions to pass the time. I will no longer feel the need to leave my house to seek any sort of entertainment I felt I needed before.

I have also discovered just how influential social media is on society. Social media has had the ability to veer us in the direction intended since the beginning of this pandemic. It has created fear in all of us, causing panic. Causing people to go out and buy out the stores in attempt to prepare their families for something none of us were knowledgeable about. Because we knew so little about this virus, we trusted for a higher power to educate us in this matter. We did not only hear what this virus can do but all we heard through it all was how fast it will take over, how serious it was, and the deaths along the way. Very few times did I hear anything about those who contracted it but recovered. I did not hear about the great

MORE: See Page 22



“It is important to stay focused on the opportunities and the skills we are developing ...”

Gloria Pacheco
Dental assisting
program administrator

Continued from Page 21

things people all over the world are helping with, and I did not hear about how through this panic we have seen the great in people. Through this I believe we are seeing in people what we never saw before. I see so much kindness and generosity, so much love and helping hands. There are so many people putting their lives on the line for the elderly or those vulnerable to contract the virus. We are seeing human decency coming out right before our eyes, yet it is not plastered all over social media. Why? Because someone in a higher power wants to have control; someone wants for us to be fearful and feel helpless. I feel this is the time we have come together the most. These are things I want to hear about, things that make us feel that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We are going to overcome this and come out on top. We have seen now what generosity and love we are all capable of; let's not let it end when the

pandemic ends.

Gloria Pacheco, Allied Health: Never in my wildest imagination did I consider the depth or the impact of the COVID-19 virus. Not until the stay-at-home orders from the governor followed by the LCC president, did realization (set in) of the severity of this pandemic, which has imposed the transition to online classes and communication between students, LCC staff and even between family, not an easy task yet accomplished. The reality has implemented fear and struggle working with limited resources, triggering stress at different levels. The importance of it all is acceptance and realization, which helps with the transitioning into a new mindset, as well as utilizing various methods to help get us through it all. While I have no doubt that we will get through this, it is important to remember that we are in this together. I have felt more support than ever before from employees as well

as from the students during this time of turmoil. We will continue fighting this battle day after day, overcoming one hurdle at a time. Duties and daily obligations that were once fulfilled at a much faster rate, and with ease, are now more difficult to accomplish and are taking longer with more barriers to overcome. Nonetheless, it is important to stay focused on the opportunities and the skills we are developing — for example, coping skills, patience, problem solving, critical thinking and communication. Strange how some of these appeared as just words on a syllabus or in a standard required from an educational sanction; today I see things in a different perspective, one of such appreciation for time and for things money cannot buy such as yesterday; once it is gone it is gone. My final words are to appreciate today, be grateful for what we do have — friends, family, technology and a job that provides the opportunity to continue

working from home with the ability to receive support as needed. We are a community who steps up toward helping each other without hesitation. May we always remember this and live strongly with a sense of gratitude.

Dr. Kenneth Patterson, Vice President of Instruction and Student Services:

I grew up believing I was a resident of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood. I often relied on his wisdom to help me navigate the insecurities of a very safe and stable childhood. One of his more profound quotes is perhaps more relevant now than ever:

"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

Fifty years beyond my time with Mr. Rogers, I find I watch the news and daily see scary things. I also find that if I look, I see people who are helping. There are obvious helpers, such as medical personnel and first responders, who go beyond "helping" to the point of heroism. Then there are those helpers who aren't quite as obvious. We've seen lots of those at Luna. They are the helpers who disinfect our campus in the face of the unknown, the individuals who process our payroll as a means of sustaining us in highly uncertain times, those who continue to teach despite a change in everything except a profound need to continue, and the many people around us who strive in everything they do to maintain a sense that life will be okay. In the coming days, we will certainly be overrun with scary things in the news. We don't know what is ahead, but I'm proud to be a part of the Luna community, and the Las Vegas community, and the New Mexico community, where we will all, of course,

find our place as helpers in a world of need.

"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes."
-Fred Rogers

Allysa Salas, student: During this hard time of COVID-19, this is affecting my family and I. I am very unsettled during this time because I am a very social person and like to interact with other teachers and classmates. The negative impacts are that I have to stay home, having a curfew, and no face-to-face contact. The positive impact is that we are safe at home, quality time with each other and I don't have to drive to school. Positive feedback is that we are still getting an education by mobile and still see our teachers. I have not reconsidered my priorities (because) I already had them prioritized. This is how it has changed me by staying at home, while also going to school online and having curfew. All I do is stay home and do homework and help my sibling because we have to do nothing but school work. (It) is a little easier because I have had night classes late and I don't like to drive at night. I think it is a good thing to have class online because those classes that I have online make it easier, plus I am used to having class online because I take online class for a few of my classes through Blackboard so I think it is easier. But for my family it is not because any kid is used to having to do online especially kids in elementary school. Thank you for this opportunity to continue my education during this hard time.

Jacob Sandoval, student: If there is one

thing that COVID-19 taught and is still teaching me is not just to think for myself but think for others. Before the virus took off in our state, I had a job as courtesy clerk at Sprouts, a so-called "essential" job. I was working in a place that was dangerous in the sense of spreading the virus. But I didn't care; I was making good money for a teenager in high school, and I wasn't worried about the virus at all. Then my dad got sent home, then the first death was reported, and then the governor issued a stay-at-home order. I couldn't think just of myself. I had to think for the people I affect; everyone in my house was staying home except me. COVID-19 gave me a different perspective on how I should think, especially now that I'm about to graduate and have all new responsibilities. I've become more cautious, and now I'm constantly thinking of things like: "Is it worth it?" "How will this affect me?" And "How will it affect others?" With this pandemic there have been a lot of negatives, but hey, I get to stay home and spend quality time with my family. I hope everyone is safe and healthy, not just my family but all of you.

Kamaro Shubert, student: Being a 15-year-old during a worldwide pandemic is almost unreal. I went from being excited about spring break to scared of a horrible sickness. Being away from school is the hardest part. I don't get to see my friends, be a part of spring sports, or just have a basic education. Yes, there is online, but it is not the same. I love being home with my family, but it's not so great when you don't have a choice and are being forced to shelter in place. Something else that is frustrating is that fact that some people aren't staying

MORE: See Page 24



Continued from Page 23

home and those people are causing this disaster. The year 2020 will forever be embedded in my mind along with every moment of this hard time.

Daniel Twitchell, Humanities: Living as a goldfish, disconnected from the ebb and flow of normal human existence, effectively reduces you to a wall-eyed spectator. Distorted images filter into your cloistered little domain in snapshots, providing glimpses of an increasingly unrecognizable world. The television in the corner, now a window onto the shadows in Plato’s cave, proffers peculiar pictures of haunted faces shrouded in paper masks. Next, shelves stripped of merchandise fill the screen, before giving way to images of solipsistic disease vectors frolicking on white sand beaches. The odd juxtaposition of these scenes made all the more puzzling by the invasion of talking heads that follows — the subject at hand, anthropoids, devoid of humanity, stockpiling paper products and cleaning supplies. Aren’t there enough crumbs for all of us? Last, and most certainly least, the bureaucrats masquerading as statesmen appear for

another spirited round of pass the buck, truly must-see TV.

You could turn the infernal machine off, but alone in the silence, you’re left to grapple with the overwhelming ennui that has taken up residence in your gray matter. So, you return, time and again to bathe in the glow of your quarantine companion, oddly thankful for the ersatz intimacy it provides. Don’t let it eat at you though; what else are you going to do, count dust motes through the endless hours of isolation? Perhaps you could rationally reconcile yourself to the new normal? Pick up a book? Do yoga? Nah, there’s got to be something on somewhere. Has anyone seen the remote?

Ida Valdez, Fiscal Office: Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) — I believe people’s lives have been impacted severely in some way or another because of it. I hear a lot of negatives about this pandemic daily but never any good. My opinion: maybe the Lord is responsible for this pandemic, a way to humble his people and let the planet rest from pollution. For me, life still goes on as before. I first and most importantly would like to thank Dr. Rael for taking quick action with his decision to keep

“I don’t think any of us will take a simple handshake, a hug from a loved one or a simple trip with family for granted ever again ...”

Ray Varela
ACE coordinator

students and employees safe and healthy by closing our college (campus). I believe this decision was not easy but necessary; his actions show great leadership. Dr. Rael is also considerate and compassionate by allowing his employees to work from home and rewarding the incentive use of the Closed Campus Leave Policy. Without these incentives, my life would have been impacted both emotionally and financially. Working from home has been achievable; thanks to Francina and Matt, all is working properly. My position also requires the use of office equipment to enable me to collect and post payments from our students and vendors. These tasks are now being completed on a weekly basis and all is working accordingly. I’m beginning to miss the daily interaction with my co-workers and students. When we return back to LCC, I will demonstrate a more appreciative attitude toward the face-to-face interaction. I will also keep in mind not to complain (as I am human) about having to get ready for work in the morning as I’m sure in the past at one time or another I might have. This week, I had the pleasure of speaking with two of our nursing students about their experience. Both are doing their best to

hang in there and appreciate the online classes but they are also stressed as it is difficult because they also need hands-on experience as well. They both still had smiles on their faces at the end of the conversation. On a more personal note, the pandemic has changed my priorities on a daily basis. I still need to work away from the comfort and safety of my home as I'm an essential employee at my other place of employment; I'm a cashier at Lowe's. At the beginning of this pandemic my actions were "Okay, I'll wash my hands and sanitize my workstation and my home and buy food to last for two weeks." Following the norm as most everyone else. Recently, I have seen fear and anxiety in some people. Others could care less as they don't practice the recommendation of "social distancing." These people still come in groups to the store to include their children. Because it is necessary, I contribute to public social distancing by keeping my 6 feet when possible, I wear gloves and face mask and stay home when not at work. I need to keep safe and healthy as best as possible. I owe it to my Luna family as well as to my own family and to our community. I don't want to be responsible for causing the pandemic growth and overwhelm the healthcare system. I haven't seen in person my daughter, son-in-law or granddaughters since this began; I'm becoming very lonely for them. Thank goodness for Facetime, but it's just not the same as sharing human touch. My faith and prayers keep me going. Working from home has allowed me to reflect on the importance of spending quality time with my Lord through prayer and getting to listen and view daily mass on Facebook live or watch the recordings at a later time in the day/night as well as read comments/postings and prayers from people regarding our

faith. I believe the virus does not show discrimination, no one is immune we are all at risk young and older people alike. The scary part is not knowing if or when one will come in contact with this deadly disease and not even realizing one is sick. Due to this virus pandemic, as I was at Walmart one afternoon getting my mother's prescriptions, I experienced a sense of high extreme anxiety. I couldn't wait to leave the store to get home; it wasn't a good feeling. As I end my reflection, let's all practice staying safe; stay home and let's flatten the curve together! LCC Strong!

Michael Varela, student: This pandemic is definitely an experience all on its own. Nothing like this has happened in any of our lifetimes, definitely, and I'm sure many of us have thought about our current situations and how to maneuver. I have taken my time social-distancing to prevent getting sick and/or being a carrier. This time is hard, for me and for many others, I'm sure, to stay busy and to not feel so claustrophobic. I have taken up my time mostly by painting, binge-watching shows, and focusing on school work. It is definitely an experience because I never thought I would see myself attending class online in such a way, and living during a time of a disease no man has ever seen. Definitely this virus is impacting the world — such a beautiful tragedy. Beautiful in a way that it has pushed humanity to be conscientious on how we should take to minimizing overuse, pollution and unnecessary habits. Truly a rude awakening to those who aren't mindful of the way the world has suffered. This time staying home has given me several moments to think about my (our) future and way of life. My top priority during this is to finish school, get and stay healthy, and not be

an ignorant carrier. I've definitely become more open-minded and alert to the things going on around me.

Ray Varela, ACE: Everybody is dealing with this situation, and no one is immune to what is going on. Having anxiety issues is a problem people cannot see on the surface and difficult to deal with on a daily basis without a global pandemic, but keeping it together at a time like this is even worse. What's helped a little is putting things in perspective, and I've noticed that we have problems that past generations would have laughed at. We are getting softer as a society and people are having a difficult time simply staying home. Past generations dealt with so much more with even less of the amenities we are blessed to have today. Humans are social beings that crave interaction and I don't think any of us will ever take a simple handshake, a hug from a loved one, or a simple trip with our family for granted again. The most difficult part is seeing my daughter, nieces, and nephews not fully understand what's going on and being trapped at home. The cliché things like "once this is over I will live every day like it's my last" isn't enough. Once this passes the simple things like family dinners, walks and outings with my daughter and partner, having a job and being able to go to work, and true appreciation of the lives we still have will be the most important things. Material things like a nice vehicle, expensive clothing, etc., are sitting useless, and the most valuable and basic things we took for granted are what we miss the most, and I hope that continues for everyone when this is over. As easy as it is to focus on the bad I hope we never forget this situation and we're

MORE: See Page 26

Continued from Page 25

able to appreciate the good we all still have.

Alexandra Velasquez, student: This pandemic has really affected my mental health and how I didn't appreciate life before this all happened. My class and I haven't really been through a time like this in any of our lifetimes, and it has affected us all in different ways. I haven't really been out of my house other than helping my mom get groceries because my grandpa's house caught on fire a few days ago and it has really taken a toll on my family and I. It's hard when most stores are closed because he lost everything he owned and can only get clothes from places that are considered "essential" businesses. I've been trying to take my mind off things by painting my bathroom or reorganizing my room or watching tons of new shows on Netflix. Yes, everyone is seeing just the bad things that this pandemic has done, but there's actually some good things that are happening in our world like, for example, the ozone layer is "healing." If we keep staying home and listening to what the president and governor are telling us, I think we will be just fine, but for now I'm gonna focus on my online work and keeping my family and I healthy by staying home and not coming in contact with people I don't need to.

Karen Wezwick, Vocations: As I consider life and work with COVID-19 "out there" ready to jump on and into anyone and everyone possible: I feel angry — angry that this kind of thing could cripple us so completely and so easily. I feel helpless — helpless that I cannot do what I feel I need to in order to do my

job at Luna. I also feel helpless that I am not able to deal with teaching the boys who are in my care, keeping them on task and learning. Keeping them occupied or entertained while not getting exasperated at the same time is exhausting.

I feel thankful — for the people who do choose or have chosen these extremely difficult jobs (teaching) as an occupation. I also feel very thankful that I have a job — first and foremost — and that I can do that job remotely. I am thankful for my health, for my home (so far from anyone), and for my Internet (without which I would not be able to work from home.)

I am also a little apprehensive about the coming months, mainly wondering when the virus DOES hit, will it be difficult for me to recover? However, with the identified remedies, I feel certain there is little to be afraid of.

At first, I was extremely grateful to be home, healthy and able to work on my home and garden. I got all "into" getting the boys on with their schedules, schooling, recesses and so on. The longer we've been in isolation, the more difficult it has become for all of us. No one wants to break up THEIR plans for the moment or day to do what I was leading them. They had their own plans for the day! Thanks to the creator of the trampoline! It alone has given my husband and myself some desperately needed space from the boys. And it gives them so much exercise. It also serves as a "fort" away from the dogs or monsters or dinosaurs or the horrible lava! Even if the weather is not perfect, they can go outside and play on the trampoline. Now, going on to the third week home "alone," I wonder if we will ever get back to what was — the normal, everyday life before COVID-19 threatened us all. My mental wellbeing

is now being threatened due to being thrust into full-time foster parenting. I am looking forward to getting back to my actual job!

Irah Yara, student: The current pandemic COVID-19 has affected everyone in one way or another, whether it's affected you in a big way or small. It has affected me and my family in a huge way. It has affected us in a good and bad way. I definitely see things differently than what I've used to. I look back at all the little things that I took for granted. It has given me realization of who really is in control and that we can have everything taken away from us at any given moment without expecting it. It has given me a whole different perspective on life. I have reconsidered my priorities and have realized all the time I wasted at home wanting to just be lazy all day, and now I want nothing more than to get out of the house back to my normal routine. My job has cut down my hours, and I only get eight hours a week. My dad's work has dropped his main work site, and he is also running out of work, and my mom works from home, which is kind of hard because we have five kids in the house. It has affected us in a good way because we spend a lot of more time together and with nature. Online classes are not the move. They are super difficult, and it's hard to find the motivation to do any work at all. I think when this is all over I will appreciate everything a little more and not take time for granted.

Editor's note: If you submitted a reflection but were not specific on allowing us to publish, it was left out of this edition. If you do not see your reflection in this issue and would like it published, please let us know. E-mail your reflection to jgallegos@luna.edu and dkavanaugh@luna.edu.

LAS VEGAS, NM WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF FREE MEALS/FOOD - SPRING 2020

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
<p>Samaritan House 1000 Mills Ave 505 454-1390 FREE MEAL 5:30 PM <u>EVERYDAY</u></p>	<p>UWC Sodexo meals to Samaritan & Borracho's</p>	<p>Comedor Soup Kitchen OLOS Parish Hall Old Town Plaza 4:30-5:10 PM Food Pantry Bags + Produce as avail <u>EVERY TUESDAY</u></p> <p>Victory Life Church <i>Commodity</i> Bags 440 Romeroville Rd 505 425-8847 8-9 AM Homebound delivery <u>1st TUESDAY</u></p> <p>Samaritan House Free Food Drive-through 1PM 1000 Mills Ave or 501 7th St 505 454-1390 <u>EVERY TUESDAY</u></p>	<p>Comedor Soup Kitchen OLOS Parish Hall 1810 Plaza St Old Town Plaza 505 617-8471 4:30-5:10 PM Food Pantry Bags + Produce as avail <u>EVERY WEDNESDAY</u></p>	<p>LV Community Soup Kitchen @ Methodist Church Basement 715 National Ave 505 425-7283 12-12:35 PM <u>EVERY THURSDAY</u></p>	<p>UWC Sodexo meals to Samaritan & Borracho's</p> <p>Samaritan House Free Food Drive-through 1PM 1000 Mills Ave or 501 7th St 505 454-1390 <u>EVERY FRIDAY</u></p>	
		<p>Salvation Army <i>Commodity</i> Food Bags 1743 Grand Ave 1-4 PM 505 425-8083 <u>1st + 4th TUESDAY</u></p>	<p>Samaritan House <i>Commodity</i> Food Bags 1000 Mills Ave 505 454-1390 8-12 noon <u>2nd/5th WEDNESDAY</u></p>	<p>USDA <i>Commodity</i> Food Bags @ Abe Montoya Rec Center 1751 N. Grand Ave 505 242-6777 9-1 PM Seniors only <u>3rd THURSDAY</u></p>		

Your response matters.

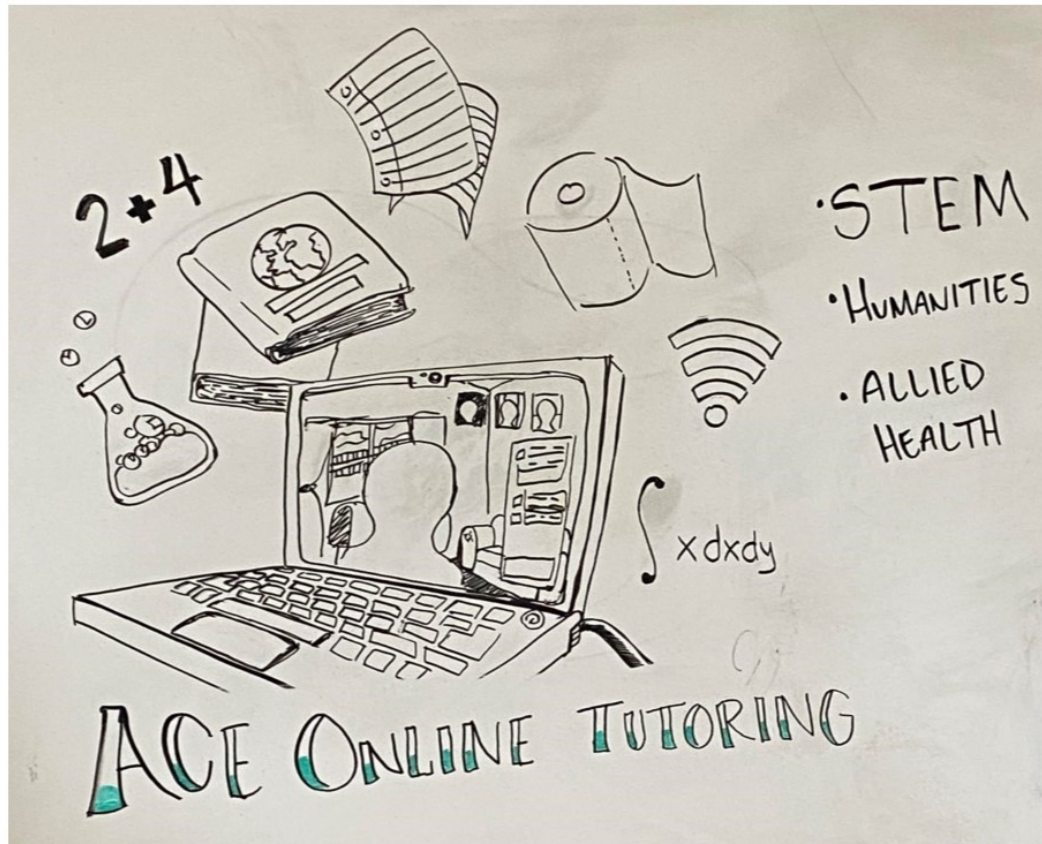
Health clinics. Fire departments. Schools. Even roads and highways. The census can shape many different aspects of your community. If you haven't already, complete your census today. Log on to <https://2020census.gov>



The Luna Light is a publication of the Luna Community College Office of Public Relations. To submit story ideas or items for consideration, please e-mail Jesse Gallegos, jgallegos@luna.edu, and Dave Kavanaugh, dkavanaugh@luna.edu.

Don't just pass all your classes this spring.

ACE them.



As COVID-19 wreaks havoc, ACE is still here to assist in any way. As Luna's classes switch to an online platform, tutors will also be switching to online services. We will be attending online classes with students and providing tutoring hours from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. We will be sending out a detailed schedule and instructions on how to receive tutoring from us. We look forward to assisting everyone in this challenging time. Contact Raymond Varela, ACE manager, at 505-454-5306 or rvarela@luna.edu, for more information.



NOW ONLINE!