

From: Office of the Provost
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2020 1:57 PM
To: Office of the Provost
Subject: Update Message from the Provost

Hello, everyone! As we start our second week online, I want to recognize and celebrate some of the successes our James Madison University community has enjoyed recently.

I cannot thank our faculty enough for the effort you've put into your classes. There was no doubt you would step up to this challenge, and the feedback I'm hearing proves that we are acclimating to this new paradigm. I appreciate the way our instructors, like Kevin Phaup in Industrial Design, are finding real-world opportunities for their students to assist in the pandemic response. Kevin is adapting his sophomore industrial design studios to identify organizations that need masks, research methods of design/fabrication for them and produce, with his 12 students, about 500 masks in the next two weeks. Kevin wrote:

As administrators, faculty, staff and students in higher education, we hopefully began these positions believing we can make a difference in the lives of those around us, our community and our world. As such, and in action to a passionate response from my students, I have decided to focus my current sophomore industrial design studio energies towards the crisis at hand. I would like to open up our efforts, collaborations, and developing ideas to anyone within SDAH or JMU. If you would like to be involved, or have students that would like to be involved, or would like to share with us what you're already doing, please contact me.

When I hear examples like this originate from faculty across campus, I am reminded of your overwhelming commitment to your students and to our community.

And I appreciate the way you are supporting each other. As we all can attest at this point, the Libraries have gone above and beyond in their efforts to successfully launch the remainder of the spring semester online, but I didn't realize some of the behind-the-scenes details that went into those phenomenal efforts.

Some of you might have noticed the new live chat feature on the Libraries website. That pop-up box, which allows site users to get real-time assistance, was created and is staffed entirely by the Libraries' amazing staff and faculty. Since March 11, the team has answered 490 chat-based questions – that's a tremendous amount of traffic for a new service.

The faculty and staff in the Libraries are also collaborating with other offices on campus to ensure that accessibility needs are being met. A faculty member in Music asked the Office of Disability Services (ODS) if they could share, with several of their classes, digital copies of texts that had previously been scanned for a student with a disability. Many of the students in their class could not get their books with the quick transition to online learning. ODS wanted to help, but they also wanted to follow copyright laws. Thanks to quick work from Christina Wulf (ODS), Howard Carrier (Social Sciences Librarian & Copyright Coordinator), and Mikki Butcher (Director of Interlibrary Loan & Course

Reserves), free, online versions of the texts were located for the students in less than 24 hours. These stories are the norm, not the exception, and I'm so proud of all the staff and faculty pulling together to make the move online possible. Fabulous job, everyone!

I know that the successes will continue over the coming weeks, and I'd love to hear more of your stories. Let me know how you and your colleagues are creating victories for our students and each other. I look forward to sharing more positive outcomes throughout the rest of the semester.

All the best,

Heather

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