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4-2020

## **April 2020 QuickNotes**

Southern Adventist University

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## April 2020 QuickNotes

# Campus Life

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### **NEW EMERGENCY FUND HELPS STUDENTS IMPACTED BY COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had unprecedented impact around the world, and Southern’s family is no exception. Students are experiencing major disruptions in their lives and need emergency support from the university. To help address these problems—and in response to alumni questions about how they can help—Southern has created the COVID-19 Student Relief Fund.

Gifts to the fund will address unforeseen or insurmountable issues, such as:

- Family/personal emergencies
- Loss of income due to recent unemployment or catastrophic illness
- Emergency travel and moving expenses
- Prescriptions and other costs related to medical or mental health issues
- Necessary academic supplies and textbooks
- Technology or equipment needed to ensure continuity of online learning



If you would like to give, your assistance during this crisis will have an immediate and lasting impact on Southern students. [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) or by calling 423.236.2829. Additional emails and social media posts about the COVID-19 Student Relief Fund, including testimonies from students who benefit from your gifts, will be shared in the coming weeks. We are certain that our alumni and friends have also been adversely affected. Please know that the Southern community is committed to praying for our larger family around the world, as well.

To stay abreast of Southern’s crisis plans and campus communications, including weekly video messages from President David Smith, PhD, visit the [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#).

-Staff Report

### **STUDENTS PERFORM IMPROMPTU ASIAN NIGHT BEFORE LEAVING CAMPUS**

On March 12, after the announcement that Southern would switch to distance learning for the rest of the semester due to COVID-19 concerns, students hosted an impromptu Asian Night performance in Iles P.E. Center. Planners quickly organized a scaled-down version of the

program—originally scheduled for April 4—as a surprise for Asian Night Director Issac Abraham, junior nursing major.

“Student leaders felt bad that everyone had worked so hard for the show, especially Issac, and we wouldn’t have anything to show for it” said Rodny Aquino, senior management major. “So, they asked us if we would be willing to come and surprise him with a last-minute performance.”



Abraham deeply appreciated the effort.

“I could never ask for a better team; the amount of effort put into this is insane,” Abraham said. “They took time out of their schedules to make this night amazing!”

For many seniors, like Aquino, this was their last time to see the show as students.

“Asian Night was important for me, and others getting ready to graduate, because it was a time where we could get some closure,” said Aquino, who was also one of the performers for the Indian and Tonga groups. “Plus, after receiving the news about needing to leave campus, it was so good to see the energy and love that the students have for this club, for Southern, and for each other.”

-by Paola Mora Zepeda, junior digital broadcast major

## **REMOTE INTERNSHIPS KEEP STUDENTS ENGAGED, PAID DURING CRISIS**

One of the secondary crises closely connected to the COVID-19 pandemic is financial disruption.



“Even as someone who spends a decent amount of time alone developing software, I really do miss the in-person connection of my peers and professors,” Cookenmaster said. “And I never thought I would say this, but I miss the meal plan. It’s so hard coming up with different things to make every night!”

Just across the street from campus, McKee Foods—makers of the popular Little Debbie snack cakes—is adjusting its internship policy, wherever possible, to allow for remote work. According to Rachel Allen-Ramos, ’11, senior talent acquisition specialist for McKee Foods, the company \_\_\_\_\_ at any given time. Interns are paid competitive market wages and work a minimum of 20 hours each week during their year-long commitment.

“We will be looking at each internship case by case and some opportunities, such as the sales analyst and IT positions, can be done from home during this COVID-19 crisis,” Allen-Ramos said.

-by Lucas Patterson, Associate Director for Development

## **ONLINE EDUCATION EXPERTS FACILITATE TRANSITION TO DISTANCE LEARNING**

Gus Martin, PhD, accepted the call to lead Southern’s \_\_\_\_\_ department nine months ago. At the time, 76 courses offered by the university were available for internet delivery. That number grew exponentially this spring as a response to COVID-19 concerns. In the span of just two weeks, the entire student body moved to distance learning and 1,214 Southern courses are now being taught online. Martin’s leadership played a significant role in this unprecedented transition.

Martin, pictured below, recently shared his preliminary thoughts about the university’s academic response to the crisis.

**How was your job impacted when Southern’s classes moved entirely online?** I had spent the first few months of my employment here performing a quality analysis of our online program and began creating a strategic plan. In the process, our Online Campus team also started developing two new online courses. However, when all of the courses moved online, our work quickly shifted to providing individual and small group training for hundreds of full-time faculty, as well as adjunct instructors.



Some of our training took the shape of video tutorials for employees and students to help them navigate through our online platform. During this time, our department partnered with Southern's Center for Teaching Excellence and Biblical Foundations of Faith and Learning to call every professor, identify their needs, and pray for them. We were also happy to assist a handful of Seventh-day Adventist K-12 schools in Florida, South Carolina, and Tennessee that are navigating the same circumstances as Southern—as are most learning institutions across the country.

**What type of feedback have you received from faculty and students?** We're working with faculty who represent all levels of comfort on the technology spectrum and, just a few weeks into this process, everyone is still adjusting. Professors continue to surprise me with their creativity and enthusiasm for this new approach. For example, Professor Judy Glass has the challenging task of teaching pipe organ online to her School of Music students. She's embraced the idea of video conferencing and provides individualized instruction to each of them.

As far as feedback from students, the comment I hear most often is that they miss their face-to-face interactions and can't wait to be back on campus. Beyond that, they understand that this is temporary and that everyone is doing the best they can to help our students complete this semester.

**What is your team's initial takeaway from Southern's response during this unprecedented disruption?** We have no doubts that God is in control, and we can clearly see that this experience will make Southern stronger in fulfilling His mission. We are asking God to show us what He wants from us both now and as we move forward after this immediate crisis is over.

**How can alumni and friends of Southern help?** Please pray for Southern's leaders, who have difficult decisions to make for the well-being of the institution, and that our faculty and students finish the semester strong. I also solicit prayers for our future students. Many families may be impacted financially after this situation settles, and it could affect whether or not they pursue Adventist education. We believe they belong here!

-Staff Report

### **BIETZ CENTER CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES, WITH ADDED PRECAUTIONS**

During a spring filled with heightened levels of anxiety and uncertainty because of the COVID-19 crisis, it's been a source of comfort for many in the Southern family to witness brick-and-mortar progress on an exciting new building designed to benefit generations of students to come.

“As students left campus early for the remainder of the semester, it really highlighted what an important role Christian community plays in our lives,” said Dennis Negron, PhD, vice president for Student Development. “It's a central part of the joy we experience on campus and we're eagerly anticipating completion of the Bietz Center next year so students will have the perfect gathering place to laugh, learn, and grow together.”

The Bietz Center's steel and concrete shell has been completed for several months, but momentum continues to push the project forward. Recent improvements include the installation of steel stairwells and the majority of the interior walls. Rough electrical and plumbing are also near completion. Masons will soon begin their work on the stone and brick facade.





Worker safety is a top priority for Southern during construction, and the university maintains a daily dialogue with contractors about their crews' availability. To date, they've all chosen to remain on task, with new precautions taken. For example, workers intentionally spread out across all three floors of the 40,000-square-foot building, group lunches and socializing are discouraged, and a new handwashing station was brought on site.

Despite these workers' presence, the construction timeline has taken a hit as suppliers pause operation or experience other logistical frustrations on their end. Accounting for both existing and anticipated delays, Southern plans for the Bietz Center to open in early spring 2021. For more information, visit [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) and [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#).

-by Lucas Patterson, Associate Director for Advancement

## Community Connections

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### **NURSING PROGRAM DONATES PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT TO AREA HOSPITALS**

In response to the national shortage of medical supplies due to the spread of COVID-19, Southern's [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) recently donated personal protective equipment to two local hospitals, CHI Memorial Hospital in Chattanooga and AdventHealth Gordon in Calhoun, Georgia.

The supplies included N95 and surgical masks, gowns, and gloves, which would ordinarily be used in simulation exercises in the university’s nursing skills lab. With Southern’s transition to distance learning for the remainder of the semester, the School of Nursing wanted to put the supplies to good use and reached out to some of their local healthcare partners.



“Even though the resources we have to offer are limited, we know that every little bit helps,” said Holly Gadd, PhD, dean of the School of Nursing. “We value all of the partnerships we have with healthcare agencies, and we want to do our part. We are a team, all trying to pull together during difficult times and meet needs when and where we can.”

Continuously accredited since 1962, the School of Nursing currently has more than 800 nursing majors. Southern has a close working relationship with many local medical facilities, where both professors and upper level nursing students regularly work in clinical roles. Like healthcare professionals around the world, they are stepping up to the challenge, continuing to serve the community however they can in the face of the current pandemic.

-Staff Report

## Alumni Highlights

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## **GONZALEZ, '11, HELPS WITH COVID-19 TESTING PROTOCOLS**

Daniel Gonzalez, '11, assistant professor in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences at The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), spends much of his time these days in a virtual classroom with students. While UTMB is working in COVID-19 vaccine development with the Galveston National Lab, Gonzalez also finds additional ways to be salt and light during a time of international crisis.

**How have you been helping others during the pandemic?** I'm involved in a variety of ways, from personal to professional. With my students, every time we have synchronous classes I remind them of things they can do to stay healthy and focused on their studies. As a clinician, I set aside time for shifts in the molecular lab at our university hospital so other full-time workers there can take days off to care for their own families. I've also been consulting remotely, for free, with smaller hospital labs—even the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Albania—to help them set up COVID-19 testing.



**Did your time at Southern prepare you well for this work?** Yes. From an academic perspective, I think of entertaining yet rigorous courses in microbiology, cell and molecular biology, immunology, organic chemistry, and biochemistry. I use the knowledge from these courses every day! My religion courses were also critical, strengthening my faith.

Another rich way in which Southern prepared me for a time like this was all the service-learning work, which included volunteering for Remote Area Medical clinics, the Hamilton County Latino Health Fair, and many other similar opportunities. They taught us to have a spirit of compassion and to understand that nothing you do is insignificant when you are helping others.

**Does your faith help provide a witness to others when working closely with COVID-19?** Absolutely. This is the time when we all can be strong in prayer like Daniel, claim God’s wisdom like Solomon, and advocate for others like Esther. Now is the time to say, with confidence, to our neighbors and coworkers: “Yes, this is bad and it may get worse, but we know that God is always in control from the beginning of time.”

**What encouragement or advice would you offer other Southern alumni right now?** God has called you to serve. No matter your occupation—business, education, social work, healthcare, or whatever—serve others until your arms drop wearily. He will lift you up and continue to use you for His cause.

[\*Facebook\*](#)

-Staff Report

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We are excited to offer an experience for our alumni and friends called Southern Community Online. Create an account which will grant you access to our alumni directory, event calendar and registration, your giving history, and more.