

### In This Issue:

Covid Guidance #6	2
Covid Guidance #7	3
Distance Learning	4
New Faculty	5

### Birthday Corner

#### March

- 25 Sr. Magnouwedeou  
Woulaou, PSP
- 26 Paul Wilczski
- 27 Sr. Tuyet Thi Pham, OP
- 28 Sr. Thoa Thi Nguyen, LHC
- 29 Megan Sutton
- 29 Michelle Vargo
- 29 Sr. Hilda Alonyo, LSMIG
- 30 Mark Garton
- 30 Sr. Kim Tuyen Thi Nguyen, LHC
- 31 Mingyo No Lee

### THE PRESIDENT *Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD*

## *Pandemic Threat – Pandemic Grace*

Who would have guessed, just a few weeks ago, that we would be hearing the word *pandemic*?

The COVID19 virus has upset our lives here at Divine Word College, in Dubuque County, and all over the United States. Of course, the virus does not stop at national borders; our students and employees tell of their worries about family and friends: in Canada and Colombia, in Argentina and Antigua. Beyond the Americas, in Asia and Africa and Europe, too, people we know are suffering because of the virus. Pandemic is the right word for this. From Greek, pan- means all, and -demic is from the Greek term, demos, meaning people. *All people*, in the whole world, are facing this threat.

When we isolate ourselves when we are sick, quarantine ourselves if we have been in contact with COVID19 sufferers, practice greater social distance, and improve hygiene, we slow the virus down, giving hospitals time and space to treat the most vulnerable. This is a wise response to the spread of the virus. However, these same precautions can turn our focus in upon ourselves.



We might say to ourselves, “I’ll save me and mine, the fortune of others is not my concern.” For a time, our national leaders seemed to be making such calculations. “The virus is far away,” they thought; “it won’t come here.” Now the virus has arrived, yet we continue to mislead ourselves by speaking of it as a “foreign” or “Chinese” virus. We forget, or ignore, the reality that we are facing a pandemic threat. If nothing else, *the virus is teaching us one more time that we are all one human family.*



St. Paul wrote, “Where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more” (Rm 5:20). That insight could help guide us at this moment at DWC. Expanding on St. Paul’s insight we can say, “When sin and sickness infect the peoples, grace and

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blessing shower all of us with more abundant hope.” As a missionary college, we do not want to be over-preoccupied with ourselves. Though we seek to protect our own bodies from the virus, we also want our brothers and sisters to be safe. If we are sick, we want someone to care for us, and if we are well, we want to help others in the community who are sick. We want those hospitalized to recover, and we want healing for the hundreds of thousands of people around the world who will suffer far from any hospital or health service.

What missionary service can we offer now DWC? We can pray for ourselves, for our neighbors, for health care workers, and for those suffering from COVID19 illness. We can wrestle with the demons of selfishness and xenophobia when they lead us away from one another. We can do the small things we can to make life easier for one another in this time of fear. More opportunities for service may present themselves in the coming months. Sewing facemasks? Making cards for health care workers?

The illness is now a pandemic, a burden pressing down on all the peoples. It can also be a pandemic of grace, a lifting up of all the peoples together.

## **Divine Word College COVID 19 Guidance (#6)**

March 23, 2020

*Divine Word College, in coordination with state and local public health experts, is closely monitoring reports and recommendations from national and regional health departments regarding coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Updates will be provided through email, the LOG and on the bulletin boards.*

### **SICK LIST**

Br. Mike is managing the “sick list” at DWC. Today there are three students recovering from colds/flu. That is fewer than usual for us during the cold/flu season. Apparently, the efforts at hand washing, disinfecting and keeping social distance are having an effect.

No students, staff, faculty or SVDs have complained of symptoms suggesting a COVID19 infection. Br. Mike screens people who feel ill according to the instructions of our local health care providers. It is really good to have Br. Mike here since his is a Licensed Practical Nurse.

### **KITCHEN**

In order to keep the kitchen workers and the kitchen safe, please refrain from visiting in the kitchen. Only kitchen workers (including community service/work study students) or administrators should enter the kitchen.

Starting today, some “grab-and-go” containers are available in the dining room. If you would like to take your meal to another part of the building, you are welcome to use the containers. Please dispose of the containers appropriately. If possible, take them to the outdoor bin.

### **DISTANCE LEARNING**

Starting today, all classes are conducted through distance learning. POPULI, Zoom, email messages, teleconferences, allow for students to continue their studies in the midst of this unusual situation. Special thanks are due to the faculty who have worked to shift their means of instruction in mid-semester.

## Divine Word College COVID 19 Guidance (#7)

March 24, 2020

### DWC COLLEGE BENEFITS AND WORK ARRANGEMENTS

**Paid Time Off (PTO) & Vacation:** All employees should use accrued PTO and vacation time to cover absences due to illness. Please stay home if you are sick! Do not return to work if you are exhibiting symptoms from colds and flu. Call your doctor if you suspect you have COVID19.

**Flexible Work Arrangements:** Some employees may be able to adjust their regular work schedules based on their own unique circumstances. A flextime schedule can take many forms, including, variations in arrival or departure time, or other changes to the employee's typical work schedule.

**Remote Work Arrangements:** Employees may seek the option of working remotely on a temporary basis. Employees who work remotely must comply with all College policies and procedures, including adequately safeguarding and securing any restricted or confidential information with which they work. These arrangements will require access to a private network.

The above options are not mutually exclusive. An employee and/or their supervisor may elect to make use of Flexible Work & Remote work, if doing so meets the unique needs of the employee and College.

**Approval:** Flexible Work and/or Remote Arrangements must be approved by staff employee's direct supervisor and the College President. Please contact your direct supervisor for details. Faculty members should make appropriate arrangements with the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

DWC is requesting that supervisors be flexible in establishing alternate work arrangements. However, the nature of some positional and departmental responsibilities may not allow for flextime scheduling, and therefore direct supervisors in consultation with the College President, must approve such arrangements.

Furthermore, the College reserves the right to implement changes to the work arrangement as may be required for operational continuity. Employees should speak directly with their supervisors to determine whether any of the above options is feasible and to establish the details of such arrangements.

### NEW FEDERAL BENEFITS UPDATE RELATED TO COVID19

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (the "Act") was passed by Congress and has been signed by the President. We expect further details to be available in the coming weeks.

**New Federal Benefits for COVID-19:** The Act requires most health plans to cover costs related to COVID-19 testing. The Act requires employers to provide up to 80 hours of paid sick leave for certain employees who are affected by the COVID-19 virus.

**New FMLA protections:** Private employers of any size must allow employees to take up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave for certain qualifying reasons beyond what is currently permitted under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), including the need to stay home to care for a child due to a "public health emergency" that would include the closure of schools or daycare facilities.

## VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

*Fr. John Szukalski, SVD*

### DISTANCE LEARNING FOR ALL UNDERGRADUATE AND ALL ESL CLASSES BEGINNING ON MONDAY 23 MARCH 2020

After further consultation with the Chairs Council and the Board of Administration, I am announcing that all Undergraduate and ESL classes at Divine Word College will be delivered through distance learning beginning on Monday 23 March 2020. This means that there will be no face-to-face classes available at DWC until further notice.

**Students:** Students are encouraged to monitor their email and Populi accounts daily for instructions from their teachers. Your teachers may provide lessons and assignments for you to complete through Populi; they might also require you to participate in live video sessions through Zoom or other technology on specific days and times. Please communicate with your teachers so you know what you need to do, and when you need to do it. Ask questions if you need help.

- Students should realize that although there will not be face-to-face classes, this is not vacation time. Your teachers will have clear expectations concerning your participation in distance learning and time dedicated to completing assignments. This will require you to be responsible for organizing your daily schedule accordingly.

**Faculty:** Faculty are encouraged to utilize Populi Lessons for content, assignments, quizzes, tests, discussions as demonstrated in the tutorial video created by Mr. Paul Stamm. Utilizing Populi Lessons allows students to conveniently access course materials at any time.

- Faculty may also utilize Zoom or other platforms for video conferencing with students, either as a group or on an individual basis. Mr. Brad Florence has sent all faculty an invitation to use our new corporate account. Ms. Elizabeth Winter has also created a document for getting started on Zoom for DWC faculty.

Students and faculty needing technical assistance may contact Mr. Brad Florence, Fr. Son Le, Mr. Paul Stamm, or Ms. Kimberly Burnett-Hackbarth. Thank you for your patience and flexibility as we all do our best to continue to provide for student learning given the current situation.

### ACADEMIC CALENDAR ADJUSTMENT FOR ESL SPRING 2020 TERM D

As part of DWC's response to the current health emergency and the transition to all distance learning courses, please take note that there has been an adjustment to the academic calendar for ESL Spring 2020 Term D. This shift in scheduling will still allow for a full 8-week Term.

Relevant dates for ESL Spring 2020 Term D are as follows:

- March 23 Classes Begin
- March 27 Drop/Add Period Ends
- April 17 Mid-Term
- April 24 Withdrawal Deadline
- May 13 Classes End
- May 14 End-of-Term Testing

## NEW FULL-TIME THEOLOGY INSTRUCTOR – FR. RAYMOND AKUMBILIM, SVD

Fr. Raymond Asagdem Akumbilim, SVD has joined the faculty of Divine Word College as a new full-time theology instructor in the Department of Theology & Philosophy with the academic rank of Instructor. Although already present on campus, he will begin teaching and serving as a director in the Religious Formation Program at DWC in August 2020.



Fr. Akumbilim earned a B.A. degree in Sociology at the University of Cape Coast in his native Ghana. He did his theological formation at Divine Word Theologate in Chicago, Illinois and engaged in the Cross-Cultural Training Program in Bolivia. Fr. Akumbilim professed perpetual vows as a Divine Word Missionary in 2017 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2018. Since ordination, he has ministered at Sacred Heart Parish in Memphis, Tennessee.

Fr. Akumbilim earned a M.Div. degree with a concentration in World Mission and concurrently a M.A. degree in Theology with a concentration in Bible from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. The title of his M.A. thesis is: "From Ethno-Centrism to Intercultural Living: A New Mission Practice for the Church in Ghana Seeking Liberation for its People."

Please help me to welcome Fr. Raymond to Divine Word College!

## NEW FULL-TIME ESL INSTRUCTOR – DR. ASHLEY HEIBERGER

Dr. Ashley Heiberger has been hired as a new full-time ESL instructor for the Intensive English Language Institute with the academic rank of Assistant Professor. She will begin teaching at Divine Word College in August 2020.

Dr. Heiberger is currently an Assistant Professor of ESL at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa, where she has primarily taught courses in English for academic purposes along with some undergraduate courses on writing and culture. Dr. Heiberger earned her Ph.D. in English at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois in 2017 with specializations in ESL and women's literature. The title of her doctoral dissertation was: "*Strong, and I Adapt Myself: Saudi Women and English Language Learning.*" Her research interests include second language acquisition, ESL pedagogy, intercultural understanding, women's literature, and feminist theory.

Help me to thank the members of the Search Committee for all the hard work of reviewing 24 applications, holding initial remote interviews, and hosting on-campus interviews over the past few months: Dr. Seo Hyun Park (Chair), Mr. Larry Udry, Ms. Gwyneth Gates, and Dr. Richard Garrett.



- March 23**      **ESL Spring 2020 Term D – Classes Begin**
- April 1-3**     **Registration for UG Fall 2020 Semester**
- April 3**        **Student Resource Center Workshop**  
"APA Seventh Edition...What's New?" – This workshop reviews major changes to APA citation and style in the new seventh edition.
- April 9-10**    **NO CLASSES (Holy Week Triduum)**
- April 18**      **Seniors CCTST (California Critical Thinking Skills Test)**
- April 24**      **Employee Retirement & End-of-Year Party** (to be determined)  
5:00 – 7:30 pm at "The Barn House," 13527 Gun Club Road, Epworth, IA
- April 30**      **Recognition and Awards Luncheon 11:50 am – 1:30 pm** (to be determined)
- May 1-2**       **Board of Trustees Meeting** (to be determined)
- May 13**       **ESL Spring 2020 Term D – Classes End**
- May 14**       **ESL Spring 2020 Term D – End-of-Term Testing**
- May 15**       **Commencement**
- May 16**       **Summer Break begins**
- June 3-5**      **HLC Assessment Academy Roundtable, Chicago, IL**
- June 15-17**   **Dubuque Archdiocesan Priest Convocation**