ALUMNI IN ACTION

Essential workers persevere during uncertain times.
This is a familiar phrase to Indiana University Kokomo’s faculty and staff. I often ask our campus members to be bold and take the initiative to make our campus culture and our students’ experience the best it can be...everyone on our campus is a leader. Never has that been more apparent than it has been during the past few months.

Little did we know when the Spring 2020 semester began in January that by the end of March, we would be closing campus and delivering class content remotely. Not only were students finishing the semester at home, faculty and staff were also working from home. I do not think the campus has ever been so quiet. I once again asked everyone to “lead from where you are”.

Faculty and students left campus for spring break and did not return to campus to finish the semester. Faculty had two weeks to figure out how to deliver course content on-line for classes that were designed to be taught face-to-face. Students had to be flexible and open to alternative methods of course delivery, and staff had to figure out how to get their jobs done from home. This issue of Legacy features some of our alumni, faculty and staff who were instrumental in their roles in dealing with the pandemic. I am proud of our alumni who are doing incredible work in service to our community during this global crisis. And I cannot say enough about our faculty and staff, who stepped up and met the challenges a pandemic brings.

While we negotiate the challenges posed by COVID-19, we cannot ignore the civil unrest and protests demanding social justice for victims of recent shootings. We believe that it is important for our campus community to re-affirm our commitment to diversity in all its forms, and to foster a climate of respect and inclusiveness; a climate that welcomes students of all diverse backgrounds, thoughts, perspectives, and life experiences.

Many of these essential workers were Indiana University Kokomo alumni, serving their communities when they were needed most. They include Jerome Campbell, an Indianapolis firefighter, made medical runs to help the sick; David Barrett, supported teachers and checked into the welfare of students at home as principal of a Lafayette junior high school; Amy Lennon Kinder, took a leave from her ER nurse job for a short-term deployment to the hard-hit hospitals in New York City, and Nikki Brown, helped people handle the mental health issues that come with sudden, even traumatic changes of a pandemic. See their stories on page 16.

Stay home, stay safe.

As the COVID-19 pandemic began in March, that was the advice given — stay at home if you can avoid exposure to the coronavirus. But for those on the front lines — doctors, nurses, pharmacists, ambulance drivers, police and firefighters, grocery store workers, and many more — staying home was never an option. And then there were the teachers, who may have been home, but continued their vital work of educating children, but through a computer or tablet screen, rather than in the classroom. Often while also helping their own children with school work.

Many of these essential workers were Indiana University Kokomo alumni, serving their communities when they were needed most. They include Jerome Campbell, an Indianapolis firefighter, made medical runs to help the sick; David Barrett, supported teachers and checked into the welfare of students at home as principal of a Lafayette junior high school; Amy Lennon Kinder, took a leave from her ER nurse job for a short-term deployment to the hard-hit hospitals in New York City, and Nikki Brown, helped people handle the mental health issues that come with sudden, even traumatic changes of a pandemic.

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GREETINGS FELLOW ALUMNI,

First and foremost, I hope this finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe as this most unusual year comes to an end. The past several months has certainly created a whirlwind of emotions from the global COVID-19 pandemic and the unrest in our country. Myself, along with campus leadership, have thought of all of you during this time.

To the Class of 2020 graduates: You pivoted. You persevered. You were determined to complete your Indiana University degree during a pandemic...something none of us could have predicted. We are more than proud of you.

Despite the curveballs, IU Kokomo continues to move forward with many great initiatives. The Greenhouse was completed this summer, as well as the Student Activities and Events Center. We look forward to hosting you on campus so you can see these new additions once we are able to do so.

Thanks to generous alumni and donors, the IUAA Kokomo Region was able to award seven alumni scholarships to current students. You’ll find more about the recipients on the next page.

One of my priorities is to keep you, our alumni, engaged in our campus and connected to each other. We are offering some fun, informative virtual events, including cooking classes, alumni podcasts, and lifelong learning opportunities. Stay up-to-date on future events by following us on social media at Facebook, Twitter or Instagram (IUAA Kokomo Region).

If you are interested in participating in a podcast interview, learn how you can get more involved with your local alumni chapter, recruit prospective students for IU Kokomo, or catch up with your alumni director, please send me an email at alumni@iuk.edu. I WANT to hear from YOU!

As we move forward and continue to travel unknown paths, it is important for all us to be kind to each other and lift each other up when we can. We are all a part of the IU family, and never daunted, we are tried and true.

Benjamin Liechty, B.A. ’06
Director of Alumni Relations and Campus Ceremonies

YOUR GENEROSITY SUPPORTS STUDENTS

The Indiana University Alumni Association Kokomo Region awarded $10,500 in scholarships to seven students for the 2020-2021 academic year. Each received $1,500.

All new and continuing students enrolled in at least six credit hours per semester are eligible.

Benjamin Liechty, director of alumni relations and campus ceremonies, said the selection committee received many strong applications for the IU Kokomo Alumni Association Scholarships and Kokomo Region Alumni Scholarships.

“We have many outstanding students on our campus and are proud to be able to help them achieve their educational goals with these scholarships,” he said. “I was very pleased with the recipients chosen, and it is my hope they will one day pay it forward to future students, by giving to alumni scholarships.”

Recipients of the IU Kokomo Alumni Association Scholarships include:

» Carter Adkins, a secondary education major from Kokomo.
» Logan Cox, a biological and physical sciences major from Lawrenceburg.
» Laina Fields, a criminal justice major from Connorsville.
» Morgan Wymer, a medical imaging technology student from Union City.

Those receiving the Kokomo Regional Alumni Scholarships are:

» Kelsey Burnham, a nursing major from Kokomo.
» Fernando Alonzo Chavez, a business student from Kokomo.
» Kara Funk, a communication major from Lebanon.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2021-2022 academic year at iuk.edu/alumni/scholarship. If you know a current or prospective IU Kokomo student, encourage him or her to apply by April 16, 2021.
The Class of 2020 doesn’t go unnoticed, even though spring Commencement was postponed. The 651 graduates represent 41 Indiana counties, 12 states, and 16 countries.

“I commend them for their perseverance as they finished their degrees under circumstances none of us could have anticipated,” said Chancellor Susan Sciame-Giesecke.

A few of our graduates reflect on their experiences at IU Kokomo.

For updated information on Commencement ceremonies for the Class of 2020, go to iuk.edu/commencement.

**IUK Class of 2020**

Frannie Ruedin
New Media, Art and Technology

“It was something I needed to do, going back to school in such an early stage of grief,” said Ruedin, whose 13-year-old brother passed away just before her senior year. “I dedicated all of my time to this art project. Once I set it up, it was so emotional, not only to see my vision come to life, but to know it was dedicated to my little brother.”

**IUK Class of 2020**

Kellin Hardin
Psychology, Active Duty – United States Air Force

“It’s exciting for me because not only have I completed an undergraduate degree,” Hardin said. “Mom graduated in her 40s. So, the fact I could graduate and start a master’s program and have that before I’m 40, that’s an achievement.”

**IUK Class of 2020**

Khoi Nguyen
Nursing

“I enjoy taking care of people,” said Nguyen. “Getting to know my patients and taking care of them gives me a sense of responsibility and purpose. It’s always good to see them getting better.”

**IUK Class of 2020**

Esmerelda Perez
Biochemistry

“Not many people from my background get these kinds of chances,” said Perez, from Mexico, who plans to go to medical school. “You have to grab these opportunities and run with them.”

**IUK Class of 2020**

Ely and Henly Page
History and Political Science

“We’re brothers, and we work and get along, said Henly. “It makes things fun. It will be weird going into the workforce without him, and missing that bond of working together.”

**IUK Class of 2020**

Carlos Enci
Biochemistry

“We come from a humble background,” Enci said, from Africa. “Education is a power in my family. If you aren’t educated, nobody will listen to you. Education is the foundation for our family coming to this country.”

**IUK Class of 2020**

Alison Carwright
Business

“The people there are more focused on who you are as a person, and how you’re doing, and building genuine connections,” Carwright said of her internship in Spain. “That’s one of the biggest things I’ve taken away, to take time to build relationships, as opposed to just getting done what needs to be done.”
Making a return to CAMPUS

Masks and hand sanitizer became backpack staples for students returning to campus this fall. Crimson-colored dots mark the spot for desks and campus furniture to ensure proper physical distancing. #IUSTRONG

HOW TO THRIVE

Have you found yourself working from home during the pandemic? Needless to say, it is a big adjustment that can be challenging. Along the way, the media and marketing team learned some tricks and tips that may be helpful:

It can be easy to get distracted at home, even when you have a dedicated workspace. At the end of each day I plan my tasks for the next day. It keeps me from getting distracted when I walk past those dirty dishes or that pile of laundry. Even though I have a plan, I always keep in mind that changes are likely. Having that mindset keeps me from getting mentally distracted and I’m better able to pivot projects as I go through the day.

— April Name, creative services manager

Keeping active while working from home is important. It keeps the blood flowing and gets you away from your desk long enough to think about other things and spurs creativity. If you have a second floor or basement, take a 10-minute break every hour to run the flight of stairs. My personal goal is to climb 20 flights, but there are days where I push myself towards 75 flights, it’s a great cardio workout.

— Michael Glasbourn, videographer

Try to find a space at home that you can dedicate to work. It’ll help you stay better organized and focused. I found a desk for $25 on Facebook Marketplace and it makes working from home feel a little more “normal.”

— Marie Lindskoog, director of media and marketing

Brush your teeth. The first couple of days working from home, after showering and getting dressed, I would go downstairs and get busy working. About midday I realized I missed the step of brushing my teeth. I started making sure I did that before I went downstairs to start work for the day. Good thing I was the only one working from home at the time.

— Terri Hellmann, graphic specialist

It’s tempting to get out of bed and go straight to your workspace in pajamas, but resist that temptation. I heard a quote somewhere that “flannel starts to feel like failure after five days,” and I do find I’m more productive when I’ve gone through the morning ritual of showering and changing into real clothes.

— Danielle Rush, communications specialist
Events Center opens for classroom, athletic use

The IU Kokomo volleyball team made history September 25, playing the first game in the new Student Activities and Events Center.

The center was pressed into service nearly as soon as it opened, to fill a need for additional classroom space due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 30 fall semester classes meet there because of the available room for physical distancing.

Volleyball Head Coach Heather Hayes was especially excited for her senior athletes, who committed to play for the Cougars before the SAEC was approved.

“Having a gym and events center on our campus does so much for the culture of our campus, and changes how we are able to recruit future students as well,” she said. “We are grateful to the university, administration, and all the donors who worked tirelessly to make this a reality. The SAEC definitely enhances the student, athletic use experience at IU Kokomo.”

The SAEC includes a 10,918-square-foot, two-story gymnasium, expected to be completed for installation by IU’s Office of the Bicentennial. It is the first regional campus history mural, was commissioned from among 25 Indiana artists to create the work, which will commemorate IU’s bicentennial and IU Kokomo’s 75th anniversary.

The mural, titled Our Story, includes 12 panels, each 6-foot by 4-foot showcasing themes of Then, Now, and Future.

“I’m very honored to have the opportunity to be involved in this project,” he said. “It’s my story as well when I call it Our Story. It’s a very inclusive title. I’ve always felt this is my family here. To be able to leave a lasting impression and interpretation of this is my family here. To be able to leave a lasting impression and interpretation of that is a real honor.”

Chancellor Susan Sciame-Giesecke congratulated Koerner, noting the selection committee reviewed all submissions without names on them before narrowing it down to five finalists.

“I’m very proud to showcase the talents of one of our faculty members in such a prominent project,” she said. “I know Michael will create a work of art that will represent us well and serve as a focal point in our new Student Activities and Events Center.”

The artwork, which will be the first regional campus history mural, was commissioned by IU’s Office of the Bicentennial. It is expected to be completed for installation by early May.

NMAT professor slated to paint Bicentennial mural

An Indiana University Kokomo professor will tell the campus’ story in artwork, with a mural in the Student Activities and Events Center.

Michael Koerner, associate professor of New Media, Art, and Technology, was chosen from among 25 Indiana artists to create the work, which will commemorate IU’s bicentennial and IU Kokomo’s 75th anniversary.

Greenhouse benefits science, nutrition classes

Something new has bloomed on campus — a 1,500 square-foot greenhouse.

Located between Hunt Hall and the Kelley House, it provides teaching and lab space for current and anticipated initiatives in sciences and other programs in areas including biology, nutrition, hospitality and tourism, earth science, and sustainability.

Christian Chauvet, dean of the School of Sciences, noted that plants are used as models in many biology classes, especially at the introductory level. It provides opportunities for students to look at science-related careers in fields that include agriculture, biotechnology, environmental science, the pharmaceutical industry, medicine and health, and teaching.

It will also be used for academic research by faculty and students. In addition, it could be used to grow food for the campus food pantry, and for use by Hospitality and Tourism Management and nutrition classes.

The greenhouse was funded by donations from two anonymous donors, along with Barb and Steve Conner and the Indiana American Water Company.

Looking for a new podcast?

Add Alumni Angle to your rotation.

Hear stories from your fellow alumni about their IU experience, their career, the unknown career opportunities a degree can take you, volunteer work, philanthropy, the IU Alumni Association and more.

This podcast can be accessed on the alumni website (iuk.edu/alumni) as well as on social media channels of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn (IU Kokomo Region).

Interested in participating in a podcast episode? Email your Alumni Director at alumni@iuk.edu to discuss future episodes!

Alumnus leads diversity efforts at High Point University

As the United States grappled with racial tension during the spring and summer, Doug Hall wrestled with his own feelings about victims of racial injustice.

“I had a mix of emotions, ranging from frustration, shock, elevated concern, and a sense of heaviness for the heart of individuals around all that had transpired,” said Hall, B.A. ‘01.

Having worked for High Point University, North Carolina, for eight years, he was moved by a statement the university president released, and emailed him a thank you. That led to Hall’s new job, as assistant vice president for diversity and inclusion.

“We’re starting to see our world change in such a way, that we would do our students a disservice if we did not educate them for it,” he said. “We have to equip them for where they go next, so they can avoid microaggressions, bias, and aspects of racism.”

His career in higher education was influenced by IU Kokomo mentors.

“I cut my teeth in student affairs working for Sarah Sarber and Cathy Barnes,” he said, adding that a career session with Chancellor Susan Sciame-Giesecke convinced him to major in communications.

“Seeing myself in this job, and thinking of all of their mentorship along the way, it’s really phenomenal to describe, as far as where I am today,” Hall said.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Alumnus leads diversity efforts at High Point University

Doug Hall, B.A. ’01

Assistant vice president for diversity and inclusion, High Point University

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By: Kate Aguilar

I moved into my college dorm the second week of August 2001.

A wide-eyed freshman, I knew very little of myself and the world. A month later, a tall, brown-haired girl yelled down the hall that a plane had hit the Twin Towers. We were still new enough to the college experience that I did not know her name. Yet, within minutes, almost the entire floor was huddled in her two-person dorm room watching our world burn.

I write this on the eve of another anniversary of September 11th. Nineteen years later, the world looks different. There is social media and the iPhone; information is at our fingertips. My world is also different. I am a wife and a mother. I work as a coordinator of Student Life and Campus Diversity at Indiana University Kokomo. I am now welcoming wide-eyed freshmen to the college experience. And, still, I sit here watching our world burn.

When I started a major in Black Studies at 18 years old, I did not know much about the term Black. Today, Black Lives Matter is painted boldly and beautifully across buildings and streets, it is on my Netflix account, and in my social media feed. To some, what they see on television – the protests against police brutality, the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights, the call for culturally rich curricula, and brave spaces in the workplace and at home where people can and are authentically engaging with issues surrounding identity, oppression, power, and privilege – feels new. For scholars of Black Studies, Ethnic Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Women’s Studies, Queer Studies, Latinx Studies, we know that communities of color, which include queer communities, have been metaphorically and physically on fire for hundreds of years. In fact, the legendary cultural critic and writer James Baldwin said to a German newspaper in July of 1964 that if the U.S. did not solve its racial crisis it was headed to a civil war. He argued the turning point may be “disaster, social and moral chaos.”

Yes, the world is on fire.

The brutal death of George Floyd caused another (not a new) eruption. Between May 26 and August 22, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) reports that over 7,750 protests occurred in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Protests took place around the world. English Premier League (soccer) players, for example, wore Black Lives Matter badges on their jerseys and took a knee before games. The portrayal of these protests, of course, differs according to many factors. Some paint the protestors as troublemakers. Others paint us as change agents. Time recently released a report from ACLED that more than 93 percent of national protests were peaceful. Even those that were not brought attention to the rage and helplessness many Black communities feel. As Martin Luther King, Jr., said, “A riot is the language of the unheard.”

Yes, the U.S. is on fire...for change.

I remember a moment in 2001, when the buildings were falling, that I felt afraid. The unknown was overwhelming. I wondered, “What happens now?” But I also remember feeling hope. I felt hope watching first responders and community members running to the rubble not from it. I felt hope watching people who did not know each other quite literally holding one another up. This moment predated social media and the iPhone. It predated platforms that, in some respects, have contributed to and amplified today’s chaos. We have keyboard warriors slinging words like spears, and our spirits are wounded.

In a World on Fire...
But the power of this moment is that we also have keyboard warriors putting up shields through the form of book clubs and podcasts. Scholars are sharing information. Artists are creating art. We see people of every walk using social media to amplify experiences, lives, and voices that often go unheard. At our fingertips is the information we never had to create culturally rich bookshelves for our children and ourselves and curricula for our classrooms and culturally responsive churches and public spaces. At our fingertips are ways to have new and more productive conversations.

Many communities are thinking about what it means to be an ally. All, we hope, are deconstructing power and privilege, like scholar of discriminatory policy Ibram X. Kendi challenges us to do through the word “antiracist.” Colleges across the nation are having discussions about hiring more faculty and staff to teach and discuss identity. Professional athletes are kneeling down and standing up: creating schools, volunteering, and refusing to play. They are reminding a new generation that there are more seats at the table but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone a seat at the table.

I have been a student and scholar of Black Studies for almost 20 years. I have been a diversity and inclusion practitioner for five, and I have never personally seen this kind of global hunger: the desire to embrace who we are, to celebrate cultural differences, and to move forward deeply rooted in love for self and others. I know it feels easier in this moment to see hate, but if you look around, you may see a world on fire... for good. If you look at the sheer volume of protestors. If you look at changes happening within higher education and corporate America. If you look at the recent Supreme Court Cases on DACA and LGBTQ+ employees’ rights. If you look at the conversation expanding to include the issues American Indians face and the Latinx community confronts, as well as the Asian American community. From the legalization of gay marriage in 2015 to the recent decision of Brazil to pay their men’s and women’s national soccer team players equally, change is happen- ing locally, nationally, and globally. The amplification of marginalized voices, stories, and experiences reminds us all that we are in this together. In 2001, I was wide-eyed and unsteady, but I was a college student. I realized, even then, what a gift it was to be surrounded by books, by ideas, by faculty, staff, and students with a desire to have tough conversations and learn about such political and social upheaval. I immersed myself in learning about another culture. I read. I asked questions. I listened to others’ experiences, and I believed them. I sub- mitted humbly, as I still do today, that I have much to discover. American pro- fessor, lecturer, and author Brené Brown recently said in a conversation with social justice warrior Austin Channing Brown, “I am not here to be right. I am here to get it right.” That statement exemplifies my personal approach to social justice.

The world is on fire, physically and metaphorically. We are living during another time of great political and social upheaval with the possibility for tremendous change. To me, social justice is not only giving everyone a seat at the table but being comfortable with everyone having a voice. My family is multiracial. My daughters are Latina. My son is Black. I get up and go to work – challenging college students to think about race and ethnicity, to deconstruct terms like “sys- temic racism,” and to analyze connections between race, ethnicity, policy, and power – so that they and my own kids will create more seats at the table. So that when any person sits down and speaks up, it will not feel unexpected or unusual or worst of all, wrong. After all, it is their table, too. And it’s long enough and wide enough and strong enough for us all to have a place.

Kate Aguilar is the coordinator of student life and campus diversity at IU Kokomo. Kate with her husband, Hector, assistant director of physical facilities at IU Kokomo, and their children (from left) Naomi, Kabi and Cailie.

To me, social justice is not only giving everyone a seat at the table, but being comfortable with everyone having a voice.
When life as we knew it took an unexpected turn in the spring, many alumni continued business as usual. Firefighter Jerome Campbell is just one of the four whose stories are shared here.
Jerome Campbell cannot remember the last time he hugged his grandma.

His job as a firefighter puts him on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, and, as a result, has caused him to switch visits with phone calls to older loved ones.

"That’s probably the hardest part," said Campbell, B.S. ’16, who joined the Indianapolis Fire Department one year ago. "I’m really close with my grandparents. Knowing they aren’t as young as I am, or as healthy as I am, I could be putting them in jeopardy because I want to see them. Talking over the phone, that only does so much, but that’s the route I’m going to have to take.

"It definitely takes a toll on you," he added. “You miss being around these people you love. Sometimes all you want to do is go hug them, it would make your day so much better. But it’s a sacrifice that comes with the job.”

While his title is firefighter, 85 to 90 percent of the job is medical runs — including caring for potential COVID-19 patients. Knowing the potential danger, however, he wouldn’t change his career.

"If anything, it’s given me a greater sense of respect for the people we’re working with," he said. "This is part of our job. We serve the community. Giving back to people and knowing you can go out there and make a difference for someone is worth the risk. They are counting on me to give 100 percent every day, even on my worst day.

He also feels a stronger sense of responsibility to his co-workers, to be mindful and make sure he’s taking all necessary precautions to avoid bringing the virus into their station.

As a firefighter, he’s used to putting on full gear for a run — a fire helmet, turnout pants and a jacket made of heavy-duty fire and moisture-resistant fabric, gloves, boots, and a self-contained breathing apparatus.

Now, medical runs also require a new normal of protective gear, including a jumpsuit over his uniform, along with an N-95 mask. A respirator can also be worn for additional protection. When arriving at a home, one crew member goes to the door to ask questions, to screen for potential COVID-19 exposure, and reduce the number of people going inside if someone possibly has the virus.

When the crew returns to the station, they sanitize all their equipment and leave the jumpsuit and any other exposed clothing in the bay with the trucks. This prevents accidental spread of the virus.

"It’s our job to show up for any situation, but we’re aware that we have to protect ourselves,” he said. Having been an athlete most of his life, including playing basketball at IU Kokomo, he likes the team atmosphere of being a firefighter.

“"You have to trust the people you’re working with, that they have your back. I’m trusting these guys with my life, and vice versa,” Campbell said. “We see things most of the public won’t see, and we understand the pressures and stress each of us face. Building that camaraderie with each other, the brotherhood and sisterhood, is one of the beneficial parts of this job.”

So far, he’s not encountered a COVID-19 patient in any of his runs but was tested when one of his colleagues had the virus. Thankfully, his test was negative.

He’s noticed extra public support for firefighters and other front-line workers during the pandemic — support that he appreciates.

"The community has been behind us even before COVID-19, they’ve always supported the fire department. But with everything going on, they’re getting behind us even more than before," he said. “They understand we are putting ourselves on the line.”

Campbell is grateful to the health care workers, nursing home caregivers, teachers, and other essential workers also doing their part during the pandemic.

"We realize we’re not the only ones out there doing this work," he said. Having seen the effects of the virus, he urges people to take precautions to avoid it at all possible.

"It affects people in different ways," he said. “You might get a light case but expose someone else who gets it and becomes seriously ill. It’s not like any other sickness. You have to take the proper precautions and protect yourself and think about what’s important in life. You don’t have to be scared and you should continue to live your life, but protect yourself, and be aware of the situations you put yourself in.”
During the pandemic, focus has been on physical health — but mental health has taken a hit as well.

CDC researchers reported in the New York Times that more than 40 percent of people surveyed in late June said they experienced a mental or behavioral health condition related to the pandemic. They found that reports of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts were up significantly in 2020 compared with previous years. Nikki Brown was among the mental health care professionals supporting those affected, first as a student in IU Kokomo’s Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling, and, since graduating in August, as a full-time counselor.

From a phone-in her living room, she walked her Integrity Counseling clients through depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues exacerbated by fear of the virus, the effects of suddenly having to stay at home, too much family togetherness, working from home while helping children with remote schoolwork, and other impacts.

“Everything else was unstable, but I worked hard to be stable for them and be someone they could rely and count on to be there,” said Brown, B.S. ’17 M.A. ’20. “I showed them that every week I am here to support you the best that I can. I was someone reliable in a time that many other things were uncertain. They knew that every week, I was going to be there.”

She found people who already suffered anxiety and depression were hit harder by the sudden changes.

“Anxiety and depression were heightened, and a lot of people felt isolated and confused,” Brown said. “People who already had anxiety, it made it worse for them with depression. Many of them felt isolated, hopeless, and uncertain.”

She found that techniques such as using technology to connect with others and stay in touch with loved ones, engaging in hobbies to relieve stress, and offering more grace to yourself and others helped her clients.

“Quarantining with family means we don’t get the alone time we’re used to,” she said. “Offer more forgiveness to yourself and the ones you love during times of excessive togetherness.”

She and her colleagues learned how to counsel by phone as they went, their jobs made a little more difficult by not being able to meet in person.

“It’s hard to judge someone’s stability over the phone, especially if it’s a high suicide risk patient,” she said. “It’s a lot easier when you are in the same space and can assess body language. Even experienced counselors were confused sometimes, so for us newer counselors, it was really challenging.”

Brown said her team met weekly to support one another, sharing techniques that worked for their clients, and talking over challenges to brainstorm ideas. Because she was also completing her mental health counseling degree, she also shared ideas and successes on regular Zoom meetings with her classmates and faculty.

Her work team returned to in-person appointments in June, after rearranging their offices to have at least six feet between counselor and client. Brown continues to serve some clients remotely, if that is what works for them.

“Local therapists had to move quickly from in-person to virtual counseling, and I think it was hard to adjust on the fly. We really did the best we could,” Brown said.

During the pandemic, focus has been on physical health — but mental health has taken a hit as well.

Barrett, assistant principal at Lafayette’s Teocumshah Junior High, tested positive for the virus. So did his pregnant wife, and all five of their children. None of them had felt sick, but he decided to get everyone tested after coming in contact with another person who contracted the virus.

Within days of finding out, Barrett was as sick as he could ever remember being — and feeling guilty on top of it for being home so close to the start of school.

“It was rough being at home and being stuck, and knowing my co-workers were busting their tails to get us back in school,” he said. “Two weeks before school starts, that’s when the pressure is on. I missed orientation, when I typically would do a lot with student services and clubs. It really made it hard to come back that first day.”

Barrett, B.S. ’09, and his family all recovered, and he was cleared to return to work the day before classes started. Even then, though, he wasn’t at 100 percent.

“I felt like I could barely breathe when I was waking up the stairs,” he said. “It took me a week to get back into the swing of things.”

Comming down with the virus brought home the seriousness of the illness that closed his school in mid-March, a week before spring break. Even knowing it was the right thing to do, it was challenging to move such a large number of students and teachers to virtual learning.

His job was supporting teachers as they pivoted to virtual instruction. Plus, it was important to check the well-being of students not showing up in virtual classes or completing work so they could be counted as present.

“It was hard for our students to adjust during that time,” Barrett said. “While our teachers did a great job making adjustments on the fly, our students really struggled without having the constant presence of a teacher. It was hard on the teachers, trying to figure out the best way to manage the pandemic and do the best they could for their students.”

Once the spring semester ended, the work began to prepare for the next school year. While they considered many options, including all-virtual, all-in-person, and a combination, everyone agreed that in-person was the best option. The biggest challenge was waiting for guidance from the state, so plans could be solidified, and the last-minute mask mandate that supported their plans.

“We got a lot of pushback on wanting to require masks,” said Barrett. “Once the governor made that mandate, it helped with what we were doing.”

About 300 students chose virtual school. The rest returned in person with new rules, including physical distancing, extra space in the cafeteria and rooms available for dining outside the cafeteria, and staircases and hallways designated to go one way only.

“It’s been hard to manage those changes, given the age group of his students.

“Our teachers have had a lot of extra patience this year,” he said. “Junior High is a tough environment. They come in really immature, you add all these rules, and not being able to go outside to run off some of their energy because of contact tracing, it makes it harder on everyone.”

Barrett appreciates the support he and the teachers have felt from the community for themselves, and for their students.

“There was a huge outpouring from our community, recognizing what we were doing to try to help the kids,” he said. “We appreciated the shout outs and recognition. We’re not the doctors, but we’re still out here trying to do what’s best for our kids.”

Two weeks before David Barrett planned to bring more than 1,000 seventh and eighth graders safely back to school, disaster struck.
When Amy Lennon Kinder heard about a shortage of medical care providers in New York, she felt called to offer her service.

Kinder spent 12 weeks in New York City during the spring, working 12- to 16-hour shifts, without a day off, for 21 days, at the Coney Island Hospital, which was only treating COVID-19 patients.

She described her experience as “a whirlwind of emotions,” with tears flowing every day after returning to her hotel room following each shift.

The dire needs of her patients broke her heart, and she saw more death during her time in New York than she had during her previous six years as an emergency room nurse in Kokomo. Kinder described an ER packed with more than double its capacity of patients, all desperately ill, and little she could do to help.

Her co-workers were mostly health care professionals from outside New York because the local nurses were either sick or burned out from the relentless work.

Kinder described her experience as “a whirlwind of emotions,” with tears flowing every day after returning to her hotel room following each shift.

“I knew I was there for a reason,” said Kinder, B.S.N. ’14, M.S.N. ’16. “We’re all in healthcare and have a shared goal of taking care of patients, and making sure they are loved while they are here.”

The impact of the coronavirus is unlike anything she had ever seen.

“COVID-19 literally attacks your entire body. People think it’s just like the flu, but the flu doesn’t affect the coagulation of your blood, and your kidneys, and your liver,” she said. “The disease progression is so fast.”

Kinder did this overwhelming work in heavy, hot PPE. A typical day’s attire included a protective suit zipped over her scrubs, an N95 mask, eye protection, hair covering, and two sets of gloves, with one pair worn for the whole shift and a second pair over them that are changed between patients.

The patients kept her going, though, with many from the nearby neighborhood, home to many Russian immigrants who spoke little or no English. She knew many of them were frightened, being elderly, sick, alone, and treated by doctors and nurses in unusual gowns.

“We utilized whatever resources we had to help them, like other staff who spoke their language, or video calls with family members, to get past those barriers,” Kinder said. “The disease progression is so fast.”

Kinder had seen.

Eight months ago, Chancellor Susan Sciacme-Giesecke had no way of knowing she would soon be the biggest leadership challenge of her 40-plus year career in higher education.

Once the coronavirus pandemic forced a campus closure in mid-March, the virtual meetings began, non-stop, to determine the best – and safest – next steps for students, faculty, and staff.

Through it all, she remained deep-rooted in two core values that continue to successfully guide the campus through this pandemic and move it forward: Simply stated, people matter and culture matters.

LEAD FROM WHERE YOU ARE

“People do matter. It is clear, without the excellent team at IU Kokomo, we would not have grown our enrollment this fall and launched in-person instruction on campus. It was important that everyone find a way in their sphere of influence to move the campus forward,” she stated.

Sciacme-Giesecke found that as the campus pivoted from in-person to remote learning, decisions were being made very quickly. And sometimes those decisions were changed yet again.

“Something would be said in the morning and then by the evening it had changed,” she said. “I had to trust that people would step up and move to action.”

Communication and flexibility were key. “I had to mobilize people’s strengths rather than look at position descriptions. I had to reorient some people to action in ways that maybe they hadn’t been before,” she said. “I believe everyone can lead from where they are.”

Daily communication emails and videos helped the campus faculty, staff and students stay connected during this remote period.

It was impossible for one person to multi-manage all aspects of the crisis. Each faculty and staff member had to determine how they could help the campus be successful. They had to lead from their role on the campus.

For example, the Physical Facilities team had to design and learn new cleaning protocols to keep everyone safe, the Admissions staff had to find a way to enroll new students virtually, and the faculty had to redesign their courses to meet the new reality of hyflex courses.

“We began by defining a clear vision, return to in-person instruction as much as possible while keeping everyone safe. Then, we all went about our work to make that happen. It was challenging as we supported each other through the fear and anxiety of the unknown.”

CULTURE MATTERS

Prior to the pandemic, the IU Kokomo campus community had worked hard to define and create its culture – a caring community that encourages innovation and big bold ideas.

A culture that focused on a caring community was important with all the unknowns that everyone was experiencing both at work and at home. We encouraged everyone to reach out to others and to contact their fellow employees to see how they were doing. The Chancellor met virtually with each department to listen and to find ways to keep people connected and to answer questions. Yet, the culture was challenged, building a caring community virtually was something no one had done before.

In addition, the culture of innovation was also needed. The campus needed quick, creative solutions to the “new normal.” For example, the Registrar’s office staff found ways to increase the number of classrooms that could be used to offer in-person classes. The information technology team jumped in find and then order new technology that would be needed to offer courses in this hyflex model. Half the students on zoom and the other half in the classroom.

As the fall semester comes to a close the Chancellor has had time to reflect. She shared, “Now we need to examine all that we have done and outline our lessons learned from this crisis. I know we will keep some practices and processes and we will change others. I know I had everyone at IU Kokomo have learned so much about leading in the midst of a pandemic. I am so proud of how we rose to the challenge.”
When faced with a pandemic, the teaching doesn’t stop.

Faculty members quickly learned Zoom and other technology to allow for interactive learning — and with very little time to prepare.

But Chérie Dodd and others faced their biggest challenge yet — setting up classrooms for physical distancing. They did a fantastic job and worked really hard to prepare for interactive learning — and with very little time to prepare. In addition, they assisted in new course strategies, helping to solve technology problems, and also provide additional instruction.

From needing a laptop to work from home, to WiFi needs, to just overall support — the University Information Technology Services team was just a phone call or Zoom meeting away. We prepared a lot of laptops for faculty and staff to be able to clean the air vents, the blinds, the lightings, every nook and cranny of this place got touched one way or another, “ he said. “We tried to clean every piece of carpet, and every piece of furniture. As long as we were doing that, we also buffed the floors, so it would look nice when we put everything back.”

He’s proud of the effort of his team. “They did a fantastic job and worked really hard to prepare for everyone’s return,” Phelps said. “I’m really happy with their dedication.”

The folks in information technology become your new best friend when a college campus goes to remote learning.

Michelle Trueblood, systems administrator, supported faculty and staff while they worked from home, helping them set up secure connections to access files on their work desktops.

“I worked with a lot of people remotely. We trained on programs and we are used to working with, and helped other people get up to speed on how to use it,” she said. “I don’t think any of us breathed in the spring and there was no way we took a day off because our schedules were so tight.”

During the summer, the work continued, preparing faculty to teach in hybrid formula, with part of the class in person and the rest joining virtually. Dodd said they taught four days a week, with full classes of faculty learning how to keep their classes interactive, create collaborative exercises, and consider accessibility for all students.

“We prepared faculty to help them be more confident about teaching this way,” Dodd said. “We knew there would be challenges, and moving forward, we are here to jump in and help whenever necessary.”

The plan of action began just as soon as classes transitioned to remote instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Phelps, team leader in physical facilities, led efforts to sanitize all classrooms and gathering spaces, paint, set up classrooms for physical distancing when the fall semester began.

“I had zero worries and zero doubts that we would be as prepared as we could be to handle whatever was thrown at us,” said Phelps about faculty, staff, and students’ return in August.

But Chérie Dodd and her CTLA colleagues taught multiple sessions on using online tools like Zoom, a video conferencing program. In addition, the team assisted in new challenges faced by faculty — like students who could no longer attend during the regular class time for various reasons. Faculty created videos in advance of classes for students who had technical difficulties, needed information repeated, or weren’t available during class time.

CTLA helped to create discussion boards, where professors share resources and ideas that work for them as they navigated a new way of teaching.

All in all, the common goal was to ensure students would continue to learn, have the resources they needed to succeed, and be engaged and supported through the unusual semester.

Once classes resumed, Dodd and the CTLA staff were on call to support faculty, troubleshoot issues, and also provide additional instruction.

“Spring was pretty hectic,” she said. “I don’t think any of us breathed in the spring and there was no way we took a day off because our schedules were so tight.”

The library stayed open, so they and other IT staff took turns working there, providing tech support and checking out devices to students, with two stations set up for in-person or remote assistance.

Once classes resumed, Dodd and the CTLA staff were on call to support faculty, troubleshoot issues, and also provide additional instruction.

“Each day is a little different, and that kept it interesting and fun,” she said. Michelle Trueblood, systems administrator, supported faculty and staff while they worked from home, helping them set up secure connections to access files on their work desktops.

“I worked with a lot of people remotely. We trained on programs and we are used to working with, and helped other people get up to speed on how to use it,” she said. “We knew there would be challenges, and moving forward, we are here to jump in and help whenever necessary.”

Trueblood, who found a love for IT unexpectedly through a previous job, enjoys helping to solve technology problems, but admits she prefers being on campus than working from home.

“Each day is a little different, and that kept it interesting and fun,” she said.
Keep up-to-date with IU Kokomo Cougars at iukcougars.com.
Building strong and vibrant communities starts when community members, institutions and organizations are able to come together. Through the gifts of our generous donors, Indiana University Kokomo continues to educate and partner with the communities in our region. We are so thankful for our donors past, present and future.

Lynette Hazelbaker, Kokomo

When many people share their resources, they can make a bigger difference. That’s what Lynette Hazelbaker likes about being part of IU Kokomo’s Women of the Well House, a women’s philanthropy circle that combines its contributions to support campus and community impact projects.

Each member commits to giving $1,000 per year, and then the group meets to review grant applications and hear from those requesting funds and recommend recipients each year. The group has funded a robotics tournament for high school students, technology at a domestic violence shelter, class service projects, a sustainability camp, and many other initiatives.

A retired physician, Hazelbaker heard about the circle, she wanted to be part of it. “I am so excited about the innovative people we have at IU Kokomo, and what the grants allow the students to do.”

Rev. Franklin and Cora Smith Breckenridge, Elkhart

While serving as leaders — Franklin Breckenridge was president of Indiana’s NAACP State Conference of 21 Branches for 23 years, and Cora Smith Breckenridge completed three terms as the first African-American member of the IU Board of Trustees — they also gave financially. Friends began the IU Kokomo scholarship in honor of Cora’s trustee election, and they endowed it — to be given each year — with preference to minority students.

Cora said scholarships made it possible for her to go to IU. “All of those people impacted our lives, and now we have a duty and an obligation to impact the lives of the young people who come behind us,” she said. “It means a lot to us. Not only did we take, but we have given.”

They are proud that they, their children, and granddaughter all have IU degrees. “It allowed us to be educated, to become the type of people we are, and has enabled us to participate and grow and be helpful, and work to erase the racism, discrimination, and inequality that has been the burden and the situation in which we have been as African Americans in this country since our ancestors were brought here as slaves,” Franklin said.

Solidarity Community Federal Credit Union, Kokomo

As an early supporter of IU Kokomo’s athletic program, it was a natural fit for Solidarity Community Federal Credit Union to make a Cornerstone gift to the Student Activities and Events Center. “We’re so excited that IU Kokomo has expanded and grown at the level it has,” said Diana TenBrook, vice president for marketing. “When I go to events there, or attend a game, and I see our name there, it’s going to make me very proud.”

The credit union began its partnership with campus with a five-year pledge to the athletic program and placed a no-fees ATM in the Kelley Student Center Commons. It also started the Cougar Checking Account for students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and contributes $10 to a scholarship fund for each of those accounts opened.

Melissa Domingues, president/CEO, values the relationship between the credit union and campus. “We’ve been a long-time supporter of IU Kokomo, and we’re proud of our continuing partnership,” she said. “We love working with and helping the students and the amazing faculty and staff there.”

TenBrook appreciates receiving information about the recipients, and especially getting to meet them. “It’s amazing how gracious and thankful they are,” she said. “That just fills your heart up with good feelings.”

She added that Solidarity has hosted 14 marketing interns over eight years, and regularly brings its Surprise Squad over to pay for meals in the Cougar Country Café. “We feel like this is part of our responsibility to our community, to volunteer, and to give monetarily,” she said. “We give with our money, our talents, and our hearts.”
When IU Kokomo students began feeling the economic impact of the pandemic in early spring, alumni and friends opened their hearts — and their wallets — to provide emergency aid.

In total, more than $12,000 was donated to support students in need in April and May alone. This was the largest amount donated to students in crisis at any of IU’s regional campuses this spring.

The Student in Crisis Fund has helped students pay for utility bills, textbooks, gas, and home internet, so they could complete the semester remotely.

One student recipient, a single working father of two, said, “The same day I applied for unemployment, I also applied to the IUK Student in Crisis Fund. I was pleased to get an almost instant response asking about my financial worries. While I was hesitant to ask for assistance, the fund graciously sent me enough money to pay for two months of WiFi. This kept me from worrying about how I would complete my studies, how my daughter would do her e-learning, and how I would keep the baby monitor hooked up in my youngest’s room. I am grateful for this resource.”

Another single parent, a nursing student and mother of two who temporarily lost her job, also received aid through the fund. In addition to Student in Crisis Fund aid, she and her family received food from the IU Kokomo Cougar Cupboard and were connected by IU Kokomo staff with other community resources to assist them. Whenever students are awarded Student in Crisis Fund aid, the campus’s resource navigator works with them to help them find longer term solutions to their needs.

The fund was established in 2008 by the Professional Staff Council, with the goal of providing financial assistance to help solve problems that might lead a student to drop out without graduating.

The need is ongoing, and anyone interested in giving can find out more at iuk.edu/give.

Our mission is vital to our community now more than ever! And our future relies on a welcoming place for us all to come together, hear dynamic speakers and exciting music, enjoy athletic events, meet with prospective employers, attend dinners, galas and more! That place is the IU Kokomo Student Activities and Events Center! Please partner with us in our mission by going to crowdfunding.iu.edu and be a part of the Believe. Build. Belong. Campaign.

Naming opportunities are also available. Contact the Office for University Advancement at 765-455-9485.

As always, thank you for your support.
The Indiana University Bicentennial Campaign set the bar higher than any fundraising effort in the university’s history. Your extraordinary generosity not only met but exceeded the campaign goal—twice! The people and programs funded will improve and transform our community for the better. You can learn more about the overall campaign at forall.iu.edu.

FOR ALL

$16,850,842
RAISED FOR IU KOKOMO
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$700,074
NON-GOVERNMENT GRANT SUPPORT

4
CAPITAL PROJECTS

142
NEW SCHOLARSHIPS

$6,484,307
WAS CONTRIBUTED
BY 598 FACULTY/STAFF/RETIREEs

118
PERCENT OF OUR CAMPUS GOAL

3,090
DONORS TO THE CAMPAIGN