

Surgite

A Brock community magazine
Vol. 12 No. 1, Spring/Summer 2020

BROCK UNITED

How the University and its alumni supported the effort
What COVID-19 taught the Class of 2020
Spring Convocation goes 'virtual'



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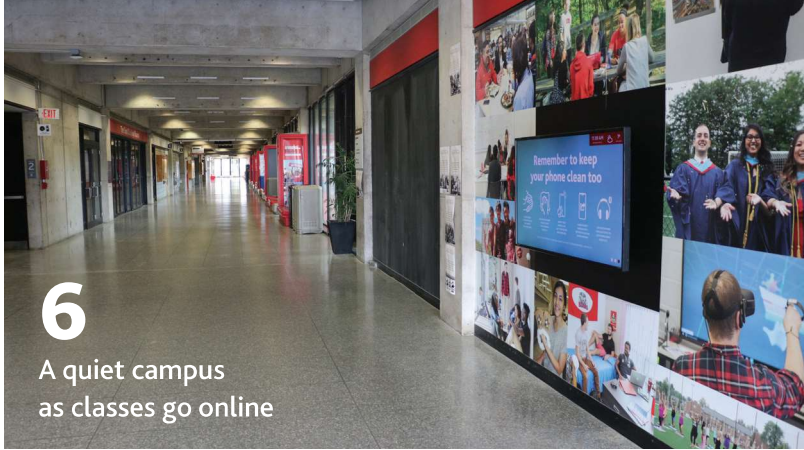
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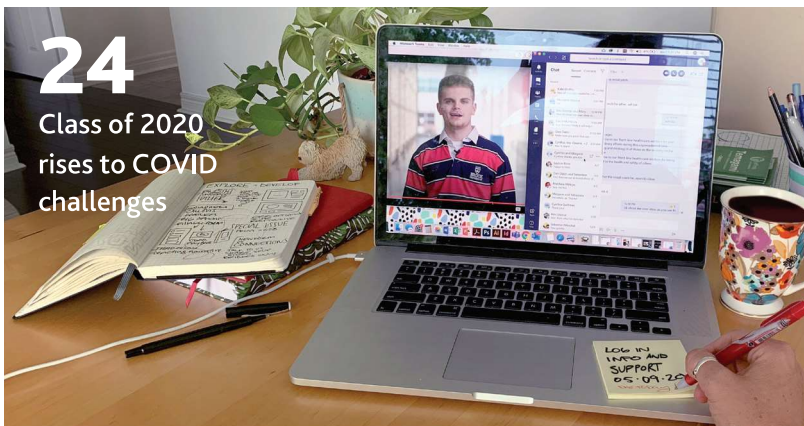
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Special people, special place

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Warm greetings from Brock University. History will remember 2020 as the year a pandemic brought our world to a near standstill. However, it is as important for us to remember the period before COVID-19 as it is to imagine the period beyond it.

At Brock, we enthusiastically began the 2019 Fall Term with our largest-ever incoming class, taking total enrolment to a record 19,600. We started the year focused on our strategic priorities and the pursuit of transformational academic programming and research to meet societal needs at the local, national and international levels.

By March, life changed dramatically. In the span of just days, we took unprecedented steps to facilitate physical

distancing; curtail public gatherings; transfer on-campus activities to online; and change our practices to meet public health guidelines. Residences were emptied, classes and exams delivered through alternative methods, and campus operations suspended. Suddenly, hundreds of staff worked from home. Spring and Summer Terms were offered entirely online.

The broader community's collective action helped affect the course of the pandemic and allow our health-care system to support individuals needing critical services. Special people have been a part of these efforts, many of them graduates from Brock.

The University itself contributed personal protective equipment; opened its residences and other facilities to support frontline workers; ensured that international students had a place to stay; helped faculty and staff transition to new learning and teaching platforms; and explored how research facilities could be made available to assist the response to COVID-19. A special word of thanks goes to the compassionate and dedicated people who helped Brock play its part — people just like you.

Across Canada, jurisdictions have explored a phased "re-opening," including relaxing physical distancing and limits on gatherings, decisions guided by public health authorities. Reports of clinical trials for vaccines are creating a line of hope for a future beyond the immediacy of today's circumstances.

It is important for us to recognize the many things we share and celebrate together. Many of you completed your degree(s) at Brock, met friends and partners here, have family connections here and have dedicated portions of your professional careers and voluntary contributions here.

Brock is a special place because it has special people. As you take a moment to read about them and the place we create and share together, I know you will share my deep sense of pride.

In recognition of today and filled with hope for tomorrow, Surgite!

GERVAN FEARON
President and Vice-Chancellor, Brock University

Surgite

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The inspiring last words of Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock



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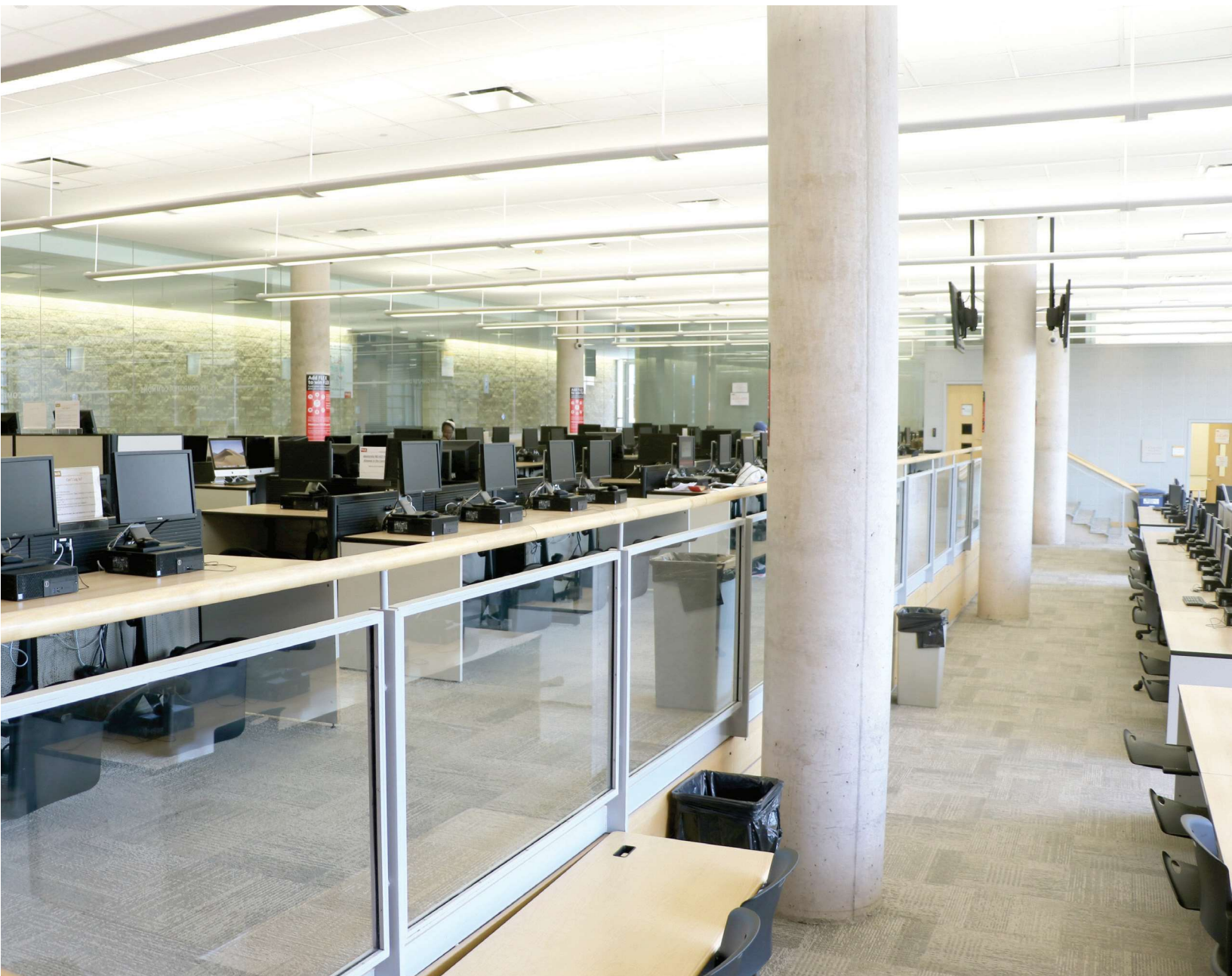
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The Brock community responds to the COVID pandemic

A QUIET CAMPUS



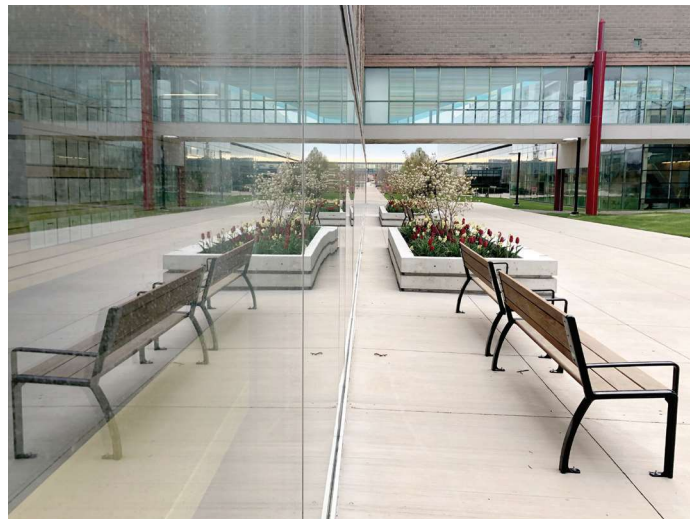
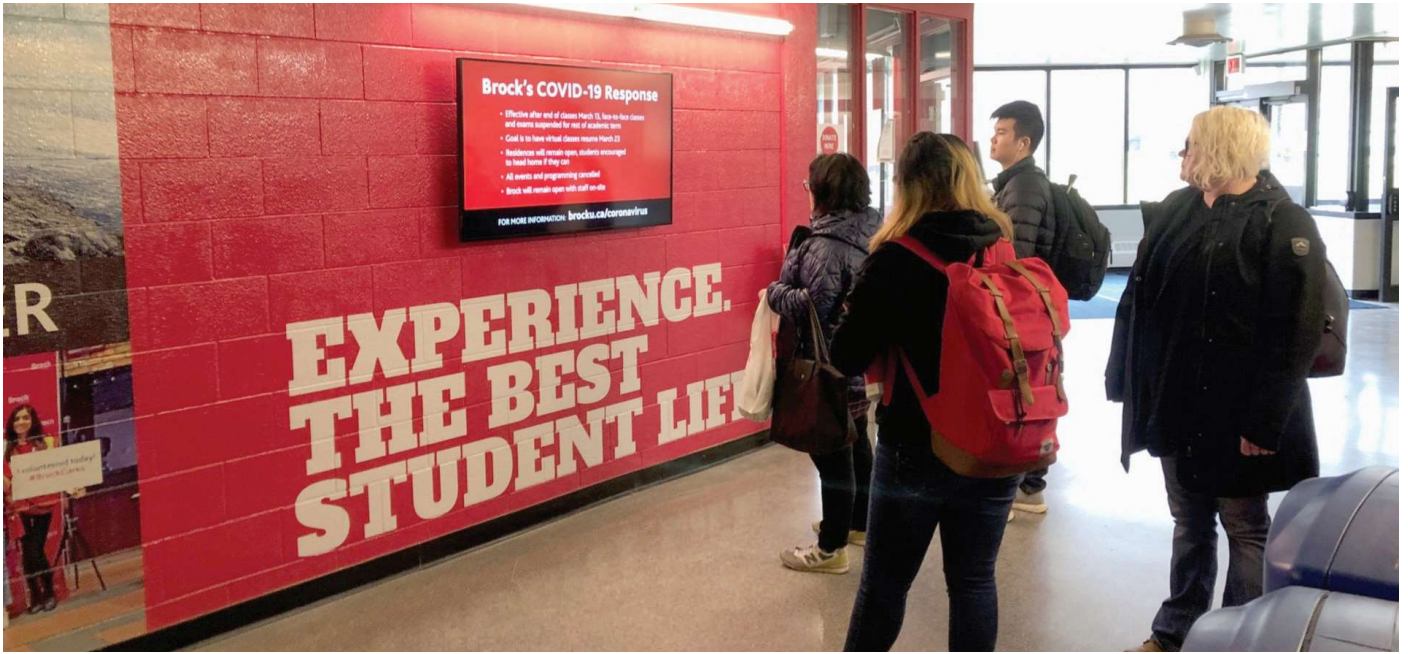
When students arrived to Brock University to start the 2019 Fall Term, they never could have guessed how much would change just six months later. Classes would go on, and staff would still work, but in an unprecedented way.

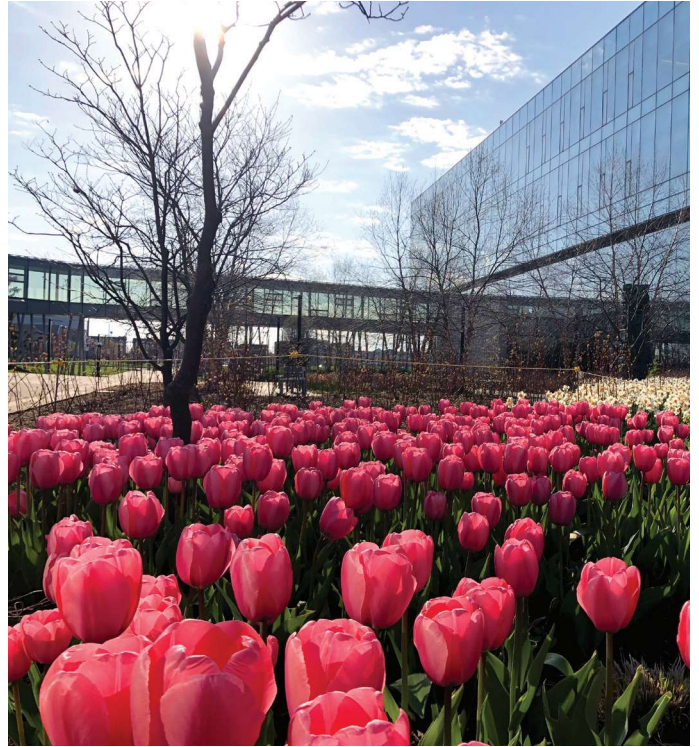


It was just after 12:39 p.m. on Friday, March 13 when the screens across the three Brock campuses relayed the message about the University's COVID-19 response: all classes were paused for 10 days to allow a transition

to online learning. What followed in the weeks and months since that day is a moment in history that will never be forgotten. All on-campus activities and events were cancelled. A modified operational model meant the vast

majority of Brock employees would resume their work from home. And on-campus facilities and cleaning staff worked to prepare the buildings for an eventual return to normal ... whenever that might be.





10 DAYS to ONLINE CLASSES

Pedagogical Innovation (CPI), headed up by Madelyn Law, Associate Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning.

“CPI didn’t blink an eye,” said Finn.

“They saw the recommendation and they were out in front of it. Madelyn and her team were just phenomenal to get us to the point on the 23rd where people were able to be online.”

CPI has long been tasked with working to help faculty members bring innovative teaching methods to their classrooms and online, so Law saw the challenge as something her team was ready for.

“We all approached it as business as usual, just ramped up to about 600 requests for assistance and focusing on providing resources in a proactive way,” she said.

As an Associate Professor of Health Sciences, Law looked at the influx of support requests as an urgent medical scenario.

“We made sure we had a way to triage across the team to deal with the emails and all the correspondence coming in,” she said. “A week before this all happened, we had set up a new system for

requests and in that time between March 13 and 23 we had as many interactions as we would normally see in the weeks leading up to September.”

Law credited the versatility of Brock’s faculty and University Senate with driving the successful transition.

“There were lot of very compassionate and understanding people who were able to reweight the course assignments or redesign their courses to help their students,” Law said. “And Senate’s flexibility and willingness to be dynamic in making changes to support this was really important.”

Finn agreed.

“Nothing in my career compares in terms of making a switch in delivery format that quickly,” he said. “I liken it back to using overhead projectors when I first started teaching and then over time switching to Powerpoint.”

As the post-secondary sector looks ahead to the future, there’s little doubt online learning will see significantly more demand than ever before. Brock has joined most other Canadian institutions in announcing a primarily-online Fall Term with only courses where face-to-face learning is absolutely necessary to be delivered in-person.

Finn sees that unexpected shift as a positive thing for the future of education.

“A lot of faculty members teach the way they were taught. This now provides a whole range of opportunities that I think people are going to leverage,” he said.

By Dan Dakin

Greg Finn woke up out of a deep sleep in the early morning hours of Friday, March 13.

Just before going to bed that night, Brock University’s Provost and Vice-President, Academic had heard that Western University was pausing its Winter Term in order to address the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping across the globe.

It was all happening so fast, but with a meeting of Brock’s senior administrators set for the next morning, Finn knew he would have to come to the table with a plan.

Very little sleep would be had that night.

The next morning, Finn recommended that Brock pause all Winter Term classes effective 5 p.m. that afternoon. The following 10 days would be spent transitioning to an all-online format, with classes to resume on Monday, March 23.

With a solid plan on the table, PVP — as the group consisting of the President and Vice-Presidents is known — agreed. At 12:36 p.m., a mass email went out to all students, faculty and staff alerting them of the news.

And that’s when the hard work really began.

Brock’s 600 faculty members were given a range of options, from ending the term as of March 13 and making current grades final to moving the last two weeks of courses and exams online.

At the heart of the 10-day transition was Brock’s Centre for

VIRTUAL SPRING CONVOCAATION

By Dan Dakin



Convocation is a monumental occasion in the life of any post-secondary student, and Brock University didn't let the Class of 2020 go uncelebrated.

With all in-person ceremonies on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University's 107th Convocation, originally scheduled for the second week of June, moved online, with a future in-person celebration also planned when it's safe to do so.

In the meantime, the University's 2020 Virtual Convocation launched Friday, June 19.

Rather than just a one-day celebration, Virtual Convocation offered a web-based portal where each of the University's more than 3,000 graduates received a tailored experience based on their Faculty, and whether they were an undergraduate or graduate student.

The Virtual Convocation experience included video messages from University President Gervan Fearon; Chancellor Shirley Cheechoo; honorary degree recipient and former Prime Minister of Canada Paul Martin; and other special guests, as well as videos submitted by graduating Brock students.

The Virtual Convocation portal remains online for students and their families to access at their own convenience.

Fearon said the University is committed to inviting 2020 graduates back to campus for an in-person celebration at a future date.

"Virtual Convocation was an important

occasion to officially mark the conferring of their degrees and completion of their academic success and many years of hard work at Brock University," he said. "When it is safe and appropriate to do so, we will be inviting graduating students back to the University campus for the opportunity to celebrate in-person their accomplishments with their peers, faculty and staff as well as family members. We are very proud of the graduating students' accomplishments and they should be too."



Brock's Virtual Convocation portal included a full slate of social media tools for students.



BROCK SUPPORTS FRONTLINE WORKERS

By Dan Dakin

The list is staggering. Thousands of gloves, hundreds of lab coats, goggles, face masks, shields and even simple care packages.

When the call came in for much-needed supplies to those working on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Brock community stepped up in a big way.

After doing a University-wide search to determine what was available, Brock donated a truckload full of personal protective equipment (PPE) to Niagara Health on March 31, all of which was distributed to health-care facilities across the region. It came from a wide range of Faculties and Departments such as research labs and services, teaching

labs, science stores, the electronics shop, and the Campus Store.

But that was just the start.

Headed up by co-ordinator Tabitha Lewis, the Brock Library's Makerspace led a team of people using 3D printers to make holders for face shields. The Machine Shop also got on board and was able to use its equipment to make the shields, while Printing Services assisted with hole-punching the protective plastic sheets that attach to the holders.

And then there were Brock staff members, dozens of whom worked full-time during the day and then spent their evenings and weekends sewing face masks, 3D printing face shields and ear savers, or gathering up

items for care packages.

Alison Innes, Social Media Co-ordinator for the Faculty of Humanities, noticed American crafters making masks on social media early on in the pandemic response. After her sister, a doctor in the U.S., asked Innes to sew a mask for her, a personal project began.

Like other Brock employees, she made hundreds of the fabric masks, hand-sewing them and then shipping them off to anyone who needed them.

"I feel personally that there is value in doing this," said Innes. "It's not only about the finished mask and whether or not it saves a life. Creating community and supporting others in need is so important at this time."



Brock University Makerspace Co-ordinator Tabitha Lewis looks over a 3D printed face shield mount, one of hundreds donated to frontline health-care workers in Niagara.



ITEMS PRODUCED BY BROCK EMPLOYEES FOR DONATION TO THE COMMUNITY

3D printed face shields

1,700

3D printed ear savers

1,500

3D printed buttons

13,000

Hand-sewn fabric face masks

750

Care packages

150



BROCK'S PPE NUMBERS

PPE donated by the University to health-care workers

Individual disposable gloves

29,030

Lab coats

1,082



Stethoscopes

15



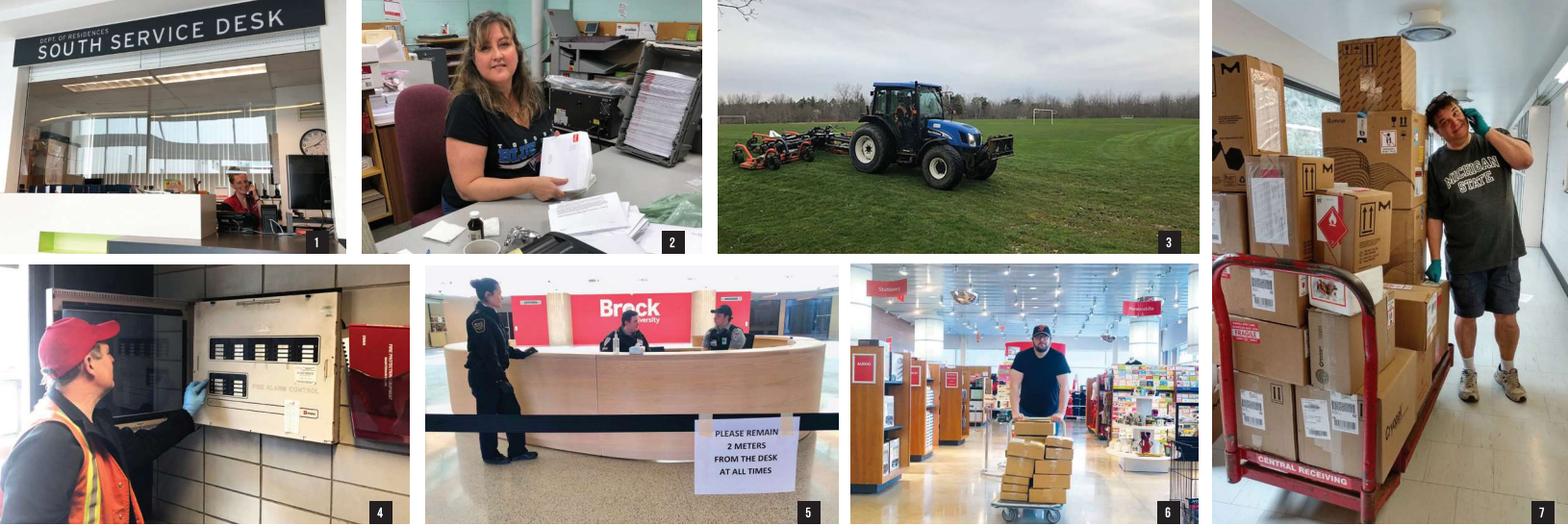
Safety glasses

341



Face masks

250



THE TEAM EFFORT TO KEEP BROCK RUNNING

By Samantha Tapp

When Brock announced the suspension of face-to-face classes and an alternate operational model on March 13 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, students were relocated out of residences, classes were transitioned to an online format and the majority of faculty and staff began working from home.

However, Brock’s essential workers faced the challenge head-on and continued to work on campus throughout the crisis to keep the University running smoothly.

Cleaning the campus, doing repairs, maintaining payroll, shipping out textbooks, evacuating residences, printing crucial materials for faculty and staff, preparing food for students remaining on campus, keeping campus secure, maintaining critical research facilities and managing IT servers are only a few of the ways Brock employees ensured the University operated seamlessly through unprecedented times.

“Outside of Brock, the situation was very fluid, but on campus, we had to be nimble reacting to changes on a weekly, daily and even hourly basis,” said Dave McArthur, Director of Facilities and Services. “All of the essential workers on campus worked really well together. The University was incredibly

well-led throughout the uncertain times.”

To create a safe workspace during the pandemic, those on campus worked in reduced shifts, physically distanced from co-workers, wore personal protective equipment and continuously sanitized work areas.

“When emergencies occur on our campus and most people are able to walk away, our essential staff head to the scene.”

— Scott Johnstone

“When emergencies occur on our campus and most people are able to walk away, our essential staff head to the scene,” said Scott Johnstone, Senior Associate Vice-President, Infrastructure and Operations. “From snow days to fires, our essential staff are on-site 24/7 to quickly respond. The global pandemic was no different when it came to our initial response and ensuring our campus

was as safe as possible following guidance from Public Health.”

Johnstone pointed out the Department of Residence team, which “worked around the clock moving almost 2,500 students off campus within a few days with help from additional volunteers from other departments.”

“Now, months later, all of our essential staff are still on campus daily continuing to take care of everything from grounds maintenance to staffing our service desks. Brock would not have been able to operate without the hard work and dedication of these employees.”

ABOVE:

1. Cara Jeffery, Service Desk Clerk on the Residence Facilities team in the Department of Residences.
2. Lucie Picard, Bindery Assistant, of the Printing Services team.
3. Groundskeeper Rick Manning cutting one of the soccer fields at Brock.
4. Electrician Doug Smith, shown servicing a fire panel, was one of 150 essential employees in Facilities Management working on campus.
5. Campus Security operated a check-in station at the front doors of the Rankin Family Pavilion.
6. John Kizera, Shipping and Receiving Supervisor, Campus Store.
7. Steve Anderson, Mail Clerk, Central Receiving and Mail Services, delivering packages to the Science Stores.



April Powless, co-owner of Mohawk Towing / Porter Trucking and employee Karl Green led an initiative to deliver food and supplies to Elders and others in Oshweken, Ont.

ABORIGINAL STUDENT SERVICES PROVIDES CALMING OPTIONS DURING PANDEMIC

By Douglas Hunt

Brock's Aboriginal Student Services (AbSS) team has not let the COVID-19 pandemic stop them from connecting virtually with students and community members.

Through a variety of outreach activities, AbSS is providing support for students while also maintaining safe physical distancing protocols.

AbSS Director Sandra Wong said the activities mirror the type of support the office provides under normal circumstances.

"We want our students to know that we're there for them and to feel like part of our Brock family," she said.

To maintain connections, Aboriginal Events Co-ordinator Cindy Biancaniello has been safely distributing sanitized craft kits, focusing on different areas of Indigenous art and design, to students and interested groups from coast-to-coast.

Further outreach is taking place through mail and online. All self-identified Indigenous Brock students had a package of seeds delivered to them, which can produce plants to be used for traditional medicines and smudging ceremonies, and the AbSS Facebook account has been sharing regular posts about the history and practices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Students also have access to virtual meetings with Elders thanks to a program guided by Brock's Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement, Amos Key Jr.

"The Elders we consult are a crucial support, and they are safe people for our students to talk to and seek guidance from," said Wong.

With many students home for the summer, Wong said all of the resources are helping to keep her team connected to students more than ever.

"We have never been so far apart, but we continue to feel so close," she said. "We can virtually come close together and continue to see so many familiar faces."

INDIGENOUS STUDIES INSTRUCTOR HELPS KEEP COMMUNITY SAFE

By Douglas Hunt

As the COVID-19 pandemic confined people to their homes, April Powless went out of her way to help community members in need.

Along with teaching in Brock University's Tecumseh Centre for Aboriginal Research and Education, the Indigenous Studies Instructor is also co-owner of Mohawk Towing / Porter Trucking and Construction in Oshweken, Ont. The company is known for helping people around the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve when they are in a bind, but the onset of the pandemic saw efforts shift to keep the community safe.

To ensure Elders and other vulnerable community members did not need to leave their homes, the company announced on Facebook they would be delivering groceries and other items to those who

needed them.

"The response has been non-stop," said Powless, who, has delivered hundreds of care packages and spent thousands of dollars of the company's money, as well as thousands more in donations from the public. "People are calling in distress and we are helping get them supplies right away."

Powless said the outreach effort is a practical manifestation of the lessons she teaches her Indigenous Studies students.

"I have this understanding that it is each of our responsibilities to improve the world we are sharing, and I try to instill that in students," she said. "Caring for our Elders and our children are principles we have as Haudenosaunee people, and we are putting action to those values."

Brock researchers examine impacts of COVID-19 on children and youth

By Cathy Majtenyi and Amanda Bishop

The girls pass letters and drawings to each other through a hole they created in the fence separating their back yards, whispering and giggling in the process. They can't play together like they usually do, but they can still share their secrets and have fun in a cloistered world.

Welcome to childhood during a global pandemic. Due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements, classrooms, playgrounds, movie theatres and even shared backyards are off-limits to children and youth, areas that are traditionally spaces of friendship and support.

Several Brock University researchers responded to the challenges of COVID-19 by focusing their work on documenting and analyzing the experiences of children and youth sheltering with family members at home.

Moved by reports of the dramatic rise in calls to Kids Help Phone, Professor of Child and Youth Studies Rebecca Raby and her six-student team devised a project to gather children's thoughts, activities, daily routines, challenges, joys and other experiences of life in lockdown.

"Clearly, there are children who are in a lot of distress out there," Raby said at the start of the project. "But I suspect we're also going to hear stories about really cool, compelling things that kids have started to initiate at home with parents, siblings, on their own or online."

Beginning in early April, Raby and her team conducted biweekly online interviews with 25 children and youth from ages eight to 16 from a wide range of backgrounds and living arrangements. In between the structured, formalized interviews are informal check-ins via text or other messaging.

Team members are asking the children and youth questions about their lives, including: How are you feeling? What's your favourite thing to do each day? What are you finding hardest about this situation? Have the rules of your household changed? How has the situation changed your extra-curricular activities and your job, if you have one?

The children's stories quickly started to emerge, like the eight-year-old girls who kept in touch via the hole in their shared fence. During their video call, the girl participating in the study showed the hole to

PhD student Laurel Donison.

"The girls can't see each other because they're not taller than the fence," says Donison. "So, they decided, 'You know what? Let's make a hole here in the fence.' As they did that, they also decided that they're going to make each other pictures and write each other notes and talk this way to each other."

Raby says preliminary research results uncovered some coping mechanisms as well as a range of thoughts, anxieties and joys that the children and youth are experiencing in lockdown.

Some common patterns among the child and youth research participants include:

- Finding comfort in painting, drawing, building, cooking, baking, writing music, writing songs, making videos and other creative activities; They are also learning new skills such as cooking, sewing, gardening, playing piano and baking.
- Difficulties in understanding certain parts of lessons during online schooling, especially for children with learning disabilities, English as a second language, or for those whose parents are working during the day and are thus unable to answer questions.
- Missing face-to-face contact with their friends and peers; although there's a high level of online engagement with friends and family, still many are experiencing loneliness.
- Fears for the health of parents, grandparents and for the future in general, especially around when schools will re-open.
- Closeness with parents, siblings and pets, and appreciation for both structured and free time.

Raby said the interviews would proceed into the summer, and then the team would more deeply analyze the data collected from the interviews.

Another researcher in the process of analyzing data is Associate Professor of Psychology Angela Evans. She is part of a research team led by Lindsay Malloy of Ontario Tech University on the study "Coronavirus: Parent-Child Conversations and Children's Reactions to the Pandemic."

The research, launched in March, consisted of three surveys across three time points asking parents a series of questions about how they talk to their children about COVID-19, as well as their own thoughts and feelings about the pandemic.

Evans says more than 1,100 parents across Canada and the U.S. completed the surveys. Participants will be given a follow-up survey in September to see how families are coping over time.

Parents are, as Evans points out, "important sources of information and emotional support for children," especially when schools and

"Clearly, there are children who are in a lot of distress out there,"

— Rebecca Raby

Answering the COVID-19 research call



A Brock research project found kids got creative when it came to interacting with friends during COVID-19.



Studies on children's pandemic experiences are among the many ways Brock researchers have contributed their expertise and time to the fight against COVID-19. Here are some more of these efforts:

- A team of Recreation and Leisure Studies researchers, headed by Professor Tim O'Connell, had participants complete an online survey to shed light on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted outdoor recreation participation patterns before, during and after the start of social distancing strategies and the closure of outdoor recreation areas.
- Professor of Physics Thad Harroun and Digital Services/Liaison Librarian Tim Ribaric teamed up to use Brock's computer network to visualize the protein structures contained in the SARS-CoV-2 virus, specifically computing which atoms of the antibodies come close and lock onto the atoms of the virus.
- Researchers from Faculties across campus have shared insights and information arising from their research in more than a dozen expert advisories sent out to media; as a result, Brock researchers were quoted extensively in local, national and international media reports on a huge range of issues related to COVID-19.
- Researchers provided their expertise in several webinars with research partners in Niagara's wine industry, community groups, sport organizations and those employing and helping migrant workers.
- Brock offered up its various labs for use by public health officials if they were needed for COVID-19 testing. This included the University's Level 3 containment laboratory, which the Canadian government approved for COVID-19 research, should it be deemed necessary.
- Brock donated thousands of gloves, lab coats, goggles and other personal protective equipment gathered from University research labs, science stores and other places around campus.

extracurricular activities are closed and families are encouraged to stay at home.

Associate Professor of Child and Youth Studies Danielle Sirianni Molnar launched her research in May, looking at how COVID-19 affects teenagers who are perfectionists.

Participants — young people between the ages of 13 and 19 who either self-identify as a perfectionist or have been described by others as being a perfectionist — are asked to complete an online survey and undergo a video interview in which they express what they're thinking and feeling in their own words.

Perfectionists are people who set, and strive for, unrealistically high standards, says Molnar; if they fall short, they are harshly self-critical and anxious. This can occur even if they achieve these high standards.

Molnar was working on a larger, ongoing project on adolescent perfectionism when COVID-19 hit. She quickly pulled together her COVID-19 study out of concern for how a global pandemic could exacerbate the stresses already being experienced by perfectionist youth.

"Some research shows that these kids tend not to be particularly resilient, so when they do face a crisis, rather than kind of change paths and adapt, they tend to get paralyzed with fear, and they tend not to have some of the coping strategies in the capacity that a lot of other kids have," says Molnar.

Among other things, Molnar will be looking at how the pandemic is affecting perfectionist teenagers' ability to learn online and maintain virtual and face-to-face relationships.

STEPPING UP

It didn't take long to realize that COVID-19 knows no boundaries. No matter what country you live in, what sector you work in, or how long ago you graduated from Brock, the pandemic and the required response impacted you in some way. We reached out to Brock alumni to hear what living through COVID-19 has meant for them.

By Dan Dakin



KAYLA LEE (BPH '12)

OBGYN Nurse

Kingston, Ont.

.....

“When I was a student at Brock, I had no idea I would one day find myself working as a public health nurse during a global pandemic. I am working as a registered nurse out of an arena in Kingston, where we assess and test community members at risk for COVID-19 infection.

I volunteered to work at the assessment centre because I knew many of my colleagues who have young families or older parents in the area would find it difficult to be on the front lines of this virus. My family still lives in Niagara and my partner Ryan and I have no children. He is able to work from home and was very supportive of me taking on this role. I don't need to worry about distancing myself and I am available to work as much as needed during this difficult time. It was a challenge I wanted to take on.

It is hard to build a therapeutic relationship in a clinic environment with masks and PPE on. I try to make eye contact through my visor; I tell patients I'm smiling even if they can't see it and I draw hearts on my name tag. I often ask patients what they most want to do when it is safe to emerge from isolation, which I find helps make things a little more personal. I also share that when it is safe to do so, I want to travel back to Niagara to visit my family.

My grandfather passed away during this pandemic and I haven't been able to go home for a funeral or to comfort my father or grandmother in-person. While this has been very difficult, I know that the work I am doing here is very important.”



PETER ARMATA (BED/BPHED '19)

Teacher / Grocery Store Clerk
Georgetown, Ont.



“My first year as a certified occasional secondary teacher has been anything but ordinary. Many students and staff just like myself are facing uncertain times during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

While I have not been able to continue supply teaching in the schools, I have been fortunate enough to be able to contribute to the community as a frontline worker in a local grocery store.

Since my time as a high school student, throughout my five years at Brock University and into my early career as a teacher, I continued to return home to work at a local Fortino’s Supermarket in Brampton as a source of secondary income. Fast forward to today, and myself and fellow co-workers at the store have become a huge part of the effort to reduce the impact of this deadly virus on our local community.

The demand has been high, protocols drastically altered, and the work tiring at times, but what helps gets me through is knowing that I am able to provide some sort of comfort or service to people who may otherwise be suffering or scared during these very unsettling times.”



**JESSICA PLATA, (BA '10),
DENNIS PLATA (BA '78),
ELEONORA PLATA
(BARTKOWIAK) (BA '80)**

Owner/Operators, Ancaster Joint
Ancaster, Ont.



“We opened our family business on Feb. 21 and then a month later we were told we had to shut our doors completely because of COVID-19. There was such backlash that we were told we could open back up as an e-commerce business with curbside pickup only. It was a mad scramble in the industry to move to online sales. It changed our business model. It wasn’t just a learning curve, it was a line straight up.

“We’ve had to scale back. We started with 13 employees when we opened as a brick and mortar store, and now we have a manager and two employees.

My mother has worked in the tourist industry, in restaurants, finance, and nutrition services. My dad is an accountant and I come from supply chain and inventory management, so we’ve put all of that experience together and it has really helped us. It has been an amazing adventure.”



COURTNEY MADDEN (BSCN '16)

Registered Nurse

St. Catharines, Ont.



"I'm a registered nurse working in the COVID-19 cohort unit at the hospital in St. Catharines. I have cared for numerous COVID patients since the pandemic began in March. It has been a difficult journey full of unknowns. But, it has been an honour to care for these patients.

When I was informed the nursing unit that I work on would become the COVID-19 unit, I made the decision that it would be best to leave the home I share with my family. I did this in order to protect them if I was to bring the virus home unknowingly. It has been difficult to be away from them and only interact through FaceTime and phone calls, but when I do get to talk with them, it provides me with comfort and the strength to continue on and to work hard through these challenging times.

Due to how little is known about this virus, it has been extremely challenging and nerve-racking working with it. There is only limited research for this virus that is only a few months old. It has been difficult going to work not knowing what to expect.

Even though there are many challenges during this pandemic, there have also been rewarding moments. I often help patients connect with their families through FaceTime. Helping make this connection after them being isolated for weeks is very touching and emotional. This experience has allowed me the privilege of being there for my patients during a frightening time. One of the most rewarding parts of my job has been when I get to see my patients recover and go home to their families after being so critically ill."

KATELYNN NORMAN (BRLS '18)

Wellness Co-ordinator
Belleville, Ont.



"I work as a wellness co-ordinator at a private retirement residence. Thankfully, we do not have any cases within our home, but the emotional, physical and mental toll is evident in both staff and residents.

It's my job to keep our residents busy and active to ensure they don't become depressed or isolated. My day has significantly changed, from running two or three activities per day to running five or six to ensure all residents make it out to something.

Planning and organizing has almost become a nightmare. I need to plan activities using materials that can easily be sanitized, but that also promote and support physical distancing. It is my role to ensure residents still socialize — but from afar. It's not simple telling older adults 'you can't sit beside your friend.'

This time has been anything but easy. This

is something educators can't teach you. Until you work and live through a pandemic, it seems easy.

Each day, I wake up not knowing if I'm an asymptomatic carrier or if my partner picked it up while getting groceries. I worry my limited PPE isn't effective, increasing the risk to my residents. Anytime I feel a cough or sneeze coming on, I panic. Not for my health, but for the health of my residents. Each day gets scarier and scarier. If someone could give us an exact date when this could be over, it would be so simple to go to work and work extra hard day-in and day-out. But not knowing is draining and it's showing on my staff, residents and family members.

We will get through this, the world will get through this. We just need to continue to be strong and fight like it's our last dying wish."

KIRK MCMAHON (BA '81)

Shelter Manager
Toronto, Ont.

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“As senior manager and with the help of the brothers of Saint John of God, I run the Good Shepherd Centre men’s shelter in downtown Toronto. We provide emergency shelter for 70 men, a drug and alcohol program, and run the largest meal program in Toronto, serving 1,500 hot meals a day to the community. We also have a medical clinic and housing program. During COVID-19, myself and 60 other men and women worked to help us remain open to the most vulnerable men in Toronto.

This pandemic has been an affirmation of the values of integrity, respect, inclusivity,

diversity and equity that Brock stood for in 1975 and still stands for today. During my 40 years working with the homeless population of downtown Toronto, I have tried to provide for those in need help mixed with a little humour. This pandemic has disrupted the



lives of those who are the most vulnerable in much the same way it has disrupted the life of my adult autistic son. The routines, community supports and structure he needs to make sense of the demands this world puts on him are mirrored in the faces of the men that arrive at our shelter every day. The growing desperation, fear, uncertainty, loss and the feeling of abandonment is evident.

Close to half of the community we help suffer from mental illness, addictions, trauma or abuse, and treating myself and my staff with respect is often not high on their bucket list. But no matter how many times a difficult, challenging or occasionally frightening human being comes to us for help, we try to find some way through, some approach, some method to help them.

I hope to continue my work with this very deserving group of human beings until my last breath.”



JACOB WILLIAMSON (BSC '16)

Paramedic
St. Catharines, Ont.

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“The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our region, country and world in a multitude of ways that no one in the general public saw coming. My typical day at work now revolves around the uncertainty of treating and caring for sick patients who may or may not be infected with this terrible condition. Our protocols and guidelines are constantly changing in order for our frontline medics to have the best chance of aiding the people in our communities while staying safe. So far, despite this stressful time, we have noticed that the people of Niagara are answering the call to physically distance. It makes me proud as a hometown boy to see this and to support the people I grew up beside. I know for certain I would not be where I am today without the lessons and time spent at Brock, and for that I am forever thankful. Stay safe and stay #BrockUnited.”

MARISSA MELANSON (BA '17)

School Counsellor
Red Lake, Ont.

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“I work in children’s mental health services with the Keewatin Patricia District School Board in Northwestern Ontario. Though I am lucky to be able to work from home, it has been a huge transition moving from face-to-face counselling to online, telephone and video counselling.

I feel blessed to still be able to connect with students in a way that keeps all of us stay safe, but I have seen how this period of uncertainty,

fear and isolation has caused anxiety, sadness and loneliness, even for young elementary school students.

Now, more than ever, it is important for all of us to make our mental health the same priority as our physical health and do what we can to take care of ourselves and flatten the curve. My students have taught me the importance of self-care, balance and reaching out when you need support.”



APRIL PETT (BA '07)

Travel Company Owner

Paris, France



"In June 2015, I had been living in Paris, France for a year and a half. I had spent every breathing moment discovering the sites, sounds and savours of the City of Light. It was that month I decided to quit my job that kept a roof over my head and food in my refrigerator, and take the plunge to launch my own tour company. After all of the books read, pastries eaten, streets wandered down curiously and neighbourhoods explored, April in Paris Tours was born.

The beginning of 2020 brought many excited tourists to Paris, but as news of the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic spread, so did the fear of travel. By the time I flipped my calendar to March, nearly all of my bookings, for what was gearing up to be my most successful season yet, had either been rescheduled or cancelled. In the blink of an eye, flights were grounded, borders closed and life, as I knew it in Paris, had come to a screeching halt. Museums, attractions, restaurants, cinemas, markets — everything that encompassed the soul of Paris — started closing in preparation for a mandatory lockdown. My beautiful, dazzling Paris turned into a ghost town.

The mandatory lockdown lasted for 55 days in France, which meant limiting outings to one kilometre from home for no more than one hour and no outdoor exercise between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Restrictions have now started to loosen and slowly the city has started to come back to life. However, borders will remain closed for international travelers until further notice and the 2020 summer tourism season has been cancelled.

During this strange turn of events, I have stayed as positive as one can. The down time has allowed me to develop new tour ideas, record daily virtual tours via social media and even start tutoring French.

Tourism will return to Paris, and when it does, I will be ready, with open arms, to welcome tourists once again to my beautiful City of Light."



JON GOODWILLIE (BSM '03)

Assistant Coach, Toronto Raptors

Toronto, Ont.



"We had just come off a successful road trip with four-consecutive wins that wrapped up with us playing against the Utah Jazz. A couple of days later, all the news came down at once: players from the Jazz had tested positive, we were to immediately self-quarantine and the NBA season would be going on hiatus.

Filled with so many questions, we just followed the guidelines set out by our organization, our league and our government. At first, being away from work was so unnatural because our schedule and travel is so hectic and constant. But as days turned into weeks, I got comfortable at a slower pace and focused all my energy on the time I had with my wife and son.

After a long playoff run last spring, coaching in the NBA Summer League and coaching with our National Team over the summer months, I had not had an opportunity for family time like this in a long while. Head Coach Nick Nurse has encouraged us to take advantage of the time to pursue some personal development individually, both within basketball and outside of it. That, along with seizing this rare extended family time, has been my focus as we all try to cope with the drastic changes to our lives."



CHRIS VENTURA (BA '12, MED '17)

Community Office Manager for
Member of Parliament Pam Damoff

Oakville, Ont.

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“In my day job handling issues management for a Member of Parliament, I’ve been working from home helping our constituents navigate this new world of benefits like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, the Canada Emergency Student Benefit, supports for small and medium-sized businesses and helping families reunite with their loved ones who are still abroad.

At the same time, my parents own a Bulk Barn franchise and they’ve been grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic environment. Like many other Canadians, most of their staff members had to leave their employment in mid-March due to child-care needs and pre-existing health conditions, but I wanted to do everything I could to help them stay open as an essential business and continue to serve the people of the Niagara region.

My boss was kind enough to let me head over there a couple of days a week to help them during this time. In a few short weeks, we’ve been able to hire and train a few new staff members, implement a growing list of new processes and rules for shopping, execute a curbside pickup and payment program (using a hockey stick to maintain physical distancing guidelines during payment), and keep a steady flow of essential items like flours and sugars in stock as demand continues to be high.

My parents are working more than 60 hours a week trying to keep up with the demand, so the least I could do was lend a hand. It has been reassuring to get out of the social media sphere of bad news stories and people making questionable choices and see that the vast majority of our customers are willing to follow strong health and safety protocols. We’re all in this together, and we are going to get through this with a new appreciation for so many of the small things we took for granted.”

SHELLEY CHEMNITZ (BADMIN '89)

CAO, City of St. Catharines
St. Catharines, Ont.

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“For someone who leads any sort of a government agency like ours, you’re always balancing and addressing the needs of many different stakeholders all the time —visitors, residences, businesses. What this has done is put the very strong lens of business continuity on top of all that.

Early in 2020, we saw this coming, so we said we might be in a situation that we’re going to have more people working from home. We made sure we had a large amount of technology available so we were ready to deploy it.

The challenge now is the recovery. We’re

looking at all of the different things we do and figuring out what the priority is in bringing them back. Because there’s such a revenue shortfall for us, we need to spend the tax money most effectively.

I’ve been really encouraged by the resiliency of our staff in being able to cope and deal with a new way of working. It has brought home how important that balance we’re always managing is and just to keep focusing on what our objectives are. It has been encouraging how our staff has handled it. There’s the message of hope that we’ll be stronger at the end of this.”

WHAT COVID-19 TAUGHT BROCK'S CLASS OF 2020

By Michelle Pressé

The lead up to Convocation for Brock University students usually consists of quality time with friends, searching for a study spot at the Library and soaking in stunning views of campus.

This is traditionally followed by a Convocation ceremony filled with proud parents sitting shoulder-to-shoulder, waiting to snap the perfect photo of their children crossing the stage.

For many, it will be one of the last times they're on the Brock campus.

When public health COVID-19 response guidelines resulted in physical distancing measures, Brock moved from in-person classes to an online format in mid-March.

For the Class of 2020, there was an unexpected learning experience, aided by an education that taught them how to be resilient and agile in a fast-paced world.

Business Communications student Niveditha Sethumadhavan said the pandemic put the capabilities of her generation — and specifically, post-secondary graduates of 2020 — into perspective.

"This is such a unique time to be a student or a member of the workforce, and this experience is going to help us navigate and be better prepared for future challenges," she said. "There is an opportunity for us to create a new, more inclusive and adaptable world for people from all walks of life."

In addition to finishing her final year of university, Sethumadhavan was also wrapping up her term as Vice-President, External Affairs of the Brock University Students' Union (BUSU), advocating for financial assistance for post-secondary students in Canada and assisting in removing the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) interest period for six months as a result of the pandemic.

She also helped spearhead an initiative with Brock International and BUSU to provide international students who were unable to fly home with gift cards to local restaurants offering delivery service to help alleviate both the financial stress of students with higher tuition fees while also supporting local businesses.

Knowing firsthand the additional pressures that come with being an international student, Sethumadhavan wanted to pay it forward from home.

"It felt strange completing my final assignment from my childhood bedroom in Lagos, Nigeria, especially because it was the same room where I applied to go to Brock four years ago," she said. "While I wish I knew my last in-person class was going to be my last, I am eagerly looking forward to being joined by my family, friends and classmates at Convocation, whenever that may be."

Bilal Khan, who served alongside Sethumadhavan as BUSU President in 2019-20, said the transition to online came with significant challenges, but also with important life lessons.

“ THIS IS SUCH A
UNIQUE TIME
TO BE A STUDENT, ”

—Niveditha Sethumadhavan



“ THE CLASS OF 2020 IS A **SPECIAL CLASS**, AND IT DESERVES OUR SPECIAL **APPRECIATION AND CONGRATULATIONS,**”

—*Bilal Khan*

“I was amazed by how effective and productive you could be when studying and working from home,” he said. “I believe, some of the most important work I did as a student leader was in a short time after our campus closed.”

Sun-Kyung (Julie) Simmonds said she never imagined that she’d complete her academic career during a pandemic, but that efforts made by her instructors made a significant difference in ending it on a high note.

“My instructors were very well organized, understanding and accommodating given the circumstances,” she said, adding that they made it possible for her and her classmates to “all complete the term successfully.”

“This is a reflection of the excellent instructors and teaching assistants that I have had the privilege of learning from throughout my undergraduate experience at Brock University,” said Simmonds. “I attended Brock to achieve an academic experience, but I am leaving with so much more than I can express, which is largely due to the people, whom I will miss the most.”

Simmonds, who is graduating from the Classics program, spent her spare time while finishing classes sewing face masks and crocheting ear savers and blankets for long-term care residents.

She said her time at Brock taught her to adapt to and embrace new situations and experiences.

“My experience has given me the courage to try new endeavours,” said Simmonds. “I have taken courses and participated in so many activities that are normally outside of my comfort zone. Moving forward, I will carry this new outlook when considering different experiences which I may encounter in the future.”

Provost and Vice-President, Academic Greg Finn has attended, by his estimate, at least 120 Convocation ceremonies at Brock, where he famously sports a pair of



red sneakers, kickstarting a fashion trend among senior administration on the bi-annual celebration.

“No one in Brock’s history has gone through something like this and we likely won’t again,” said Finn. “I hope students think about the time they’ve spent at the University and the connection they have to people because of that.”

Despite uncertainties with the economy and job market, Finn hopes students think about the opportunities that may be worth pursuing which perhaps weren’t on their minds previously.

“Think about what you’re going to be doing in your future,” Finn said. “You’re still young; you still have lots of time ahead of you. If you’ve considered furthering your education at the graduate or doctoral level, now might be the best time. We don’t know when the economy or job market will recover, but universities are still open to provide opportunities for students going forward.”

Finn acknowledges that it can be difficult to plan for the future during unprecedented times, and encourages the newest lifelong members of the Brock University Alumni Association to stay connected to their alma mater.

“We treat people as people — not numbers,” he said. “We really care about the individual, not just from an academic perspective but from a personal perspective. Even though you’re leaving the University, we’re still here for you.”

Graduate Students’ Association President Chris Yendt said the whole pandemic situation has added to the journey toward convocation.

“Despite all of that, students have succeeded, and in time will realize just how much these challenges have taught them about resiliency and their ability to adapt and respond to an ever-changing environment,” he said.

BRIGHT FUTURE

FOR BROCK WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL



Laura Condotta's final season of varsity volleyball ended on a heartbreaking note, but the talented player said the program has a bright future ahead.

By Stephen Leithwood

It was the eve of the U SPORTS Women's Volleyball Championships. Laura Condotta sat in her Calgary hotel room reflecting on the past five years at Brock University.

The program had endured its fair share of ups and downs during Condotta's time with the team, yet in her senior season, the Badgers were finally here. The first appearance at the national championships in school history. Her dream since she was a first-year student-athlete was becoming a reality.

Then her phone buzzed.

It was head coach Steve Delaney asking the players to gather for a last-minute meeting. "That's when we heard the news," said Condotta. The COVID-19 pandemic had forced the cancellation of the tournament. The next day, Calgary and other municipalities across the country closed public facilities.

It was a somber flight home to Ontario for the Badgers.

"I was very emotional at the time," Condotta said. "It was the first time that we made it to nationals. To have it abruptly taken away took a huge toll on the closure of my university volleyball career."

The senior Sport Management student was slated to graduate during Spring Convocation. While her degree was still conferred during a virtual Convocation event, she'll have to wait for Brock's future in-person celebration.

"It's a memorable way to end my university career," said Condotta. "I can only see this program growing more each year and I'm incredibly excited to be a supportive alumni and watch a program I was a part of make a huge statement in the future."

Despite the heartbreaking end, Condotta capped off her final season with U SPORTS All-Canadian honours as she finished second in the OUA in total kills (257) and kills per set (3.78).

The Etobicoke native ranks among the Badgers' all time kill leaders with a total of 857 kills over five seasons, including four playoff matches. She's tallied 789 regular season digs and 941.5 total points.

"Laura is our top engine, our leader and one of our best players," said Delaney. "A lot of the girls look up to her, because she's such

a talented player and athlete. She's key for us putting the ball away and getting the ball up on defence, but also with leadership."

Condotta posted back-to-back 200-plus kill seasons to finish off her career with Brock and led the Badgers to their only two winning seasons in the past five years.

"Brock Volleyball is a huge part of my volleyball career and means a whole lot when it comes to the success I've had in the sport," said Condotta. "I'll forever be a Badger no matter where I go with the sport in the future."

**"Laura is our top engine,
our leader and one of
our best players,"**

— Steve Delaney

BROCK-NIAGARA CENTRE FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING GOES VIRTUAL TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY

By Samantha Tapp

Physical activity is an important part of staying healthy and boosting immunity, but doing so during the COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be a challenge — especially for older adults and high-risk groups.

When the pandemic first arrived in Niagara, the Brock-Niagara Centre for Health and Well-Being was forced to close its doors. In response, the Brock University team running the Centre quickly began offering online tools and daily home workouts through social media to keep members engaged and active.

“The Brock-Niagara Centre for Health and Well-Being is a social hub for many of our members,” said Associate Professor of Kinesiology and Director of the SeniorFit program Kimberely Gammage. “It’s important to us that our community doesn’t feel isolated and we are taking steps to contribute to the social, mental and physical health of our members.”

The Centre’s membership is comprised of older adults, individuals with cardiovascular disease or risk factors and individuals with spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease or amputations.

As it became clear that local businesses would need to stay closed for a significant period of time, the Centre enhanced its virtual services by offering memberships for online fitness

classes hosted by the Centre’s staff and Brock graduate and undergraduate students.

Initially, only existing members of the Centre were eligible to join. However, with appropriate documentation, online membership opened up to all community members. A virtual membership includes live fitness classes, educational seminars, weekly check-ins and social meetings with the students.

“It is so important to keep all our members engaged and staying active during this unprecedented time and we look forward to getting all of our programs running again when it’s appropriate,” said Department of Health Sciences Chair and Centre Director, Deborah O’Leary.

Yoga, circuit workouts and osteoporosis, core and Parkinson’s classes are all delivered virtually on the video

conferencing platform Lifesize.

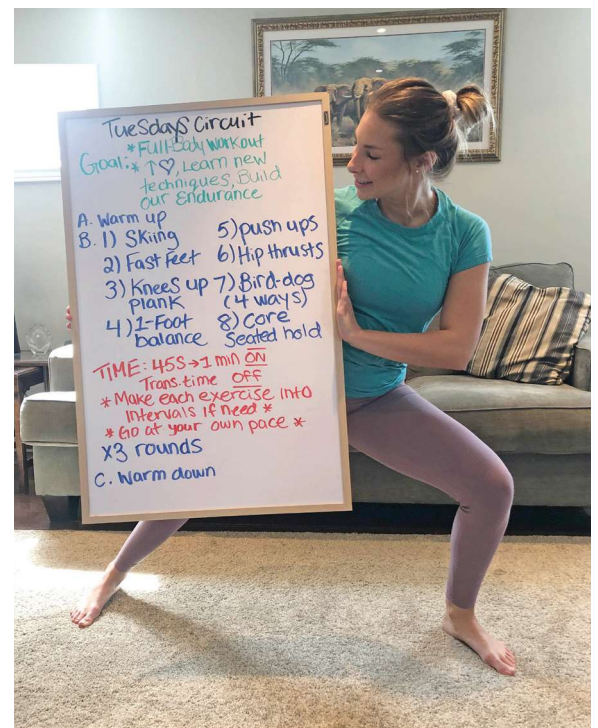
Brock Kinesiology, Health Sciences and Therapeutic Recreation students are teaching virtual classes throughout the Spring and Summer Terms that will count towards the placement aspect of their credits.

Specifically, Kinesiology students are offering one-on-one sessions to develop personalized home-based workout programs. They’re using these sessions to create a library of exercise-related videos, presentations and pamphlets. Health Sciences students are working on social programming designed to enhance mental health and well-being.

Four master of Professional Kinesiology students doing their placements with the Centre will be offering virtual programming, as well as doing the intake of new members, mentoring undergraduate students and doing online fitness testing with members.

“We are taking steps to contribute to the social, mental and physical health of our members,”

— Kimberely Gammage



Brock University Kinesiology student Olivia Parker goes over the workout schedule for a Brock-Niagara Centre for Health and Well-Being online fitness class.

APPOINTMENTS



HILARY PEARSON
Chancellor

Hilary Pearson, a recognized Canadian leader in philanthropy and community engagement, will become Brock University's new Chancellor this fall. University President and Vice-Chancellor Gervan Fearon said Pearson accepted the invitation to serve a three-year term after her nomination was unanimously endorsed by Brock's Senate following a comprehensive nominating process. Her versatile achievements range from serving in senior policy roles in the federal government, to advising some of Quebec's largest corporations, to forging a new platform for Canadian philanthropy, a role that led her to receive the Order of Canada. As the ninth chancellor in Brock's 56-year history, Pearson will follow Shirley Cheechoo, who in 2015 became the first woman and first Indigenous Canadian to hold the ceremonial leadership role at Brock.



LYNN WELLS
Provost and Vice-President, Academic

Lynn Wells, an accomplished scholar and academic leader, will be Brock University's new Provost and Vice-President Academic, effective July 1. Wells had been serving as the Associate Vice-President, Students and Teaching at MacEwan University in Edmonton, and previously as the Provost and Vice-President, Academic, and Acting President at the First Nations University of Canada, in Regina. She has many years experience as a professor, teacher and researcher, and more than a decade in senior administrative roles at universities. Wells will succeed longtime Brock leader Greg Finn, who stepped into the University's senior academic role in October 2018, and who has been instrumental in supporting the implementation of the University's Strategic Plan and helping Brock achieve record enrolments.

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brocku.ca/donate



“Had it not been for COVID, I likely would have had him at Brock,”

—Tania Melnyk



Two-year-old John Melnyk looks over his baby brother Matthew, born on March 19.

BROCK FAMILY GROWS

By Michelle Pressé

While birth plans often change, most don't expect it'll be due to a global pandemic.

For Tania Melnyk (BBA '09), Manager, Student Information and Services and Matt Melnyk (BA '07, MA '08), Director, Student Recruitment at Brock University's Office of the Registrar, that's exactly what happened.

The couple, who met while working at Brock in 2010, had their first son, John, in 2018. He arrived so promptly that he was born on the living room floor instead of at the hospital as planned.

A combination of Tania's first quick labour and the COVID-19 pandemic caused their midwives to recommend a second home birth, which they eventually and reluctantly agreed to. Matthew, their second son, was born March 19, less than a week after Brock announced the remainder of the Winter Term would take place online.

“Had it not been for COVID, I likely would have had him at Brock,” said Tania, who said the pandemic created a lot of uncertainty leading up to the birth. “I had a virtual call with

my manager and then an hour and a half later, Matthew was born.”

She said the situation led to additional anxieties, including what things would've looked like if delivery didn't go smoothly at home.

“It was overwhelming, especially as the province shut things down and moved everyone home,” she said. “I often wondered, ‘What would being in the hospital during this situation be like?’”

One of the things keeping them at ease was the Niagara Falls-based Renaissance Midwives, which also provides practicum placements for Brock Nursing students. The Melnyks say that at appointments, they would often be asked if a student intern could observe, which they always agreed to. “Building our family in Niagara is a wonderful experience, and Brock has been at the centre of that,” said Matt, who is originally from Toronto. “We offered our students a learning opportunity through our journey. We're thankful for all the support from our Brock family as we've grown our own family. We feel incredibly blessed.”

IN MEMORY OF ARNIE



Arnie Lowenberger, Brock's first Dean of Students and a leader in developing the University's athletics facilities, passed away in February.

By Michelle Pressé

One of Brock University's most prolific figures, Arnie Lowenberger, passed away in February at the age of 92. Lowenberger came to Brock in 1967, where he became influential in building a master plan for the development of the Physical Education and Recreation program, the only one of its kind in Canada at that time. He was also a leader in developing Brock's athletic and recreation facilities.

Lowenberger was part of many Brock firsts. He was the first Dean of Students, established the first Student Health Services and assisted in founding the first incarnation of the Department of Residences, which housed students in townhouses on Glenridge Avenue. He was also a member of the OUAA executive and was an executive member with the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada.

"Lowenberger was instrumental in contributing to the foundation of Brock University, and today we are the recipient of his dedication and vision," said President Gervan Fearon. "We are deeply saddened by his passing, but his contributions and legacy are to be celebrated."

Like so many quintessential Canadian country kids, the outdoors and hockey played a significant role in Lowenberger's childhood.

Growing up on a dairy farm in Saskatchewan, his mother would pack his lunch every Saturday morning before he embarked on a more than three-kilometre trek in the early morning Prairie darkness to

play hockey on a frozen lake. Nearby, men would fish in huts with fires to stay warm, so Lowenberger would join them while eating his lunch to warm up before going back out to play more hockey.

"The most obvious characteristic of Arnie was that when he was Dean of Students at Brock, he had a fantastic vision that the foundation for the Physical Education program at Brock would be children's movement education," said Nancy Francis, Professor in the Department of Kinesiology. "He consulted the most influential and insightful people of the time to advise him on the curriculum, which was innovative and progressive. His mark upon that curriculum is heralded still today."

In 2004, the University commemorated his legacy by naming a residence after him. Speaking at the ceremony to officially open the Arnie Lowenberger Residence, he called it a "humbling experience."

Bob Davis, for whom the University's Bob Davis Gymnasium is named, met Lowenberger in their home province of Saskatchewan, and later attended the University of Oregon at the same time.

"When Arnie came to Brock, he remembered me," said Davis. "It's because of him that, the year after he started, I came to the University too. He was never a boss; always a friend, and of course, incredibly athletic. I'll miss hearing the latest joke; I'll miss him even more."

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