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Dean's Corner: Stepping Up Together

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Stepping Up Together

The College of Education (COE) continues to step up, and I couldn't be prouder.

In early March, 15% of our faculty were teaching online. A week later, responding rapidly to the COVID-19 pandemic, 100% were doing so. They sought supplemental training that raised their online teaching to the highest level and helped students sharpen their remote learning skills. Our course evaluations for last spring remained virtually identical to those of previous spring quarters. We consistently updated our students as the landscape shifted, sometimes every few days. We created communities so our students could better connect with each other and the college. Unsolicited testimonials poured in, praising the work of our faculty and staff, not only in the classroom, but on behalf of communities across Chicago that needed it the most.

Through our alumni network and school partnerships, we've been analyzing the current needs of teachers, students and parents with regard to virtual learning, and we are working to help bridge the digital gaps. I am proud of our faculty for rising to this incredible occasion, asking "What must be done?" and committing themselves to answer the call. I am proud of our staff for tackling projects collectively and providing our students with expert advising, communications, academic and technical support, and encouragement. We continue to work with our recent graduates to help them navigate the challenges in their new positions.

COE has also met other critical challenges head-on and collaboratively. We've engaged in difficult but critical conversations about anti-racism and how we can better support and empower one other. I am proud that we have a diverse student body, faculty and leadership, which we continue to support and strengthen.



We've been reexamining our college's mission and asking how it reflects our values and goals.

Together, we will find a way. That's a simple truth that also guided us during the nation's recent election angst. Social-emotional learning and counseling is an intrinsic part of our pedagogy, and that expertise helped support opportunities for students, faculty and staff to process their feelings prior to and after the election. For example, we provided a self-care toolkit for faculty, students and the university at large that people could use, if they desired, in their personal lives and their classroom and counseling settings. In this issue you will read about some other actions we have taken to help mitigate the challenges of 2020 and beyond.

If you would like to join the phenomenal initiatives taking part at the college, please connect with us. The future may be uncertain, but we have faith this generation of students will make the world a better place. I'm thankful for the remarkable alumni and friends of the college who have generously given their time and support for the sake of our students. I hope you and your loved ones are safe, healthy and persevering. Let's keep moving forward together.

Dean Paul Zions

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