

# BEYOND

COLORADO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



## Giving Feet to Our Faith

CCU alums model Christ's love on Italy's coronavirus-ravaged front lines

*[Feature Story, page 10]*



**COLORADO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**  
*Grace and Truth*

Dear friends,

Colorado Christian University has experienced a season that is truly unprecedented in the history of American higher education. These past few months we have been busy navigating an extraordinary crisis of a global pandemic and an economic shutdown with all its complications. Despite some of the gargantuan predictions people are making, I believe that CCU will not only survive, but will be stronger after the pandemic.



Of course some things will change. Getting back to “normal” will take time. But I can tell you this: However long it takes, there will still be a great need for Christian liberal arts higher education — a CCU education.

Recently while on a call with other university presidents in Colorado, we were preparing to make the case with our elected officials of the importance of higher education, in order that legislation might be passed to provide needed financial aid for colleges and universities.

Collectively, these educators came up with three basic points:

- Universities are an economic engine for our state and nation, a pipeline for prosperity and a skilled workforce.
- Some of our universities are research centers providing critical research and innovation for the marketplace and health providers.
- Colleges and universities are a gateway to the American dream, a ladder to the middle class.

I agreed with each one of these points, but sadly, that was the extent of the list. After that call, I thought to myself: “Is that all CCU offers?”

Then it occurred to me that Christian higher education offers so much more. We would say “amen” to each of these three points, but that is not where we stop. At CCU, we go much further. Christian higher education teaches the pursuit of wisdom. We engage in character formation. We teach citizenship, ordered liberty, and what it means to live well. We pass on the heritage and lessons of the past. We instill in our students a sense of calling for a lifetime of service. We unapologetically ground the education offered at CCU in Christ-centered faith, which provides a spiritual anchor for our students.

This is what gives our students substance and resilience for times like this. This is what is unique about CCU. Our gift to the world is our students. Our mandate is to send out leaders of competence, character, courage, and faith, to send out thousands upon thousands, year after year, wave after wave, a movement of world changers.

You will read about many of them in this issue. Solid, excellent Christian higher education will not disappear. The world needs it now more than ever. Its value will show itself, especially in and through this crisis. Thank you for helping us fulfill that mission.

Yours in His service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Don Sweeting". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DONALD W. SWEETING, Ph.D.

President

Colorado Christian University

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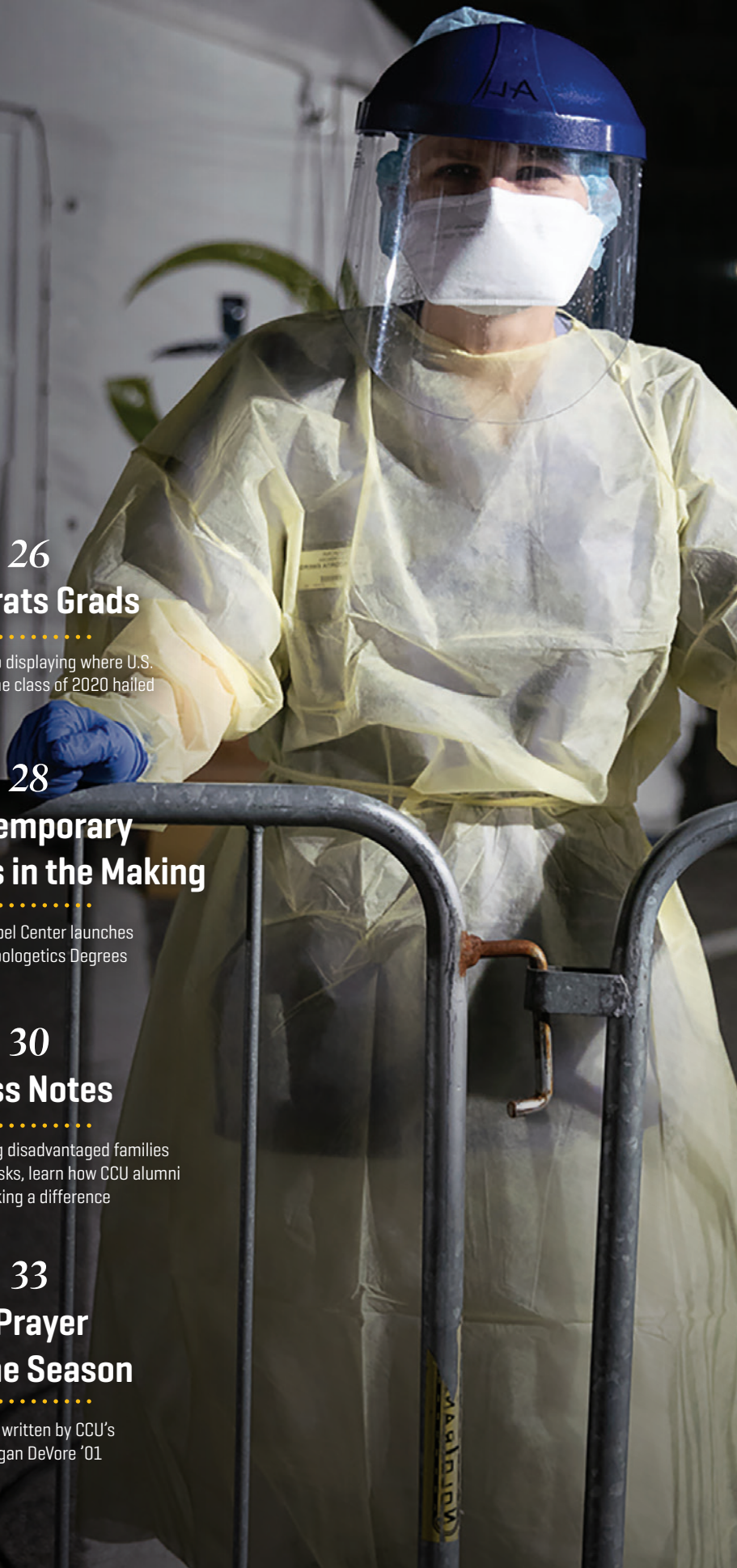
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# BEYOND

A publication of Colorado Christian University

## Our Magazine

In *BEYOND*, our goal is to share the story of CCU, as well as God's faithful provision for more than 100 years. We aim to share the stories of the people who go beyond and make CCU the great university it is today. Whether you're an alum or a friend, this magazine is designed for you, because your story, our story, His story, is meant to be told.



## BEYOND Production & Creative Team

Executive Vice President: Dan Cohrs  
Assistant Vice President of Communications & Creative Services: Chris Franz  
Director of Communications & University Spokesperson: Lance Oversole '06  
Writer & Editor: Aaron Burnett  
Graphic Designer: Martha Snowbarger  
Project Manager: Nicole Heersink '10



## University Advancement Team

Vice President of University Advancement: Eric Hogue  
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Director of Major & Planned Gifts: Mark Heckelmann  
Director of Alumni & Parent Relations: Kara Johnston  
Director of Foundation Relations: Nancy Engel  
Data Architect: Matt Rummel  
Project Coordinator: Mikayla Kakahara '19  
Athletics Advancement Coordinator: Phil Nelson '11  
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## Mission

Christ-centered higher education transforming students to impact the world with grace and truth.

Colorado Christian University cultivates knowledge and love of God in a Christ-centered community of learners and scholars, with an enduring commitment to the integration of exemplary academics, spiritual formation, and engagement with the world. We envision graduates who think critically and creatively, lead with high ethical and professional standards, embody the character and compassion of Jesus Christ, treasure the gospel, and who thereby are prepared to impact the world in their callings.



## On the Cover

Matthew Hodgkins '19 and Emily Simonaitis '19 have been on the front line of the coronavirus outbreak in the Lombardy region of Italy.



Colorado Christian University  
8787 W. Alameda Ave., Lakewood, Colorado 80226  
303-963-3000 | [ccu.edu](http://ccu.edu)

Emily Simonaitis '19 on the night shift at Samaritan's Purse Field Hospital in Cremona, Italy. [feature story on page 10]

# News & Highlights

An overview of what's happening at CCU



## CCU Partners with FirstBank to Provide First-generation Student Scholarships

Colorado Christian University and FirstBank have announced a new scholarship that will support first-generation students in their efforts to earn a bachelor's degree through the College of Undergraduate Studies. The \$240,000 commitment for a \$60,000 annual scholarship will provide \$6,000 to 10 first-generation minority students annually for up to four years.

The FirstBank scholarship recognizes current high school seniors who are Colorado residents and have performed at a high level academically, in addition to their standing as a first-generation student. Recipients are required to have earned a 3.0 GPA throughout high school and must maintain a 3.0 GPA in their college coursework to remain eligible.

The FirstBank First Generation Scholarship is one of several new initiatives aimed at growing awareness of the University to key potential applicants, including first-generation students and traditionally underrepresented populations such as those with high financial need.



## CCU Strategic Communication Students Cover Super Bowl LIV in Miami

Colorado Christian University deployed a team of four strategic communication and digital media students to Super Bowl LIV in Miami, joining the Faith and Family Sports Programming Network (fspn.net) to cover Super Bowl Experience and Media Week ahead of the contest between the Kansas City Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers. Super Bowl Experience and Media Week include pro football's interactive theme park offering participatory games, youth football clinics, and autograph and media sessions with NFL players and coaches.

More than 5,000 media outlets covered Super Bowl LIV, yet FSPN is one of the few networks that interact with players concerning their faith and how it impacts the players both on and off the field. FSPN and CCU were invited by the NFL to video interview players, coaches, and other Super Bowl media personalities during the week.



## Peter Kerr Named Dean of the School of Business and Leadership

Dr. Peter A. Kerr has been named dean of the School of Business and Leadership in the College of Undergraduate Studies. Kerr will begin his new duties on July 1, 2020. He takes over as dean for Dr. Gary Ewen, who has served in that capacity since 2010. Ewen will continue to serve as dean emeritus and professor of leadership and management.

Kerr currently serves as an associate professor of marketing and international business in the School of Business and Leadership at CCU. Prior to joining the CCU faculty, Kerr served as the senior academic director of regional campuses and an associate professor of leadership and communications for the School of Unrestricted Education at Southeastern University in Florida, where he taught business, leadership, communications, and religion courses in addition to fulfilling administrative duties.





## Dr. Wess Stafford Named 2020 Values-Aligned Executive

Colorado Christian University presented Dr. Wess Stafford, president emeritus of Compassion International, with the Values-Aligned Executive award during the 2020 Values-Aligned Leadership Summit (VALS).

Stafford was honored during the 17th annual leadership conference. This year's summit was held at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Denver and was attended by over 500 members of the business community, current Colorado Christian University business students, and alumni. VALS was inspired by a group of business executives who were searching for an educational response to an unraveling of the ethical fabric of business in America.

Other guest speakers at the summit included Tami Bandimere of Bandimere Speedway; Jim Johnson, president and CEO of GE Johnson Construction; and Beth Bowlen Wallace, daughter of long-time Denver Broncos owner Pat Bowlen.



## Boundless Opportunity Scholarships Benefit Non-traditional Students

Colorado Christian University has received a \$52,000 grant from the Daniels Fund to provide Boundless Opportunity Scholarships to non-traditional students. The scholarship is designed to benefit motivated non-traditional students who recognize the power of education to create a better life for themselves and their families.

The need-based scholarships are available to specific student populations, including adults entering or returning to college, GED recipients, veterans entering or returning to college, former foster care youth, and former juvenile justice youth.

The Daniels Fund, established by cable television pioneer Bill Daniels, is a private charitable foundation dedicated to making life better for the people of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming through its grants program, scholarship program, and ethics initiative.



## School of Education Associate Professor Named STaR Fellow

Colorado Christian University Associate Professor of Education, Dr. Renee Lizcano, has been named a 2020 STaR Fellow by the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE). The STaR Program — which stands for service, teaching, and research — is a national program that supports early career mathematics educators at institutions of higher education.

As a STaR Fellow, Lizcano will participate in a five-day summer institute in Park City, Utah, and will receive mentoring through an online network with other mathematics educators. In addition, Lizcano will attend the AMTE annual conference in Orlando, Florida, in February 2021.

Lizcano joined CCU in 2018. She completed her undergraduate degree in brain and cognitive sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and earned her doctoral degree from the Stanford Graduate School of Education.



## CCU Completes \$5 Million Matching Campaign for the Armstrong Center

CCU has secured more than \$5 million in gifts to complete the largest match gift campaign in University history, effectively raising \$10 million toward the University's goal of securing \$30.2 million in funding to construct the Armstrong Center — a 60,000-square-foot facility that will house the Lee Strobel Center for Evangelism and Applied Apologetics, the School of Music, the University's first dedicated chapel, and the Clifton Fowler Library. To date, over \$27 million has been secured for the Armstrong Center.

The \$5 million matching campaign was completed in just under 15 months and saw distinct donations from 320 CCU supporters and donors. The campaign was completed thanks to the generosity of donors both large and small. The largest match campaign donation totaled \$790,000 while 143 individuals donated \$5 to the campaign. The average match gift was \$12,418.



## Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Earns CACREP Reaccreditation

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has granted reaccreditation to the University's Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree for an additional eight years.

As the only accrediting body for counseling programs in the United States, CACREP streamlines the licensure application process and is recognized in all 50 states. Research shows that CACREP graduates typically perform better on the National Counselor Examination for Licensure Certification. Students going on to doctoral studies will also have easier paths into the school of their choice.

The CACREP committee remarked upon their exit interview, "The Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at CCU is a mission-driven program that successfully provides a Christ-focused framework reflecting the platinum rule for enhancing specific cultural competencies and skills in the application of spirituality to the process of counseling."



## CCU Academy to Launch Online Dual Enrollment Program in the Fall

Following 10 years of record enrollment for Colorado Christian University's high school dual credit program, the University has launched CCU Academy, a new academic division designed to provide affordable general education college courses to high school students. More than 5,200 students around the country are currently enrolled in CCU's dual credit courses offered through their high schools.

Starting in fall 2020, CCU Academy will offer 100% online dual enrollment college-level courses taught by CCU faculty. In addition, high school students interested in completing an associate degree may apply dual credit, AP, and online dual enrollment coursework toward the CCU Academy Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts. Additional course requirements can be completed online or accepted as transfer credit from another regionally accredited college or university.



Rebecca Bullock '22, B.S. in Business Administration, participating in Kahoot Trivia, hosted by Campus Activities

# A SEME

The last 100 days have been without precedent — for the world, for the United States, for Colorado, and for Colorado Christian University.

The COVID-19 pandemic became a reality for CCU in late February, as confirmed cases, both domestic and abroad, continued to rise. University officials were in contact with county and state officials and continued to review updates from federal and international health agencies to monitor the situation. Accordingly, the University assembled a Coronavirus Response Task Force (CRT) to prepare for and to address the University's response to the growing pandemic.

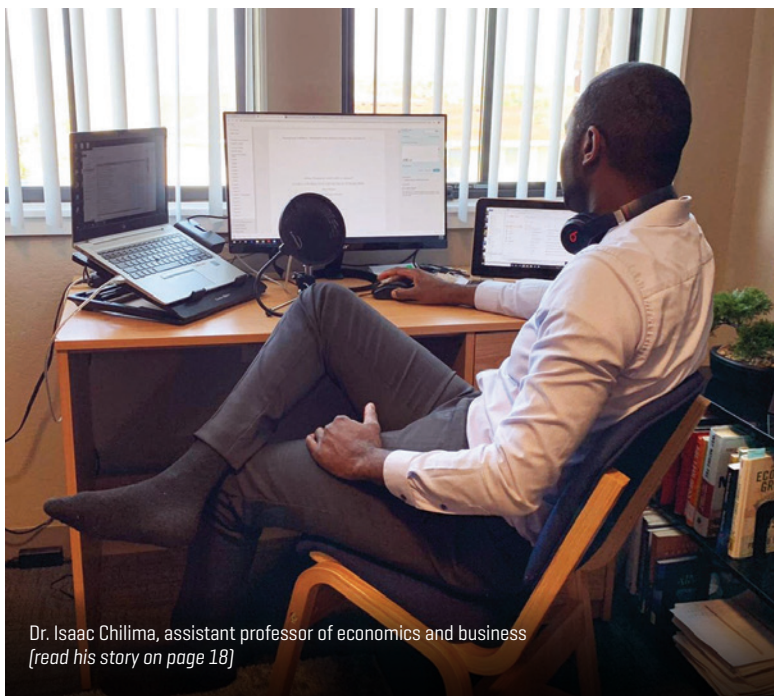
*As President Sweeting said, "Extraordinary times call for extraordinary decisions."*

On March 12, our first decision as a University was to restrict and then to cancel international travel to certain countries for students on University-sponsored trips in March, April, and May. Days later, it became apparent that it was necessary to curtail all University non-essential domestic travel as well.

By March 16, out of an abundance of caution and upon the recommendations of the CRT, CCU announced that the University was transitioning all traditional undergraduate classes in the College of Undergraduate Studies from in-seat to online instruction beginning Friday, March 20, continuing for the duration of the semester. All University employees also transitioned to remote work at that time. Two days of classes were canceled prior to the regularly scheduled spring



President's Cabinet meeting



Dr. Isaac Chilima, assistant professor of economics and business  
*[read his story on page 18]*



# ster Like No other

break, in order to give students adequate time to check-out of the residence halls and travel home.

The University announced on March 26, upon recommendation of the CRT, a postponement of the 2020 Commencement exercises, scheduled for May 8, 2020, at the FirstBank Center in Broomfield. Of the many difficult decisions the CRT had been discussing, 2020 Commencement was perhaps the most meaningful one — especially to our graduates and their loved ones, who have invested so much during their years at CCU and have looked forward with hopeful expectation to a public and joyful celebration that honors their achievements and honors Jesus Christ.

Such actions were highly unusual. As President Sweeting said, “Extraordinary times call for extraordinary decisions.” The University has made these decisions carefully and prayerfully. In doing so, University leadership listened to voices of those who were in the know. University leaders took seriously the opinions of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute of Health, Health and Human Services, our president, our governor, the Colorado Department of Education, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, local healthcare officials, and experts from our own University community. It would have been irresponsible to outguess them.

If the pandemic is serious enough for the cancellation of all college sports competition by the NCAA, the postponement of the Olympics in Japan, and the stay-at-home

orders issued by 41 states, then it was serious enough to take unusual actions.

In listening to key government voices, it was the intent of University leadership to comply with various orders. There is a biblical principle here — to be subject to rulers and authorities. To disobey would have been in defiance of governments (Romans 13). At the same time, CCU’s Centennial Institute has been working with legal experts to assure that our constitutional rights are protected as these various orders are handed down.

*Our students, faculty, and staff are actively committed to supporting each other in their passions and dynamic pursuit of Christ. This hasn’t stopped.*

Through this transition, the University community has found numerous opportunities for new engagement together and with those in need. CCU has provided medical supplies from our nursing program to local hospitals to help with the shortage of personal protective equipment. The University has also coordinated with one local hospital by providing space in one of our now-vacant residence halls to house healthy first responders. These individuals are on the front lines of the pandemic and

concerned about going home and potentially subjecting their loved ones to infection.

Finally, as many of us have learned over the last several weeks, technology-enabled engagement can still present an amazing opportunity to come together as a community. From in-seat courses to University leadership meetings, Zoom has become part of our daily routines. Staff have learned nearly overnight how to make home videos of devotions for our students to watch from anywhere in the world, and the largest graduating class in University history was conferred their degrees through our first virtual Commencement ceremony.

A CCU education is much more than what happens in the classroom. Our students, faculty, and staff are actively committed to supporting each other in their passions and dynamic pursuit of Christ. This hasn’t stopped since we’ve had to shift to remote operations. CCU is still CCU. There is still a great need for Christian liberal arts higher education — a CCU education. Colorado Christian University will be open for instruction in fall 2020. Our hope, goal, and fervent prayer is to see our Lakewood campus vibrant and alive with our students, faculty, and staff together again this fall. Please join with us in praying for that outcome, and pray for those on the front lines: the first responders, and those who are advancing research on this to find a vaccine. Pray for wisdom for our national leaders and their coronavirus task force as they direct the national response to the pandemic. Finally, pray for wisdom for the leadership of CCU as we continue to navigate this crisis. •

# From the Pages of *Paragon*

*Paragon* is CCU's literary magazine that provides students with an outlet for creativity and expression. Under the direction of appointed student editors, this annual publication is comprised of student art, photography, original poetry, and short stories. Featured here are two faculty picks from the spring 2020 *Paragon* issue.

## Grief

by Elizabeth Setters '22  
*Paragon* Faculty Pick

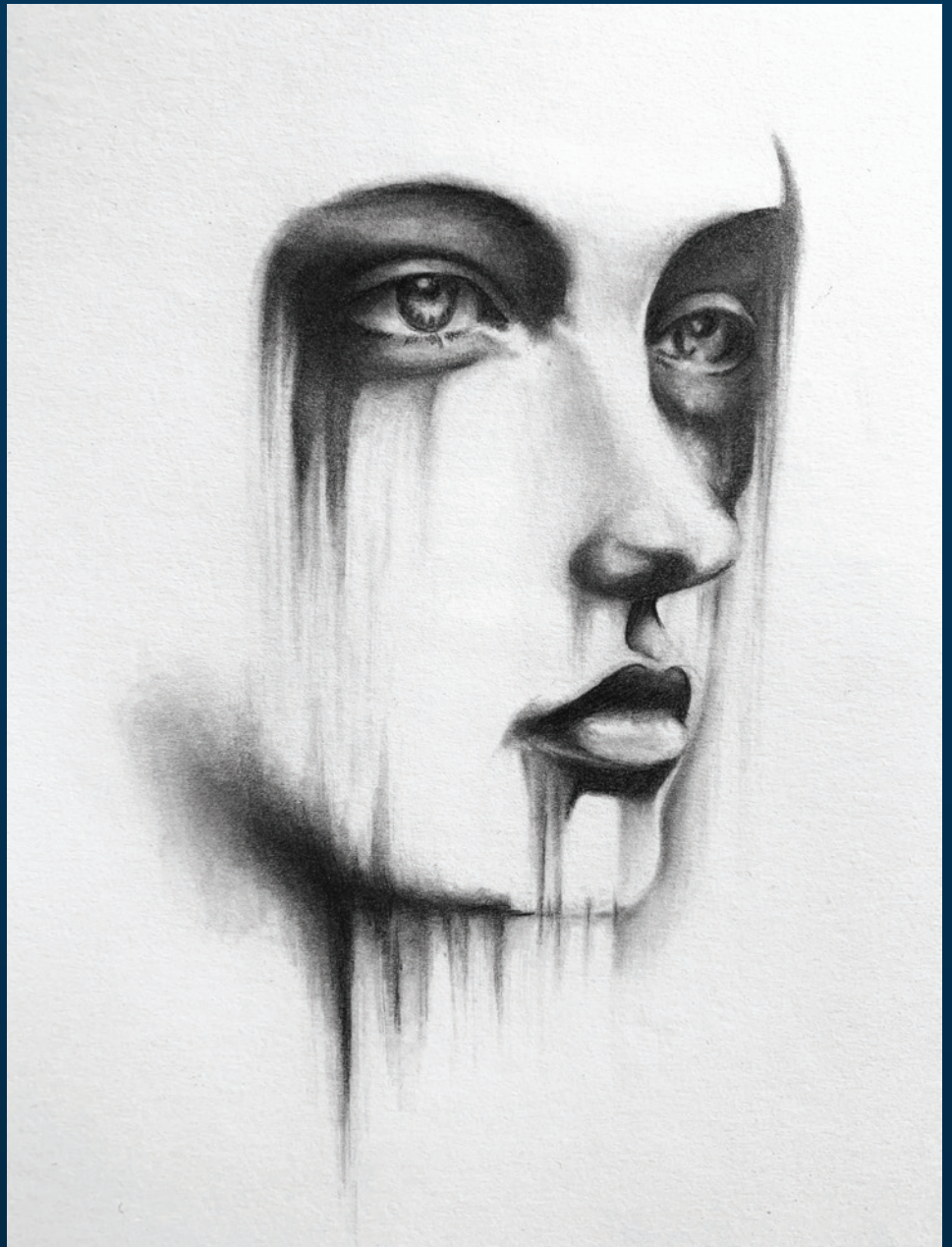
I chose this work for several reasons.

First, the artist shows excellent control over line and shape. The face portrayed here is both believable and conceptual: It gives the sense that it was drawn from what the artist directly witnessed.

Shading is also powerful in this drawing; it helps to separate darkness from light, and creates an air of mystery in the shadowed and hidden facial areas. The areas of vertical shading that flow over the face add to the mystery, and these shadings seem holistically inevitable.

The use of space also creates mystery: Parts of the head are hinted at, and other parts are missing entirely. Yet our imagination still fills in this negative space in order to construct a whole. As Ron Highfield wrote, "nothingness enters the imagination either as a negation of what God has affirmed or as an affirmation of what God has negated."<sup>1</sup> This drawing embodies Highfield's idea, and the control over positive and negative space creates a powerful emotional response.

– Dr. Richard Neizen, professor of music and art appreciation



1. Ron Highfield, *The Faithful Creator: Affirming Creation and Providence in an Age of Anxiety* (InterVarsity Press, 2015).

## Holy Night

Cold metallic scent  
filling cathedral sky with  
hesitant promise.

Falling, drifting. Soft  
and white; gently, gently it  
quiets every noise.

You stop and listen  
to the sound of nothing as  
it falls, it settles

slowly all at once.  
Streetlight halo softly glows,  
you feel like bowing.

by Elise Hegarty '21  
*Paragon* Faculty Pick

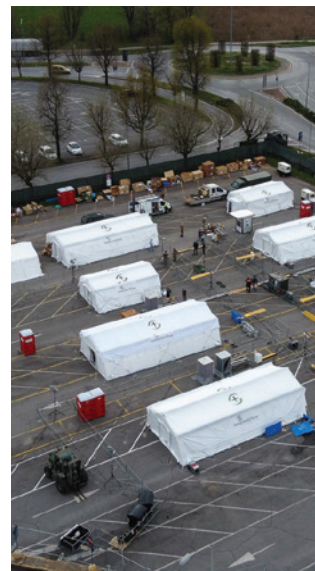
'Holy Night' grips me with its simplicity and its allusions. The title tips me off that there is something ineffable at play, and indeed, 'cathedral,' 'halo,' and 'bowing' deliver. Each individual line speaks on its own, yet the line breaks and enjambment communicate effectively. The poet subtly uses diction to short, accentual lines to support the image of this holy night. Brava!

– Susan Spear, professor of English  
and published poet

*CCU alums  
show Christ's love  
through their work  
in Italy during a  
global pandemic*



**Giving  
Feet  
to Our  
Faith**



As the coronavirus pandemic ravaged nearly every corner of the world, one of the hardest and earliest hit areas was the Lombardy region of Italy. Located in the northern part of the country, the region has seen some of the highest COVID-19 infection and death rates. That didn't stop recent Colorado Christian University graduates Matthew Hodgkins '19 and Emily Simonaitis '19 from working on the front lines of the pandemic at a field hospital for COVID-19 patients in Cremona, Italy.

Since mid-March, Hodgkins and Simonaitis have been logging 12 hours or more daily as they assist with logistics and operations for a 68-bed hospital housed in a tent in the parking lot of a local hospital. The field hospital is operated by Samaritan's Purse, a non-denominational evangelical Christian organization that provides spiritual and physical aid around the world.

"At the time that we deployed, Italy was the epicenter of this disease. We didn't know what our jobs would look like, let alone that we would be here in Italy," Simonaitis said. "It's been crazy, but we are so grateful for this opportunity."

For the two recent CCU grads, the posting was unexpected.

"Both of us had other assignments. I was preparing to go to South Sudan for the next three months to a year," Hodgkins said. "As countries started to close their borders, those assignments were temporarily postponed. Our focus for our ministry at Samaritan's Purse is on our response here in Italy and in New York. There are a handful of us here and there are a few that are responding in New York."

For Simonaitis the seriousness of the situation was apparent from the start of her time in Cremona.

"I didn't realize the full extent of how bad it could be. One of the first days we opened we had a reporter on the front lines with us. As a patient was being brought into the ICU he was intubated and on a ventilator," Simonaitis said.

"The reporter dropped to his knees in tears. I think the full depth of how bad it can get has been huge."

Hodgkins echoed her sentiment. "When I was back in the States I didn't know any friends, family, or neighbors who had become sick with COVID. Since being here, it's hard to come across someone that doesn't have a family member, friend, neighbor, or someone they go to church with who has died from it."

But even though the virus' toll can seem overwhelming, the CCU grads have seen positives at the same time.

"There have been deaths, there have been sad things, but we've also seen incredible miracles as far as seeing people healing and coming off of ventilators and being discharged. It makes it all worth it at the end of the day," Simonaitis said.

The biggest positive though has been seeing people giving their lives to Christ.

***"The reporter dropped to his knees in tears. I think the full depth of how bad it can get has been huge."***

"We have chaplains who are in with the patients, we have chaplains who are out here ministering to translators and military officials who are working with us," Hodgkins said. "That's been one of the coolest things, seeing some of our patients accept Christ, seeing some of our translators accept Christ, and hearing reports from hospital staff that we've partnered with and people in the community about what a light we are here."

"For those that watch the way we interact with each other, they are seeing a representation of what a personal relationship with the Lord looks like. I've been amazed with how receptive so many of the Italian people are, how it seems that the Lord



*Clockwise from top: Disaster response specialists set up the Samaritan's Purse Emergency Field Hospital. The 68-bed respiratory care unit is in the parking lot of a Cremona hospital. Healthcare workers attending to COVID-19 patients in northern Italy where the pandemic has overwhelmed the local medical infrastructure. Matthew Hodgkins '19 and Emily Simonaitis '19 pause for a selfie.*

has uniquely softened their hearts and prepared them for the message that we've come to bring."

Hodgkins and Simonaitis work with approximately 70 other staffers and medical professionals at the makeshift facility.

"It's been incredible to see people acting as the hands and feet of Christ. I see that in each staff member here," Simonaitis said. "We have to remember why we came to Italy to begin with, how important the gospel is. It's not a day-by-day thing, it's an eternal thing and it has an eternal weight and an eternal purpose."

Simonaitis is primarily responsible for procuring and stocking medical supplies such as personal protective equipment for the staff. Hodgkins is tasked with

procuring non-medical items as well as managing the organization's fleet of vehicles and doing laundry.

*"It doesn't always feel like glorious work ... Even if it is as a door keeper or the folder of laundry, it's really cool to be a part of this and to see how God is moving."*

"Sometimes I'll spend hours folding laundry, counting scrubs, and making sure that they

have what they need. It doesn't always feel like glorious work, but truly I'm grateful to be here and be a part of the work that we are doing. Even if it is as a door keeper or the folder of laundry, it's really cool to be a part of this and to see how God is moving," Hodgkins said.

The team meets for breakfast and devotions daily before starting their shifts at the hospital. Generally, shifts are 12 hours and days off are hard to come by.

"Some days it's 12 hours, some days it's 17 hours. It's been very intense, but so worth it," Simonaitis said.

"It can be hard to sustain that pace and remember why we are here. It can get easy to get caught up in the work and the doing when you're on that hectic schedule,"



Hodgkins said. “Ultimately Samaritan’s Purse is not here to be treating patients physically, they are here to be addressing the spiritual needs.”

Hodgkins credits his time at CCU for developing a fire to serve others around the world.

“I think CCU2theWorld played a big role in affirming my sense of calling for this type of work,” Hodgkins said. He relayed how on a missions trip to Uganda he fell ill with malaria but was ultimately able to recover and continue the trip.

“God showed me that even in the midst of really hard situations, really scary situations, that He’s with me, He sustains me, that when He calls us somewhere He protects us. Having been through something like

*“We have to remember why we came to Italy to begin with, how important the gospel is. It’s not a day-by-day thing, it’s an eternal thing and it has an eternal weight and an eternal purpose.”*

that it comforted any fear that I might have responding here.”

For those concerned about the toll of the coronavirus in the United States,

Simonaitis noted that with God there is no uncertainty.

“God is working and He is moving. He prepared the way for us before we got here. I know that cases may rise in the U.S. and continue to rise, but I know that He has already prepared a way.”

.....



Hodgkins and Simonaitis joined President Sweeting for a special webinar from Italy to address CCU employees and staff in mid-April.

This article was compiled from that conversation. Scan the QR code below to watch the full interview online. •



The Intensive Care Unit was full less than 24 hours after the field hospital opened. Teams pray for patient’s recovery and are working around the clock to bring critical care to those affected by the deadly virus. Photos courtesy of Emily Simonaitis, Matthew Hodgkins, and Samaritan’s Purse.



# LIFE NOW

The coronavirus pandemic has transformed the lives of Colorado Christian University faculty, staff, students, and alumni the world over. Classes have moved online, in-person community has shifted to the internet, traditional markers of completion have transitioned to virtual endeavors as graduates and families celebrated their Commencement and baccalaureate programs from homes dispersed across the country and around the globe.

Healthcare professionals have risked their lives on a daily basis as they selflessly care for patients suffering from COVID-19.

In this section we highlight a few of the thousands of members of the CCU community that are doing their part during the pandemic to cope with a changing world and live the love of Jesus Christ in their daily lives.



# Jennifer McGlue and Jennette Kallander

From the classroom to the ICU, how one nursing alum helped another stay connected to family



There are times in life when God has been working things out behind the scenes and one day it becomes apparent to us what His purpose was all along. This was the case for one of our senior nursing students. When Jennifer McGlue '20 came to the nursing program at CCU she didn't know anyone. As it happens, students often find a seat in the classroom and keep the same seat for the entire program. They get to know the people that sit around them and make friendships and connections.

Almost two years ago, Jennifer McGlue grabbed her ideal place to sit in class and created a bond and relationship with the student that sat next to her, Jennette Kallander '20. Kallander was already working in the healthcare field as a nursing assistant in the ICU while she went to CCU to get her Bachelor of Science in Nursing so she could become a registered nurse. These young women were both excellent students and leaders within their cohort. Throughout their years in nursing school, they supported each other and leaned on each other, never realizing how that bond would one day be used for something much bigger.

This spring both students were in their final semester of nursing school, completing their senior practicum when COVID-19 struck. This highly contagious disease caused many hospitals to close their doors to all visitors, even immediate family. Sadly,

McGlue's father contracted the disease and because of an underlying comorbidity had complications that landed him in the ICU at a local hospital and on a ventilator fighting to live. McGlue and her family were not allowed to visit or even come in the hospital to support her dad, yet God knew all along that this was going to happen one day.

Lo and behold, Kallander, who had been sitting right next to McGlue, worked in the ICU where McGlue's father was being treated. McGlue expressed what a comfort it was to know that her friend, with whom she had gone through so much over the last two years, was now caring for her father and able to be a mediator and communicator for her family. McGlue said knowing that Kallander was there and was checking on him for her gave her peace. The students have encouraged each other through many challenging things during the program. McGlue said her faith is strong and she knows that this was a full-circle moment that God orchestrated, stating that her dad "is in bad shape, but in good hands." Meanwhile, the nursing faculty and staff were praying for McGlue's dad to make a full recovery and we are so thankful for all of the students like Kallander who are on the front lines.

Many patients during this time do not have their support person with them. This makes a physical illness even more challenging and traumatic for families emotionally. Of

course, hospitals have the best interest of the family in mind and are doing what they must for infection control. Nonetheless, it is hard to imagine your loved one on a ventilator and you can't even be by their side. Knowing you had a compassionate classmate to even just sit and hold your loved one's hand and give messages from the family is a gift from the Lord.

McGlue says that Kallander is such a strong person and she doesn't know how she would have made it through the program without her friendship and support. God has used Kallander for such a time as this, to be His hands and feet to her patients and to be more than a friend to her classmate. McGlue can't wait for the day when this is all behind her and she can hug her friend and father again.

Thankfully, after a month on a ventilator and some experimental treatments, McGlue's father was removed from the ventilator and was released from the hospital to a rehabilitation center in early May. He has a ground floor window at the center, so family are able to take him signs and wave at him. The CCU family continues to pray that he will be back at home with his family soon. Amen.

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By Kristi Hargrave, DNP, RN, CNE, director of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program and assistant professor. •

# Renee Lizcano



Even the ‘tech pro’ can have connection issues when working from home

**F**rom 2015 to 2018, I was a stay-at-home mother while serving as an adjunct instructor for multiple online statistics classes. I was thrilled to be teaching, overwhelmed by having a new child (and then a second) in the home, and working late into the night or any time the children were occupied or sleeping.

In some respects, this recent transition to remote learning is reminiscent of that time in my life. Prior to teaching online, I was in a doctoral program at Stanford University where I focused on educational technology and STEM education research. While I was momentarily taken aback by the announcement to move our

College of Undergraduate Studies (CUS) classes online, I felt that I would be able to handle the transition well, given my love of and experience with technology. I even volunteered to be the tech captain for the School of Education. This meant helping our faculty test out the technology that we would be using and relaying any online pedagogical strategies that we would learn in the process. I said tearful, rushed goodbyes to my students, practiced Zooming with my colleagues, gathered up supplies and books from my office, and prepared to get my classes up and running.

Then, the unthinkable happened. As I explained my situation to one of my colleagues they gasped, “The tech pro is having tech problems.” We had been having internet issues for a few months, but I had not realized how terrible our connection was until I tried working from home that first Monday during what would have

been spring break. After multiple visits from our internet provider and long calls to our phone company, we were finally back online. In between dealing with tech issues, I planned, wrote, and recorded asynchronous lectures. Since I knew my students would be dispersing to different time zones and might be taking on new responsibilities at home such as caring for siblings, I wanted to have content available that they could watch at any time that was convenient for them. I was also expecting that I would not have much time for full Zoom lectures once my three- and four-year-olds were home all day. My husband is considered an “essential” worker, so he has been reporting to work. I needed to plan to be the only adult in the house with young children who are still working on their impulse control.

During the first week, things were bumpy, but it was so nice to see my students again. I alternated between managing online

preschool for my children, responding to faculty tech questions, hosting Zoom check-ins with my students, and grading assignments. We all got through just fine, but we were very tired and grateful by Friday evening.

The second week was much more difficult. My children now knew that “mommy has a meeting” could mean that I was busy for 15 minutes, an hour, or more. My daughter strongly declared her dislike for my computer and the fact that I was on the phone all day long. On Thursday, I mistakenly scheduled online preschool right after my work-related Zoom meetings. Online preschool did not go well that day. By the end of the second week, tempers were short, children were tired of

looking at screens, and the Zoom fatigue had definitely set in.

Then we had Easter. We did not get to celebrate like we normally do, but we spent time together as a little family. One of the sweetest moments of the weekend was having to calm my son’s tears after his sister told him Jesus had died. He bounced back quickly after his sister said that “Jesus comes back alive!” The joy on his face was restorative in a tough time.

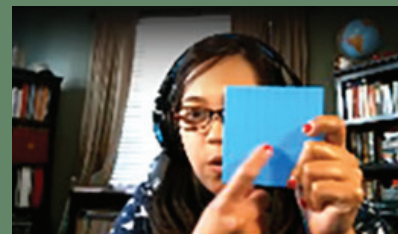
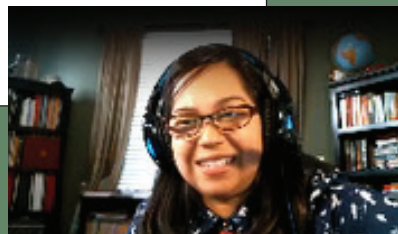
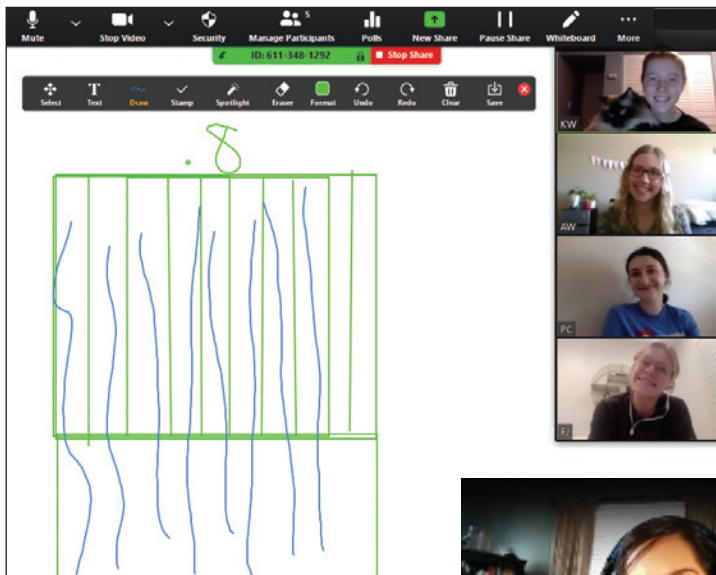
We now know to schedule preschool meetings for days when I do not have as many student meetings, and to take family breaks between Zoom meetings and phone calls. I have loved meeting with and praying for my students as they moved into

the final weeks of their unique term. I am inspired by my colleagues who are trying new techniques and new tools while still providing the same care for their students

that they always do. I am grateful for our Information Systems and Technology department and other helpers. I am proud of the School of Education. These past few weeks have definitely been an intense learning process, but I am comforted because I know that God is by our side as we continue moving forward.

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Dr. Renee Lizcano earned her B.S. in brain and cognitive sciences from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and earned her doctorate from Stanford University’s Graduate School of Education. She has served as an adjunct lecturer for online and in-seat courses in psychology, education, and statistics. In the fall of 2018, Dr. Lizcano joined the faculty at Colorado Christian University as an associate professor in the School of Education. She teaches Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Mathematics in the Elementary Classroom 1 and 2. Her research areas are higher education, Latin@ issues in education, STEM education, gender issues in education, and culturally responsive teaching practices. She can be reached at [rlizcano@ccu.edu](mailto:rlizcano@ccu.edu).





## Isaac Chilima

Take 1, take 2, take 3, ... take 99,  
connecting virtually can take time

I distinctly recall the day, February 13, Thursday morning, when I unexpectedly ran into Dr. Kyle Usrey, former vice president of Academic Affairs, in the lobby of the School of Business and Leadership. In his wisdom, he had brought us a precautionary word: “If the coronavirus hits Colorado, we may eventually have to close campus. I want y’all to be ready, to go fully online.” He then tasked a colleague and I to record short Zoom sessions as sample lectures by close of business.

The School of Business and Leadership had been piloting online technologies since the fall. Regardless, when the need for transition became clear, many of us felt unprepared. Thankfully, the University quickly set up and facilitated training sessions.

On day one, my first class was ECO 215 at 10:50 a.m. with 51 students. I anxiously sat by my computer for three hours. Would the students be enthusiastic? Would they understand what to do? Would the internet connection be stable? Dr. Gary Ewen, dean of the School of Business and Leadership, had us ready with contingency plans for the contingency plans.

I had structured my class sessions in three parts. First, students would view a 20-minute pre-recorded PowerPoint. Second, they would join a live 25-minute Zoom session to discuss the content

and address questions. Third, they would take a live quiz via Socrative.

Accustomed to in-seat, face-to-face interactions, I didn’t know what to expect. I’m pleased to say it started great and just got better. Forty-five students, more than I expected, participated in that first class. Only one had an issue with their Wi-Fi router at home. Several participated in what turned out to be a lively discussion on the Federal Reserve’s stimulus response to the economic downturn and the consequences that would follow. Later that afternoon, I received an encouraging email from one of the students expressing how grateful she was for the class. She found it useful that we were utilizing Zoom and was happy to see and engage everyone from class.

On day two, I was more relaxed, excited actually. Later that afternoon at the end of a class, three students stayed on just to catch up and share how we could be praying for each other, and this has continued since. One of the benefits of the online sessions is we have more time when we don’t have to rush off across campus to the next class.

Among the challenges, one has been the time it takes to create and process video PowerPoints and other content. Who knew that could be a daunting task? Take 1, take 2, take 3, ... take 99, it takes hours for a 20-minute video. I should probably add to the credits: “Coffee beans were ‘hurt’ during the making of this video.” It’s all joy though, when you love what you do, knowing it is the purpose to which He has called and sent you; I do.

Overcoming the challenges has been worth it, for the love of teaching, and the opportunity to go on learning. Feedback from students has been affirming, including comments about how other faculty have transitioned. I can safely say, mission accomplished. Still, nothing can replace in-person interactions. I miss the spontaneity of the classroom, and being a little animated, but I trust we all are in this adjustment together. It is, after all, only temporary!

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Dr. Isaac Y. Chilima serves as assistant professor of economics and business at CCU. He is a native of Malawi, where he completed his undergraduate education at the University of Malawi, before completing his master’s and doctorate degrees in economics from Yokohama National University in Japan. •



# Kelly Clausen



## CCU alumna talks of building and maintaining community online and at home

As the spread of the coronavirus closed schools and altered the way that America's youth accessed education, Kelly Ann Clausen '11, MBA '15, was on the front line of transitioning Valley Christian Schools in Chandler, Ariz., to the world of fully online instruction.

Clausen, a former science teacher, serves as Valley Christian Schools' instruction technology specialist. Prior to the pandemic, she was tasked with training teachers how to integrate technology into the classroom. The shift to distance learning accelerated this process.

"We were really prepared. We did a lot of front-loaded work. Education needs to move more to digital platforms. I really feel thankful that we had put in so much work ahead of this," Clausen said. "The teachers who were willing to adapt were so much better prepared than those who were not."

But for Clausen, the biggest change hasn't

been the shift to technology, but the drive to develop a new sense of community in both her school and personal life.

"Even though I was out of the classroom this year, I still oversaw student council and coached volleyball. Not seeing them has been really hard," Clausen said of her students. "I know that some of them have been struggling with not seeing their people. I struggle with that, too. Even though you can talk to them, it's not the same as seeing them and giving them a hug."

The seasoned educator noted that to combat the loss of in-person community the school has increased the use of online one-on-one and group meetings. Additionally, the school has launched a virtual campaign on Instagram, Mr. VCHS, similar to CCU's King Cougar competition designed to build a sense of community.

"It has been hilarious because we have teachers, alumni, and students posting. The best part of our school is the community," Clausen said. "When our families, kids, and teachers don't have the community, that is the hardest thing. We're trying to maintain that whatever way we can."

While Clausen and her fellow educators are trying to adjust to a new normal centered on virtual classrooms, the slower pace dictated by stay-at-home directives has provided an unexpected respite.

"Personally, I was like go, go, go, go," said Clausen about the transition to online instruction and the busy pace of her life. "Coming back and having this forced time of rest has been good for me. It has allowed me to refocus on what's important — spending more time talking to friends and family, spending more time in Scripture, spending more time in solitude. Sometimes it's hard, but I think for me it has been really important."

The Arizona resident added that her new routine has allowed her to explore her neighborhood and reconnect with the natural beauty of God's creation.

"This season has been a blessing. I have found a bigger gratitude for where I'm living. I have always loved the people that I have done life with out here; but the state, my neighborhood and what's around, I've seen things through new eyes." •

Andrea Artzer '19  
B.S. in Nursing



ACTING AGAINST

**COVID-19**

WITH GENEROSITY

CCU healthcare students are working long hours to help pay their tuition, but they still have a gap. Your gift to the CCU Fund will be pooled with other gifts so that a student can receive vital scholarship aid and pursue a kingdom-building and compassion-centered career in healthcare.

**[CCU.EDU/COVID-19-RELIEF](https://www.ccu.edu/covid-19-relief)**

Madelyn  
Van Kooten

## 2020 CCU grad awarded Fulbright grant to teach in the Netherlands

Colorado Christian University alumna Madelyn Van Kooten '20 has been named a Fulbright Scholar. Van Kooten, who graduated this spring with a double major in English and Secondary Education, is the first CCU undergraduate student to be awarded a Fulbright grant. The Fulbright U.S. Scholar program provides research, study, and teaching opportunities in 140 countries. Van Kooten intends to teach English in the Netherlands beginning in the fall.

"My goal in getting a degree in secondary education was to teach abroad. It's been my dream for a long time," Van Kooten said. "My reason for applying is that it will be a great stepping stone and get me out there. It makes it easier when it's all paid for."

Van Kooten learned of her award during the week of spring break, a time when the University had just announced the closing of the Lakewood campus and the transition to online instruction for the remainder of her final undergraduate semester.

Van Kooten said that while the situation remains fluid, she plans to leave in August for the Netherlands. Fulbright continues to monitor and re-evaluate the situation every 30 days. If Van Kooten is able to travel in the fall, she will be paired with a Dutch teacher and will be tasked with teaching English as a native speaker and promoting American-Dutch relationships.

"Madelyn is suited in so many ways for this Fulbright grant and the work it will entail, as she has a passion for teaching, expertise in English as an English major with secondary licensure, and a personal heritage that reaches back to the Netherlands," said Dr. Janet Black, interim vice president of Academic Affairs for the College of Undergraduate Studies. "This award will also catapult her to new accomplishments because of the Fulbright's wide recognition and support around the world."



Van Kooten intends to rely on her already-considerable teaching experience during her time in the Netherlands. Through her studies in the School of Education, the Colorado native has logged more than 800 hours of teaching experience. Following her freshman year at CCU, Van Kooten took a mission trip in which she taught English to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Additionally, she has spent the last two years teaching English as a second language online to students in Japan and other countries after earning her TESOL certification.

To other students thinking about teaching English abroad, Van Kooten encourages them to give it a try.

"A lot of people are afraid of teaching English. The fact is, you know a lot more than you think you do because you speak it natively," Van Kooten said. "It opens a lot of doors. There are so many places looking for English teachers." •



Jeremy Poirier

Tailoring your approach for each class online is vital for success

*“But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face.”  
- 1 Thes. 2:17  
[ESV]*

Are you just going to teach your classes over Zoom?” That was almost always the reply of friends and family members who had heard I’d be working from home for the rest of the semester. It’s been over two months since the first days of Colorado’s stay-at-home order, but my answer in regard to Zoom remains the same: it depends.

The “it depends” answer hinges on two variables, the first of which is a course’s content and materials requirements. A traditional lecture adapts well to a video conference, but it would be difficult to teach a course on 3D printers to students who were at home without the ability to print and evaluate their creations.

The second variable lies in the fact that for a given semester, each class develops its own unique personality. The personality of a class is heavily influenced by the number of students enrolled and the active participation level of each of those students. Some classes are more humorous while others are more reserved. I’ve taught courses where the first section was filled with high-energy chatterboxes, only to be followed 10 minutes later by a second section that was as silent as a submarine that had gone all quiet. Same professor, same course content, same room, but a far different collective personality.

At a university like CCU, where class sizes are relatively small, it is possible for the professor to adapt to the personality of each

class to leverage unique opportunities and respond to any obstacles that may arise. This doesn’t mean changing the “what” of our course’s content, but we may change the “how.” As I reflect back, this really was the guiding philosophy of moving my classes to an online-only format. One of my classes required almost no modification while another required extensive work.

***It amazed me that students who had barely spoken a word for the entire semester were now active participants in a lively discussion.***

My Database Administration course was a solid candidate to simply move our class time over to Zoom video conferences. This course only had nine students, all of them had taken at least two other classes from me in the past, and they understood my expectations. I must say I enjoyed their practical jokes during class time, seeing how many heart icons they could display on my screen before I would even notice.

On the other end of the spectrum was Business Applications in Technology, which is commonly known as CIS 101. With an



enrollment between 20 and 30 students, this class is predominantly freshman, and most have never taken a course with me as their professor. I also knew that once we returned from spring break the difficulty level of the course content was set to significantly increase regardless of whether we were on campus or online.

In CIS 101, I generally have my copy of an Excel spreadsheet projected on the screen at the front of the classroom. Students follow along on their own computers as I demonstrate how to craft formulas for various scenarios found in the business world. This may seem like an obvious use case for Zoom screen sharing, but my 19 years of teaching this course told me otherwise. Demonstrating complex formulas tends to generate a high volume of back-and-forth dialogue with my students, and I am constantly walking around the classroom to provide individualized assistance.

To address the pacing issue I decided that in lieu of our first meeting each week I would pre-record instructional walkthroughs and post them to YouTube. This gave students the ability to pause a video if I was going too fast or increase the playback speed if I was going too slow. I would later hold office hours during Monday's scheduled class time to assist students that might be struggling with the more difficult material.

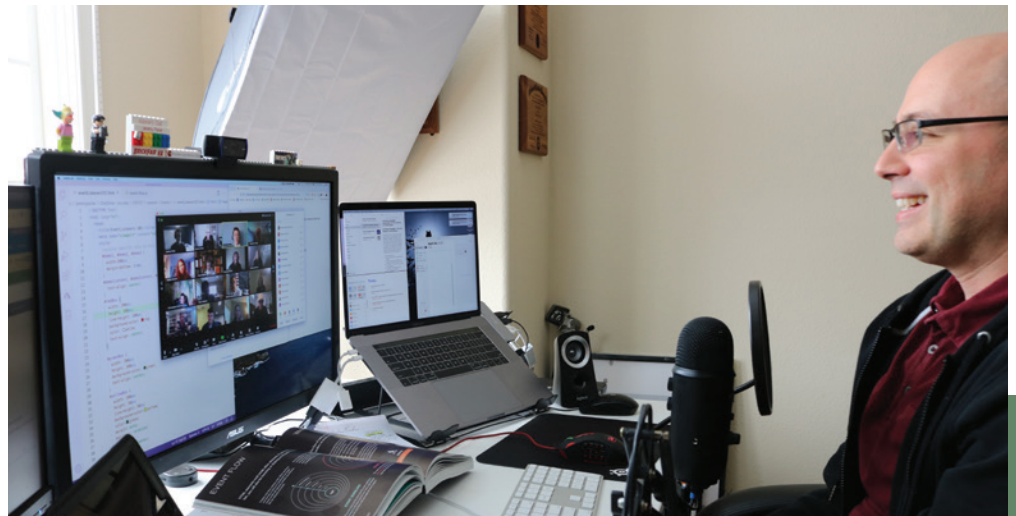
Another component of CIS 101 is discussing the current events that are happening in business technology each week. The global pandemic was providing plenty of tech articles, videos, and podcasts that I didn't want students to miss out on, but I had an uneasy feeling about simply moving this part of our course over to Zoom. My fear was that only two students would actually talk, and 18 or more would acquire CZFS (chronic Zoom fatigue syndrome).

In an attempt to combat CZFS, I split Wednesday's class into three smaller discussion groups that would meet for a third of the scheduled class time. To ensure that students were prepared for the weekly

discussions, I required an online journal entry that addressed each week's reading, listening, and watching material.

I could not have anticipated the success of this approach. It amazed me that students who had barely spoken a word for the entire

revealed a few weaknesses. It is amazing how an assignment description can be perfectly adequate in a face-to-face class, yet far too ambiguous when I am miles apart from my students. I have been pushed to level-up my knowledge of the various tools in Blackboard, our online learning



semester were now active participants in a lively discussion. The combination of Zoom, smaller groups, and real world issues drastically increased the engagement of my students to a level far beyond our typical classroom experience. I looked forward to our discussions each week with great anticipation. They were a lifeline of connection in a world that was becoming more isolated with each passing day.

As I've looked back and evaluated this condensed time of immense change I am drawn to how it parallels my career in information technology. Stress testing is an important part of delivering a reliable IT solution, as it helps to assess a solution's viability should the worst happen. A well-built solution can withstand the stress test, but that doesn't necessarily mean that weaknesses won't be revealed.

It has been the same for my courses these past two months. An unscheduled stress test has earned a passing grade, but it has also

management system. I have also come to learn that there are times in a pandemic where you schedule a Zoom call simply to invite your students to socialize for an hour as a means of combating the loneliness of a stay-at-home order. That Zoom call can never be the same as meeting for lunch in the Anschutz Student Center, but that doesn't mean it held no value.

"But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face."  
- 1 Thessalonians 2:17 (ESV)

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Jeremy Porier '00 is an assistant professor of computer information systems at CCU. He has taught at the collegiate level for more than 15 years, courses ranging from introductory to advanced. Subject areas include business applications, programming and software development, database design, networking, and security. •



# Jason Pierantoni

CCU Senior and four-year cross country runner  
writes a letter to his freshman self

**D**ear Freshman Jason, You are about to begin one of the most difficult, yet most rewarding journeys in your life. You are about to grow as an athlete and a man of God in ways you have never imagined. You are about to walk on to the CCU cross country/track team and push yourself beyond your limits. You are about to be a part of a team and family that will push you and pour into you as you grow as a student athlete. I encourage you to lean into all that the Lord has for you in the next four years.

As you are about to head off on your first team camp, you are feeling overwhelmed and a little out of place. You look at the other freshmen and the upperclassmen and you compare your PRs to theirs, and you feel way out of your league. Fight that feeling because you belong on that team. Do not get discouraged when you begin to struggle with the increased mileage or the seemingly underwhelming results. This is a process and you just need to keep putting in the work. Whether you can see it right now or not, the team needs you almost as much as you need them.

I know you are also struggling to adjust to life in college; studying for classes, running and going to workouts, and spending time with friends, all while trying to adjust to life away from your family. Lean into your coaches and your teammates when you are

struggling. They want to help you grow and succeed, not only as a runner but also as a follower of Christ. Through the struggles and the major life decisions that you are going to face in the next few years, let them in. Let them be a part of it. You are going to make mistakes and struggle in your time on the team but invite them in to walk through it with you and help make you stronger. Coach Jon Poag, Mandee Middleton '20, Vince Keller '20, and so many others are there for you as you go through these difficult stages.

You are going to have many opportunities to step up as a leader on this team. Do not shy away from those moments. Set an example with the way you work and the way you love your teammates. Be there for them when they need an encouraging word or someone to talk to. Never miss a chance to seek wisdom from Coach Poag or your teammates. Also never miss a chance to glean from Caden Magnuson's '20 positivity.

There will be many unexpected blessings that come during your time at CCU. You will see teammates come and go, and you will build friendships that will last a lifetime. You will get another chance to run with your little brother, Josh, and you will have the blessing of watching him grow as a runner, leader, and a man of God while you are both a part of the program. You will watch him run at the national cross country

meet and you will be filled with pride as you see him accomplish his goals. Enjoy those moments. Enjoy the moments when your family travels far and wide to watch you race and show their support. You are also going to find your future wife at CCU, and she will be a constant support in running and in life. Enjoy every moment and every word of encouragement she gives on this journey.

Savor each moment you get to lace up the racing shoes and toe the line with your teammates. Those are great moments and they are not guaranteed. Trust your training and race with all you have, because you never know when your season is going to be cut short by injury or unprecedented circumstances. Give everything you have in those moments and honor your teammates with your effort. Lean into every opportunity you get to spend time with your teammates and coaches and do not take any runs for granted.

Your college running career is about to start, and it is going to be a wild ride. Lean in and love your teammates and coaches well. Continue to work hard and dedicate yourself to your team. Your life will change in your time at CCU, and you will come out of it having grown as a runner and as a man of God.

Best Regards,  
Jason Pierantoni '20



The CCU men's cross country team had its strongest ever showing in 2019. The squad qualified seven runners for the NCAA Division II National Championships. Using a strategy that required patience and poise, the Cougars rallied from the back of the pack in the 34-team field to place 17th overall in their first appearance at the national championships.

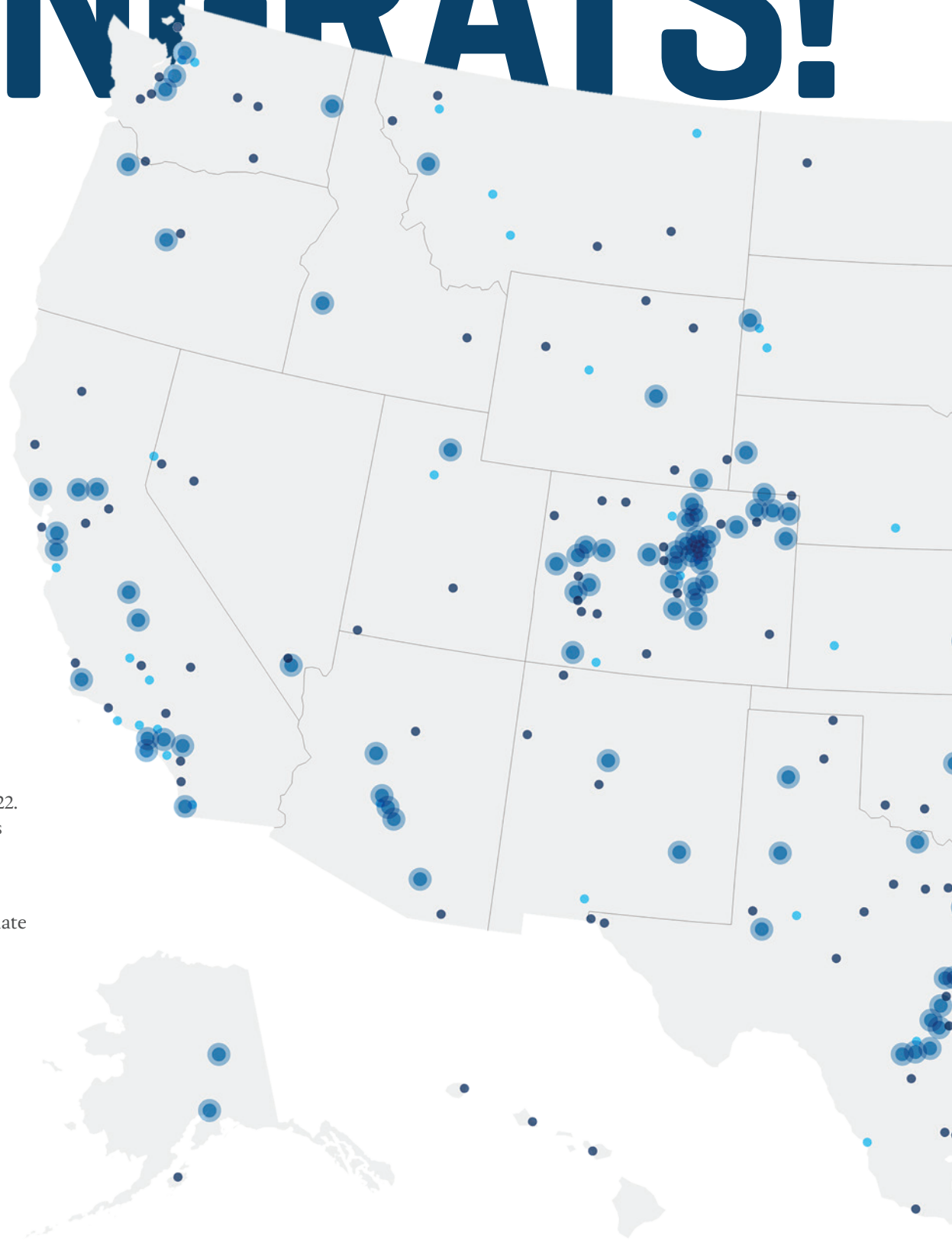


Above: CCU's NCAA Division II National Championship Team: Back row (L-R) Keaton Helm '20, Josh Pierantoni '22, Jeremy Miller '22, Trent Cochran '23; Front row (L-R) Ryder Searle '20, Jacob Vermillion '23, Nicholas Skinner '20

Left: Three named all-region performers at NCAA Division II South Central Regional Championships: (L-R) Josh Pierantoni '22, Ryder Searle '20, Nicholas Skinner '20



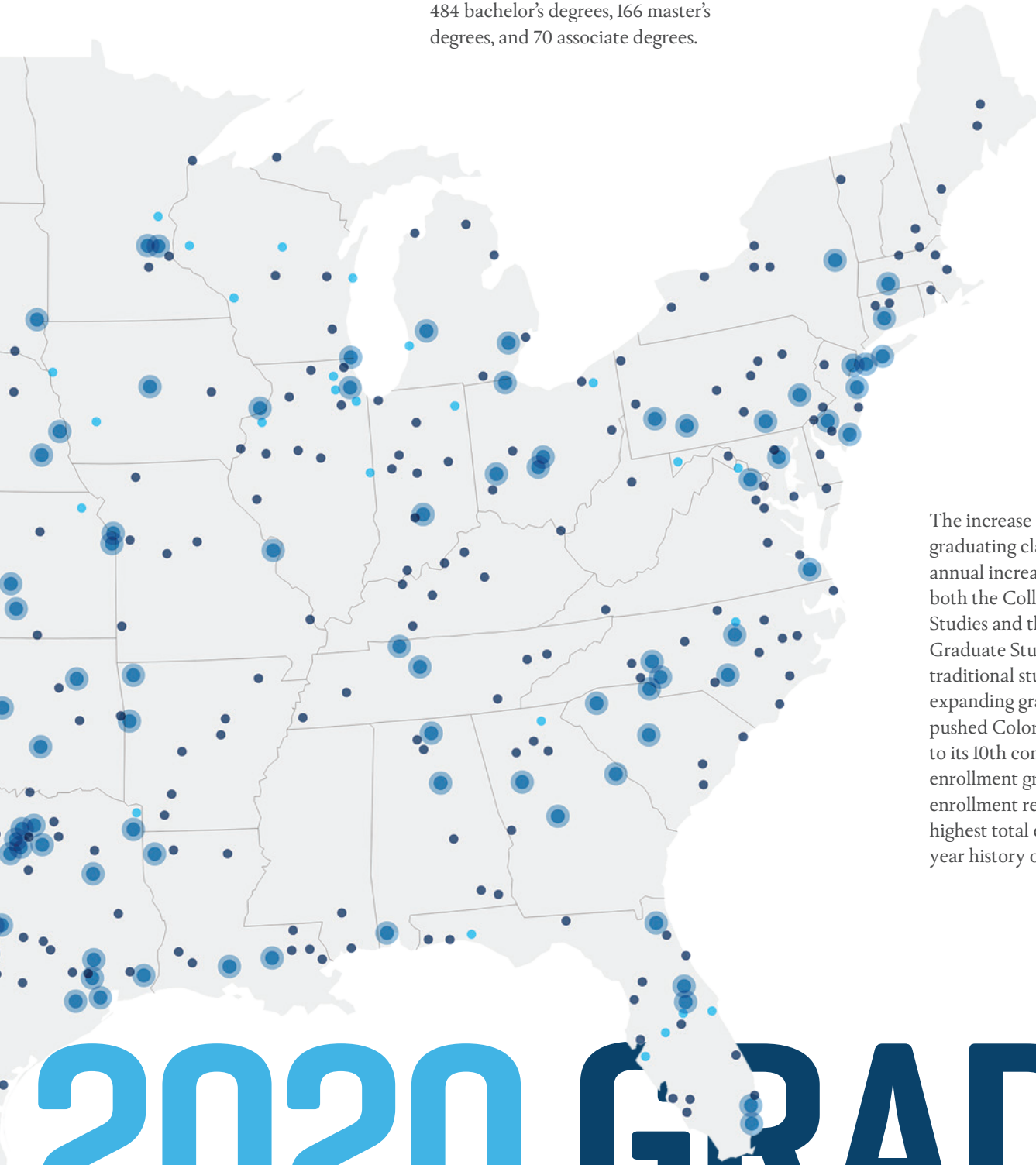
# CONGRATS!



Colorado Christian University awarded a record 720 degrees to its Class of 2020 during a historic virtual Commencement on May 22. Find an interactive version of this map at [ccu.edu/gradmap](http://ccu.edu/gradmap).

- College of Adult and Graduate Studies (CAGS) graduates
- College of Undergraduate Studies (CUS) graduates
- Cluster of two or more graduates

The 2020 graduating class includes graduates from all 50 U.S. states and several foreign countries who will receive 484 bachelor's degrees, 166 master's degrees, and 70 associate degrees.



The increase in the size of the graduating class corresponds with annual increases in enrollment in both the College of Undergraduate Studies and the College of Adult and Graduate Studies. In 2019, record traditional student enrollment and expanding graduate-level programs pushed Colorado Christian University to its 10th consecutive year of enrollment growth. Total University enrollment reached 8,486 in 2019, the highest total enrollment in the 106-year history of the institution.

# 2020 GRADS

# CONTEMPORARY APOLOGISTS IN THE MAKING

CCU's Strobel Center  
Launches Applied  
Apologetics  
Degrees



**LEE STROBEL CENTER**  
*for Evangelism and Applied Apologetics*  
*at Colorado Christian University*



The Lee Strobel Center for Evangelism and Applied Apologetics at Colorado Christian University is excited to announce the launch of a Bachelor of Arts in Applied Apologetics and a Master of Arts in Applied Apologetics, beginning this fall. The programs are available 100% online and focus on apologetics — the study of defending the Christian faith through intellectual means.

“We want to equip our students to be able to effectively share the Good News — the grace of Jesus Christ — in their spheres of influence,” said Lee Strobel, the founding director of the Strobel Center. “We also want to equip them to be able to confidently defend the truth of the Christian faith. Both are important.”

Offered through CCU Online, the undergraduate and graduate degree programs will each include four emphases: Cultural Engagement, Global Apologetics, Innovative Evangelism, and Practical Apologetics. Each emphasis is uniquely designed to equip students to be effective communicators and defenders of the Christian faith in a world increasingly skeptical of Christian values and ideals.

*“Through the Lee Strobel Center, we will train contemporary apologists to do exactly what Paul did 2,000 years ago.”*

“Christian apologists have a long and storied history. Early Christians were defending the faith in the second and third centuries against Roman misconceptions of Christianity. Scripture also records the Apostle Paul conversing with Greek philosophers in Athens in their own language, on their own terms, and in praise to God,” said Dr. Earl Waggoner, dean of the School of Biblical and Theological Studies. “Through the Lee Strobel Center, we will train contemporary apologists to do exactly what Paul did 2,000 years ago.”

The courses for both the undergraduate and graduate degrees were designed by Strobel and his ministry partner, Mark Mittelberg, in conjunction with leading apologetics and evangelism experts from around the world. All courses are offered completely online,

allowing students the ability to study nearly anywhere with internet access.

“These courses provide life-giving information that will grow our students in their own faith, while training them to be more effective at helping other people really consider the claims of Jesus Christ, with the hope that they become followers of Christ,” said Mittelberg, executive director of the Strobel Center.

The Strobel Center is a unique partnership between CCU Online and two of the 21st century’s leaders in evangelism and apologetics. A primary goal of the center is to train apologists and evangelists to be a resource for local churches and ministry leaders. More churches and parachurch organizations are seeing a greater need for individuals and leaders prepared with the right training to become actively involved in the marketplace of ideas, with the goal of influencing the culture for Christ.

Interested in growing in understanding of the gospel message and learning how you can better spread and defend your faith? Visit [strobelcenter.com](http://strobelcenter.com) today to discover how you can help bring salt and light to an increasingly secularized world. •

### About the Lee Strobel Center for Evangelism and Applied Apologetics

The Lee Strobel Center at Colorado Christian University seeks to equip Christians, ministry leaders, and churches to effectively share the grace of God and confidently defend the truth of the gospel, in order to reach our world for Christ.



**Lee Strobel**, The Strobel Center’s founding director, *New York Times* best-selling author, award-winning journalist, and atheist-turned-apologist



**Mark Mittelberg**, The Strobel Center’s executive director, best-selling author, international speaker, and leading strategist in evangelism and apologetics

# CCU CLASS NOTES

How CCU alumni  
are making a  
difference

## Essential Healing of Brokenness



**Sharon MacLean '07** (B.S. in Business Administration) has been working at Christian Encounter

Ranch ([christianencounter.org](http://christianencounter.org)) a residential counseling program for struggling young people. For nearly 50 years, the ministry has been dedicated to overcoming cycles of brokenness, one story at a time.

*Because we are considered an essential operation, we continue to pursue our mission (with a few adjustments to follow CDC guidelines). We work with young people who are aware of their need for help, and we teach that genuine commitment to Christ is the key to a healthy life. Currently we are accepting young women between the ages of 16 and 25, and young men between the ages of 16 and 21. We provide spiritual mentoring, biblically-based counseling, housing, meals, education (classroom teaching and individual tutoring), work experience,*

*supervision (24 hours/day, with an average ratio of one leader to three students), and transportation for CEM events. The average stay is 14 to 18 months.*

*Nearly 10 years ago, I was drawn to Christian Encounter because I desired to be a part of helping others close the gap between where they are and where the Lord calls them to be. I wanted to partner with Jesus to see the full capacity of Isaiah 61 on the earth. Each day at the ranch, the Good News is being proclaimed. Each day, with the help of the Holy Spirit, young people take courageous steps from bondage toward freedom, brokenness toward healing, mourning toward joy, ashes toward beauty, and devastation toward restoration.*

Thank you, Sharon, for bringing hope and love to so many young people!

## Essential Help for Middle School Students



**Eric Palmer '04** (B.A. in Elementary Education) is the assistant principal at Ortega Middle School in

Alamosa, Colo., which is part of the greater San Luis Valley.

*Seventy percent of our youth live well below the poverty line and 58 of our students are homeless. We continue to deal with a serious opioid addiction that has decimated many families. An overwhelming majority of our students have faced some sort of trauma in their lives. School is one place where they are welcomed, accepted, and safe.*

*Now that schools have been shuttered for the remainder of the school year, our students are home, which may not be a safe environment for them. Every single one of our students received free breakfast and lunch at school, Monday through Friday. Our food service and transportation departments have done an outstanding job of getting breakfast and lunches to students five days a week, with extra food on Fridays for the weekends. Our counselors and mental health*

*counselors have reached out to students and families. Teachers and administration are in constant contact with students of concern.*

*Two students at my school have been stuck at home for the past six weeks because their father was in quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19; their mother in the hospital. Their older brother is a junior at our high school and he will be the first in his family to graduate high school. Not being able to work, the family was unable to secure enough food, the students were not able to grab their locker belongings during our designated days, and bills were going unpaid. Our community rallied around them, contributing to a GoFundMe campaign to get them the help they needed, ensuring they have enough food and assistance. Several of my teachers gathered the two middle school students' belongings and dropped them off at their home. While that may seem trivial to some, small gestures like that mean a lot to teenagers, especially ones that barely have anything to begin with.*

*Our city may be small, but we have big hearts and have been able to rally together to help many of our hurting families.*

Thank you, Eric, for your dedication to teaching and supporting teens in the San Luis Valley!

## Essential Food for Frontline Workers and Food Pantries

**Kara McMullin '12** (B.S. in Business Administration) is the marketing director for a Chik-fil-A (CFA) franchise in Katy, Texas. Most fast food restaurants were allowed to stay open during shelter-in-place orders because access to meals in a safe environment is an essential need for citizens.

McMullin shares that the corporate purpose at CFA is “to glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us and to have a positive influence on all who come into contact with Chik-fil-A,” and this mission made their decision to help their



local communities easy. “We are serving our community through donating to local food pantries and healthcare providers. In one week, we donated over 500 sandwiches to two different food pantries, and over 300 sandwiches to local grocery store workers who have been working day and night to keep our stores well-stocked and open. As we always say, we are not in the chicken business, we are in the people business.”

McMullin added, “The community is so important to CFA’s mission, and it’s a pleasure to serve in any way we can!”

Thank you, Kara, for blessing essential workers and hungry families in Houston!

## Essential PPE Created With 3D printers



**Paul Ross '06** (B.S. in Management of Information Systems) is the associate vice president and chief

information officer at Phoenix College, a community college with four sites located in Maricopa County, Ariz.

Ross had the privilege of spearheading an effort to use a 3D printer to create essential PPE for St. Joseph’s Hospital in Phoenix. “Phoenix College is always looking for ways to give back to our community. The community, including our health care partners, are so important to us,” said Ross. Ross spent more than 500 hours over a 12-day period to monitor the process. He chose the “Montana Mask” because of its thoughtful design and how it fared in sanitization tests. In April, they printed 90 masks to add to their previous donation of \$8,000 worth of PPE from their existing inventory in their health programs.

Ross was quick to get his whole family involved in the project — wife, Sylvia,

and kids Jennifer, Micah, Paige, and Grace all played a role making this a successful activity. For more on this story, visit [phoenixcollege.edu/news/2020](http://phoenixcollege.edu/news/2020).

Thank you, Paul, for creatively providing PPE to health care workers in Phoenix!

## Essential Help in the Fight Against Suicide and Depression



**Aleha Landry '16** (B.S. in Business Administration) lives in Colorado with her husband and four

children, and has spent the last decade as a stay-at-home mom. She submitted this op-ed to [militarytimes.com](http://militarytimes.com). Excerpts are reprinted with permission from the author.

*I am an Air Force wife. My husband battles persistent depression and suicidal ideation. As many are acutely aware, suicide and depression is at an all-time high among our military men and women, and unfortunately, my husband is not an exception.*

*I know that he is not alone; he recently completed an eight-week partial hospitalization program that was specifically for active duty military. So many people are struggling.*

*I know that as a spouse, I am not alone, but I have not seen many spouses publicly writing and speaking out about this issue. I get it — it is scary and there could be repercussions on a career, the next move, the recommendation, finances, kids, home stability, and more. If this is you, you are not alone. I am in this battle with you.*

*Being the wife of anyone who is suicidal is excruciating. There are many components in play and not knowing what I may or may not come home to is unsettling. It takes a toll on me as a person, on my marriage, and on my kids. As such, I believe that spouses are on the front lines of this*

*issue. Servicemen must keep it together all day for co-workers and commanders, but we see how that impacts them. I firmly believe that spouses are the system experts in this fight because we see the facets that the Air Force cannot. It is a hard position to be in.*

*There have already been suicides because of the lockdown and shelter-in-place orders. Human contact and relationships are a necessity and when those already struggling have their lifelines and routine shut down, it is a battle to simply stay sane.*

If you want to discuss this topic with Landry, you may reach her by email at [aleha.landry@gmail.com](mailto:aleha.landry@gmail.com). If you or someone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1.800.273.8255.

Thank you, Aleha, for showing us what it means to love your family and your country! •



**ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**  
Colorado Christian University



Have an update or looking to reconnect with the CCU community? Contact Kara Johnston, director of alumni and parent relations, at 303.963.3320 or [kjohnston@ccu.edu](mailto:kjohnston@ccu.edu).

## Honor a Loved One with a Tribute Gift

Tribute gifts are an excellent way to honor your loved ones. You can endow a named fund with CCU that stands in permanent tribute to a parent, spouse, or beloved individual. The fund can be in your name as well. You can designate the named fund to support a particular department or program.

Additionally, CCU's Armstrong Legacy Initiative is nearing the finish line. The Initiative is an effort to secure funds for the Armstrong Center and our second new academic building. Contact us today to discover opportunities to impact future generations for Christ.



### Questions or want to discuss options?

Contact Mark Heckelmann  
Director of Major and Planned Gifts  
[mheckelmann@ccu.edu](mailto:mheckelmann@ccu.edu) or 303.963.3343



ALMIGHTY GOD

FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

YOU ARE THE *One* WHO HOLDS ALL THINGS

*Together.*

IN EVERY SEASON, YOUR SUSTAINING

LOVE *brings* HOPE.

≡ MAY YOUR PRESENCE BE REMEMBERED IN OUR ≡

*hearts, minds, AND habits,*

DRAW US MORE DEEPLY UNTO YOU *&* INTO LOVING SERVICE FOR OTHERS.

FOR YOUR GLORY'S SAKE.

*Amen.*



COLORADO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

*Grace and Truth*

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8787 W. Alameda Ave.

Lakewood, CO 80226