Listening to What Our Students Are Saying

My work in the Center for Student Success the last few weeks has meant many student meetings via Microsoft Teams. My favorite line from one of those meetings was “My low motivation is only trumped by my boredom. So, I’ve been getting a lot done!” As we live in online learning right now, I have been pleasantly surprised by how much students appreciate a personal connection and are more eager than normal to process their diverse experiences. Here are a smattering of annotated student comments from those Teams meetings:

- My motivation is really low. I never realized how much I appreciated in-person classes for the structure and accountability.
- I am grateful to Professor _________ for being understanding with my home situation.
- I think my professor is trying to grow a beard.
- I traveled many days to get home. I will be quarantined for 14 days now. I cannot leave my room. I have to wear a mask covering most of my face. All the time. I’m glad I’m not job interviewing right now! I only get a little Wi-Fi in the morning and a little at night. This is hard.
- There are so many emails. I am overwhelmed by logistics. I need to Marie Kondo for my email [verbatim].
- It has been really nice to be home. The food is spicy.
- My carwash job was deemed non-essential. The unemployment system is harder to navigate than my courses.
- I am really excited to continue with my nursing major so I can be a person that serves my community in times like this.
- Our financial situation right now is really hard. My family is a farming family. Trying to. My grandfather is especially worried. We can't keep him from working on the farm. And he is highly susceptible to this disease. I’m worried.
- Being at home is terrible. My parents forgot I grew up.
- I exercised a lot at Calvin. Now, I am baking a ton. I am likely to add the COVID 19.

Three themes are resonating from these meetings. **First, thanks.** Thanks for the many ways the institution is going above and beyond to keep students learning and helping them work out their unique situations. **Second, keep it simple.** Anxieties and logistics of our current moment mean many students have less cognitive space to attend to their courses (even if they are really bored). Aim for simplicity and clarity in course design and services. **Third, connect by voice when able.** Many students feel isolated from networks beyond families and close friends. Brief connections via Teams, phone, or another platform communicate care (with tone), allow us to offer advice to their unique situation, and are often quicker for longer questions.

Please continue to submit any students concerns you run into. And, again, thanks for working to rise to the moment we are in for students.

*Kyle Heys, on behalf of the Teaching and Learning Network (TLN) and the Center for Student Success.*
Faculty Awards

The deadline has been extended for submitting nominations for the various faculty awards:

- FEN Award for Excellence in Teaching
- Innovative Teaching Award
- Advising and Mentoring Award
- Student-Faculty Research Award
- Community-Based Teaching Award
- Collaborative Change Award
- Teaching Excellence Award for Affiliated and Adjunct Faculty

Descriptions of the awards are available online. The site also includes the link to a brief nomination form. Deadline for nominations is now Wednesday, April 22, 2020. These awards allow the university to recognize the variety of contributions that faculty make to the Calvin University learning community. In addition to honor and recognition, all award recipients will receive a cash gift.

CCCU Networking Grants

The CCCU has extended the deadline for Networking Grants for Christian Scholars, a program that encourages high quality, collaborative scholarship to bring Christian voices into contemporary academic conversations. If you have, or would like to develop, a project with at least one other CCCU institution, consider applying for a one-year planning grant ($5,000) or a three-year implementation grant ($30,000). Submission deadline is June 19, 2020. Contact Beth Dykstra with further questions.

From the Faculty Activity Reports


Be sure to fill out your Faculty Activity Reports regularly. If you have questions, see the FAQ page.

Coming Up on Campus

Monday, April 13–Friday, April 17

- Daily chapels are posted here
- Cultural Competency Professional Development opportunities are posted here