Family Ties

“Chronic stress is more often associated with higher family dysfunction than an acute event, even if the acute event was catastrophic in nature...” Snippets from lectures from my Marriage and Family class have been running through my head as of late. In terms of sheltering-in-place, I have it pretty good. My husband, 20 year old Calvin sophomore daughter, 1 year old Entlebucher Mountain Dog, and I are largely self-sufficient and we have ample room, technology, and food to get through this coronavirus. And we all like each other, which helps. Sometimes though, tempers flare, we quarrel over a simple chore, or we engage in a DeHaan family favorite (passive aggression). I am not sure we compare very well to my Facebook and Instagram “friends” either: “Last night we all put together a puzzle and just laughed and laughed” or “We are loving snuggling on the couch and other simple joys that quarantine has brought our family” (Instagram posts have the added irritation of showcasing a perfectly clean and staged family room).

My Calvin colleagues also seem much more heroic in their family life than my family. I have watched in awe as my colleagues engage in meetings with young children literally climbing all over them. They juggle with teaching college students remotely while teaching their own children at the kitchen table. I know other colleagues who have had to postpone major transitions, face the uncertainty of a partner’s job loss, care for or worry about ill relatives, or feel social isolation quite keenly. All of us bring these cares and chronic stresses to our virtual workplaces every day, and I am proud that we do it with such humor and grace.

I often use family examples when I teach Marriage and Family, as a way to explain a concept or inject some humor. These, of course, are the only things that my students remember when we meet years later. One student shared that she learned a lot about family life from my silly stories. When the ragged edges of our personal life become visible to our Calvin community of faculty, staff and students, I argue that this is a wonderful gift. We learn from each other, and these ragged edges bring rich lessons to our students as well. My hat sincerely goes off to all of our Calvin community, for teaching me to love, savor and thank God for my unique quarantine experience, even if my family is not roasting marshmallows every night, in matching pajamas that coordinate with the pillows on our couch...

Laura DeHaan, dean for academic administration

Shout-outs – We’re all pulling together; let’s celebrate each other!

The Calvin Community is once again showing their amazing generosity as gift cards to local businesses have flooded in to support the many students who have had to stay behind on Calvin’s campus and not return to family for many different reasons. The Calvin Housing Department has organized this ongoing effort.

Email any shout-outs about your amazing colleagues to Betsy Jacobsen (bij2@calvin.edu) for inclusion in a future Academic Bulletin.

Welcome New Staff

Joan Stephens, department assistant, Communication Department

Joan’s arrival at Calvin marks her 20th year in higher education. She most recently worked as a workforce coordinator for Dallas County Community College. She also held positions in marketing at Lansing Community College and in marketing and continuing education at Madonna University in Livonia. She holds a bachelor’s degree in communications and journalism from Western Michigan University and a master’s degree in integrated marketing communication from Emerson College.
Call for Proposals

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) invites proposals to present at the 2020 conference. This three-day event runs October 8–10, 2020, in Miami, Florida with the theme, “Lessons on Global Learning from Higher Education’s Response to a Global Crisis.” The worldwide spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically heightened awareness of the importance of global learning for all. The methods, mindsets, and interdependent nature of global learning have become increasingly relevant and, indeed, critical for institutions of higher education—and for society at large. As the world faces an unprecedented halt in mobility, and as COVID-19 continues to affect the lives of individuals everywhere, the need to address the crisis holistically, within and across nations, is readily apparent. Proposals are accepted through May 11, 2020. Visit the website for more details.

From the Faculty Activity Reports


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

Virtual WRITE NIGHT – Encourage your students

The Rhetoric Center and Hekman Library announce a safe, socially-distant alternative to cramming hundreds of students into the library for a night of writing: VIRTUAL WRITE NIGHT, tonight, 7-10 p.m. ET. We’ll have library and RC staff on hand for virtual video chats, post some tips and encouragement each hour on the hour, and create opportunities for students to interact with their fellow writers virtually...because MISERY LOVES COMPANY. Please encourage your students to join us, and know that faculty, staff, and families are welcome to participate. Maybe this is the time to write that poem or novel or journal article or rock opera you’ve been putting off.

Twitter: @calvinrhetoric Instagram: calvinrhetoriccenter


The Rhetoric Center is open for business via online chat/video conferences M-F 9-5 and M-Th 7-9 pm ET. To make an appointment any time, email us or sign up here. Questions? Contact RC director Karen Saupe.

Coming Up on Campus

Monday, April 27–Friday, May 1

- Daily chapels are posted here
- Cultural Competency Professional Development opportunities are posted here
- President LeRoy Virtual Office Hours, Thursday, April 30, 4:00–5:00 p.m.