

THE UNIVERSE

Serving the Brigham Young University Community

Plans for Fall Semester still in limbo



Photo illustration by Hannah Miner

The BYU campus used to be full of students, but has been largely empty since classes moved online in March. Plans for the upcoming Fall Semester are uncertain.

By LISI MERKLEY

Sarah Winters never thought about going anywhere but BYU for college. “My parents and four older siblings all attended or attend there,” she said. “There are so many opportunities there that excite me, like the choirs, the study abroad programs and the weekly devotionals.”

Winters graduates high school this year and plans on attending BYU in the fall. However, because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Winters and many other students are questioning whether they will be taking classes in person or over Zoom this fall.

“I would honestly be devastated (if classes were all online),” Winters said. “One of the best college experiences is the freshman experience, and there’s pretty much no way I can get that online.”

Trends and decisions

Students are not the only ones feeling uncertain about what Fall Semester holds; university leaders and health officials are also struggling to make decisions while forecasts about the virus’s future change.

In a May 14 email to students, the University said BYU might not have a decision about Fall Semester until July because of the “uncertain conditions in

Provo and elsewhere.”

“Ideally, the university would like for all of its students, faculty and staff to be on campus learning together, and we are working on plans that we hope can make that happen in some form,” states the announcement.

Plans for colleges and universities around the state are likely to be announced in the next few weeks. The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) is developing a set of guidelines for fall for the eight public colleges and universities in Utah in conjunction with the state and Leavitt Partners, a health care intelligence business.

In a May 15 meeting, the USHE board said the official guidelines could be announced as soon as Tuesday, May 19. These guidelines are only for the colleges and universities under USHE — which do not include BYU — and would allow each school to make its own plans about reopening in the fall.

Commissioner David Woolstenhulme said USHE is pretty confident that its colleges and universities will hold classes on campus this fall as long as the virus behaves as predicted by local health experts.

“We’re going to have actually multiple plans, depending on where COVID-19 is and depending on what happens,” he said. “It may be that we are good in August. But in the middle of November,

we may have to transition everything back to online, so we’re planning accordingly.”

During the same meeting, UVU President Astrid S. Tuminez said the university could announce its plans for fall in about two weeks.

California State University Chancellor Timothy P. White announced on May 12 that classes taught at the system’s 23 campuses this fall would be held primarily online with a few exceptions for classes and research that can’t be offered online.

“This planning approach is necessary because a course that might begin in a face-to-face modality would likely have to be switched to a virtual format during the term if a serious second wave of the pandemic occurs, as forecast,” White said in a statement.

The California State University system is not alone in considering changes. A survey of 262 universities by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers showed that 58% have considered keeping all classes online this fall, and 62% have considered decreasing the amount of in-person classes.

Pros and cons of virtual classes

BYU has students from all 50 states and 105 countries, and many of these students returned home in March after classes moved online. If classes were

held online like they were during Winter Semester, many students living at home would encounter issues with scheduling because of the difference in time zones.

BYU student Ethan Kitsell is from the U.K., which is seven hours ahead of Provo. “I moved back to the U.K. in the middle of Winter Semester and having to work and study with the time difference was hard,” he said. “I was busy in the evenings when other members of my household were free.”

Kitsell is currently enrolled in a physical science class during Spring Term. He said if he hadn’t passed the exemption exam that allows students to use the exam grade as the overall class grade, he would have class from 12:15–2:40 a.m. “I’d like to avoid having to do that if I can this fall.”

Kitsell said he hopes to move back to Provo in the fall — provided borders open and both governments allow international travel — regardless of the method classes are delivered.

Case counts in and around campus have been low, but the nature of a full-functioning college campus might increase the spread of the disease. As of May 14, there have been 1,435 lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Utah County according to the Utah Department of Health, 27 of those cases have ties to the BYU campus community.

See ENROLLMENT on Page 4

BYU digesting new Title IX sexual harassment definition

By KARINA ANDREW

BYU officials have yet to determine how a new Title IX Final Rule will go into effect on campus.

The controversial new regulations, announced by U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos on May 6, include a new definition of sexual harassment; new provisions to the reporting, response and investigative processes; and a narrowed scope of cases that fall under Title IX jurisdiction.

Universities are required to comply with the new regulations, known as the “Final Rule,” by Aug. 14.

BYU Title IX Coordinator Tiffany Turley said the Title IX office is actively working on implementing the new rules on campus, though they have not yet nailed down any specifics.

“There will inevitably be aspects of our process that change, and the university will do everything required to ensure compliance with the Final Rule,” she said. “What exactly that looks like though is yet to be determined.”

Turley said the Title IX office is unable to address whether it will remain responsible for cases of sexual misconduct that occur in off-campus housing, on study abroad programs, or in cases where the accused is not a BYU student. The Title IX office has also not yet determined whether it will use the “preponderance of evidence” standard or the “clear and convincing evidence” standard, nor has it addressed whether BYU coaches will be required to report incidents of sexual misconduct.

The Final Rule defines sexual harassment as “any instance of quid pro quo harassment by a school’s employee; any unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it denies a person equal educational access; (or) any instance of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking.”

The new regulations also require live hearings for cases of sexual assault or misconduct, in which cross-examination of both parties is facilitated. Accusers and the accused may not directly cross-examine each other; they must appoint “advisors” to perform the cross-examination. Either party may also request to hold the hearing in separate rooms, connected by video chat, instead of meeting in person.

“Too many students have lost access to their education because their school inadequately responded when a student filed a complaint of sexual harassment or sexual assault. This new regulation requires schools to act in meaningful ways to support survivors of sexual misconduct, without sacrificing important safeguards to ensure a fair and transparent process,” Secretary DeVos said in a press release. “We can and must continue to fight sexual misconduct in our nation’s schools.”

Proponents of the Final Rule view the changes as a restoration of due process, while opponents worry the changes will increase protections for the accused at the expense of victims.

S. Daniel Carter, president of Safety Advisors for Educational Campuses, LLC, said the new regulations do not foster moral, political or legal trust within the academic community.

“Ultimately the overly complex and prescriptive system the Title IX regulations would establish will harm everybody involved — complainants, respondents, institutions and the safety of educational programs,” he said.

He also said Secretary DeVos overstepped her jurisdiction by creating the Final Rule, assuming legislative and judicial responsibilities that are not part of her job. “The regulations may not take effect in August or ever.”

Students face decision deadlock as contract cancellation deadline approaches

By KARINA ANDREW

BYU students living in off-campus housing must decide soon whether to cancel their housing contracts for the upcoming Fall Semester, despite BYU not having announced whether classes will be held on campus or remotely.

Section 22 of the standard off-campus housing contract states, “At any time not less than 90 days before the commencement date in paragraph two of this agreement, either party may terminate this agreement.” That means for most fall housing contracts, which begin shortly before classes start on Aug. 31, the cancellation deadline will occur before the end of May.

However, the University announced May 14 that administrators may not decide whether to hold fall classes on campus until as late as July, long after the cancellation period for off-campus fall contracts has passed.

In its announcement, the University encouraged students to carefully read their contracts. “When you signed the lease, you entered into a binding legal contract with your landlord. Off-campus landlords are not BYU employees or companies, and the university does not have power to cancel the contract or release you from it,” the announcement states.

The announcement also encourages students to pay close attention to



Photo illustration by Preston Crawley

Students must decide soon whether to cancel their fall off-campus housing contracts without knowing if fall classes will be remote or in-person. Scan the image with the *Universe Plus* app to read a Spanish translation of this story.

time-sensitive cancellation conditions and acknowledges the difficulty of making a housing decision without knowing whether Fall Semester will happen remotely.

“We wish we could give definitive guidance on how events will proceed, but these are very uncertain times,” the announcement reads.

Julie Brooks, a law student who recently petitioned Provo landlords to release homebound students from their off-campus housing contracts, posted about the upcoming cancellation

deadline on the @provo23b Instagram account she runs with a small team.

“If Fall semester remains online and students want to cancel their housing agreements, they have 90 days before their contract goes into effect to cancel and not have to pay rent during Fall semester,” the post reads.

Brooks postulated on a comment from the @provo23b account that most contracts begin Aug. 26, making May 28 the deadline for cancellations.

“It’s really important to get this information out now to give people time to

make a decision, especially since their landlords won’t warn them,” Brooks said. “Landlords never tell their prospective tenants about the 90-day clause.”

She lamented the circumstance’s inherent difficulty, saying it wouldn’t be right to pressure BYU into making a premature decision about Fall Semester.

But not everyone agrees. Holly Stewart Franz said her son had a difficult time canceling his housing contract when he moved back home after winter classes went entirely remote, and she doesn’t want him to repeat the experience.

“Students need to know right now whether fall classes will be online or in person so we can cancel housing contracts,” Franz said. “My husband is pretty upset with BYU for requiring students to live in BYU-contracted housing that uses these horribly-written leases and then not holding landlords accountable for refusing to adhere to the contract during this unprecedented pandemic.”

Kelly Keene Blier, whose daughter was intending to live off campus for the first time this fall, also said she wished BYU would do more for students living off campus.

“College is a financial struggle for many students and the contracts they sign exploit those students,” Blier said. “If BYU approves the housing, they should have more of a say in the contracts and how and why they can be terminated.”

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Outbreak updates

THE CORONAVIRUS

WHAT WE KNOW

- 
Symptoms are extensive
 The symptoms of COVID-19 were originally thought to be fever, shortness of breath and a dry cough. They now include sore throat, headache, chills and loss of smell.
- 
It is deadly in different ways
 COVID-19 is typically fatal due to viral pneumonia caused by organic debris buildup in the lungs. It can also cause a deadly overreaction of the immune system known as a cytokine storm.
- 
Anti-malarial drugs don't work
 Anti-malarial drugs have proven to be ineffective against the virus even though they seemed like a promising solution at the beginning of the outbreak.
- 
Washing hands is the best prevention
 Hand sanitizer may be in short supply, but washing hands with soap in warm water for 20 seconds is still the best way to keep safe from the virus.
- 
Its genome
 In a display of modern technology, scientists sequenced the entire genome of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, within weeks of its discovery.

WHAT WE DON'T

- 
How it spreads
 Scientists understand people come in contact with the virus through respiratory droplets, but it is still unclear exactly how it is transmitted from person to person.
- 
Mortality rates
 Because it is difficult to know exactly how many people have the virus due to a lack of testing and many people showing no symptoms, a mortality rate cannot be accurately calculated.
- 
What makes people more susceptible
 The severity of the virus varies greatly from person to person. It is deadly to some, while others show no symptoms after infection. It is unclear what causes these different responses.
- 
How it mutates
 Viruses genetic code can change rapidly. Understanding how quickly and in what ways a virus mutates is critical to effectively combating it.
- 
If a vaccine is feasible
 If SARS-CoV-2 mutates rapidly, it may be impossible to create a vaccine to fight it, or many vaccines may be necessary each year, similar to influenza vaccines.

Ben Daniel

Outside the outbreak



Defense attorneys: Don't rush to judge in the Arbery shooting

The defense attorneys for Gregory and Travis McMichael, the father and son charged with aggravated assault and felony murder in the Feb. 23 fatal shooting of Ahmaud Arbery, urged the public to not rush to any conclusions and stated their clients had been vilified. "Right now we are starting at the end," attorney Jason Sheffield told the Associated Press. "We know the ending. What we don't know is the beginning." Attorney Bob Rubin added, "We implore all of you ... don't rush to judgment."



ESPN to show film about Game 6 of the 1998 NBA Finals

ESPN announced it will show "Game 6: The Movie" on Wednesday, May 20, at 7 p.m. MST. The movie will cover the Chicago Bulls' sixth championship and comes after the docuseries "The Last Dance" finished airing on May 17. It also marks the first time that the game has been available to watch in high-definition. The Bulls defeated the Utah Jazz 87-86 as Michael Jordan hit the game-winning basket with 5.2 seconds remaining to cap their sixth championship in eight seasons.



Democrats investigating Trump firing of State Dept. watchdog

President Donald Trump fired inspector general Steve Linick on May 15, inciting backlash from Democrats who called the move an illegal form of retaliation. Linick had recently opened an investigation into Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. "We unalterably oppose the politically-motivated firing of inspectors general and the President's gutting of these critical positions," the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee wrote in a letter.



Taliban suicide bomber kills 9 troops in eastern Afghanistan

At least nine members of Afghanistan's intelligence service were killed early on May 18 after a suicide bomber in a stolen military Humvee targeted a base near the city of Ghazni. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. The attack came a day after Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his political rival, Abdullah Abdullah, signed a power-sharing agreement and a month and a half after the Taliban signed a peace agreement with the U.S. that called for American troops to leave Afghanistan.

Most US states fall short of recommended testing levels

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — As businesses reopened Friday, May 15 in more of the U.S., an overwhelming majority of states still fall short of the COVID-19 testing levels that public health experts say are necessary to safely ease lockdowns and avoid another deadly wave of outbreaks, according to an Associated Press analysis. Widespread testing is considered essential to tracking and

containing the coronavirus. But 41 of the nation's 50 states fail to test widely enough to drive their infections below a key benchmark, according to an AP analysis. Among the states falling short are Texas and Georgia, which recently moved aggressively to reopen stores, malls, barbershops and other businesses. As health authorities expand testing to more people, the number of positive results should shrink compared with the total number of people tested.

NFL teams can reopen facilities Tuesday with provisos

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL teams can begin reopening their facilities on Tuesday if state and local governments will allow it. In a memo sent to the 32 teams Friday, May 15 by Commissioner Roger Goodell and obtained by The Associated Press, he stressed that the clubs must be "in compliance with any additional public health requirements in their jurisdiction, and have implemented the

protocols that were developed by (league medical officer) Dr. (Allen) Sills and distributed to all clubs on May 6." Facilities have been closed since late March due to the coronavirus pandemic. Each team was required to submit a plan to the league for reopening its training/practice facility this week. "Clubs unable to meet these criteria on May 19 may reopen their facilities on the earliest date thereafter on which they are able to meet the criteria," Goodell added.

Pandemic planning becomes political weapon as deaths mount

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — For the first three years of his presidency, Donald Trump did not publicly utter the words "pandemic" or "preparedness." Not in speeches, rallies or his many news conferences, planned and impromptu. But on Friday, May 15, the White House pointed to extensive planning exercises the administration conducted and reports it wrote warning of the

threat in 2018. Still, Trump has repeatedly said that the blame for the federal government having inadequate stockpiles of crucial supplies and machines needed to cope with an outbreak lay with his predecessor, Barack Obama. In the case of planning for the pandemic, Trump has devoted little attention to the 69-page "playbook" from the Obama administration about the threat of a viral outbreak that might include Ebola or an airborne respiratory illness like coronavirus.

US retail sales plunged a record 16% in April as virus hit

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BALTIMORE — U.S. retail sales tumbled by a record 16.4% from March to April as business shutdowns caused by the coronavirus kept shoppers away, threatened the viability of stores across the country and further weighed down a sinking economy. The Commerce Department's report Friday, May 15 on retail purchases showed a sector that has collapsed so fast that sales over the past 12 months are down

a crippling 21.6%. The severity of the decline is unrivaled for retail figures that date back to 1992. The monthly decline in April nearly doubled the previous record drop of 8.3% — set just one month earlier. "It's like a hurricane came and leveled the entire economy, and now we're trying to get it back up and running," said Joshua Shapiro, chief U.S. economist for the consultancy Maria Fiorini Ramirez. Shapiro said he thinks retail sales should rebound as states and localities reopen their economies.

Utah mayor approves concert despite restrictions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SALT LAKE CITY — A Republican Utah mayor will allow a country music concert protest event later this month, defying newly loosened health rules aimed at slowing the coronavirus pandemic. Kaysville Mayor Katie Witt acknowledged Thursday the May 30 event would violate current state directives but told the Salt Lake Tribune "I believe I need to support people's First Amendment rights." She is also running for Congress, and her opponents questioned whether her approval of the show by well-known singer Nashville-based Collin Raye was politically motivated and could prove risky for public health. The event is sponsored by Utah Business Revival, which has also backed other protests calling on the state to lift restrictions aimed at halting the spread of the virus. More than 75 people have died in Utah so far.

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Students, professors discuss ethics of grade bumping

By KARINA ANDREW

The end of a semester can be a stressful time for college students. Final exam schedules and project due dates serve as a forceful reminder of impending final grades, which affect a student's GPA and, potentially, their scholarship status or potential for graduate school acceptance.

When the stakes are high, students on the edge of achieving their desired letter grade might consider asking their professors to round up their scores. This practice is known as "grade bumping." Though grade bumping isn't uncommon, some BYU students and professors question the ethics behind it.

"Asking for a raise in grade that is not part of the prepared syllabus or widely available to the class is nothing short of cheating," microbiology professor Julianne Grose said.

The problem is twofold, Grose said. First, professors who allow grade bumps explicitly advantage some students over others, a practice that Grose thinks most students would consider unethical. However, if students who would not otherwise ask for a grade bump hear about other students doing so, they might feel inclined to ask for one as well, so as not to be disadvantaged.

"I don't think it's right to put a professor in that position, and most of mine have said they won't do it at the beginning of the semester," student Tyler Smith said.

Other students have also reported that their professors have banned the practice early in the semester, including Jessica Boshard and recent graduate Zach Winegardner.

"Basically, they're saying if you want a certain grade, you have all semester to get it," Boshard said.

Winegardner said while he was a student, he felt it was more effective to ask professors about individual assignments throughout the semester rather than ask

for a boost in the overall grade.

"I would sometimes ask for points back on individual assignments if points were taken off because I didn't write 'what they were looking for,' but their supposed specific expectations weren't on the rubric or laid out very well in the instructions," he said.

BYU has no universal policy on grade bumping, Grose said. Bryan Bradley, associate director for BYU's Center for Teaching and Learning, added that individual departments and professors must make those decisions for themselves.

Some former BYU teaching assistants, including Winegardner, said they were more willing to work with students who had shown consistent effort throughout the semester when they came asking for help with their grades.

"Random students that came out of nowhere and asked for grade bumps at the end of their class without ever having met with a TA before? No chance," said Winegardner, who was an independent study TA for two years.

Professors have developed their own policies and accompanying rationale when it comes to grading decisions.

Manufacturing engineering professor Andrew George said it feels more "transparent and impartial" to not round grades, though his students don't often make the request.

Information systems professor Mark Keith said his students frequently request grade bumps, but he doesn't raise grades because grade inflation could make BYU graduates less competitive in the job market.

He also said that emotional appeals, such as the prospect of losing a scholarship or an assertion that a student has worked hard enough to deserve the grade, do not help a student's case. Such statements, Keith said, deny the student's responsibility and blame the professor for the undesirable score.

Keith said he once taught a student who requested a grade



Photo illustration by Preston Crawley

Students sometimes ask professors to round their grade up to the next highest letter grade. This practice is known as grade bumping.

change after failing an exam early in the semester. Keith refused, and the student subsequently changed his behavior, increasing participation in class and putting more effort into studying. By the end of the semester, the student had earned his desired grade without a bump.

"In hindsight, that's exactly what needed to happen," Keith said. "He kicked it into high gear and did what he needed to do to actually learn the material."

Keith acknowledged that in his opinion, "significant personal hardships" in the life of a student merit some academic mercy.

"I handle those on a case by case basis," he said. "Your instructors care a lot about you when you have legitimate problems. We want to help those who are in sincere need."

Keith said that COVID-19 created such extenuating circumstances for many students. He called the pandemic a "complete exception" to his usual policies. In addition to loosening assignment requirements in his own class during the Winter Semester 2020, he praised administrators

for the pass/withdraw option they gave students.

"In my opinion, the primary advantage of the pass/fail

option was that it reduced student anxiety," he said. "That is a very good cause and I fully support the administration in their

decision."

Not all professors agreed with this assessment.

Chemical engineering professor Morris Argyle did not change his no-bump grading policy for the winter semester, nor did he approve of the pass/withdraw option, which he said demotivated students.

"I could detect a significant decrease in some students' effort after this policy was announced," he said. "I believe it harmed students because they did not achieve the learning that they might have done if they had expended their normal efforts."

Though individual policies vary widely among those who determine grades, some people, like Smith, believe the problem with grade bumping is not about difference in policies. Rather, it indicates the grading system itself is flawed.

"I'm more against the fact that .1% can affect your GPA to a greater degree than that .1% itself," Smith said. "The GPA should be based off of (grade) percentages themselves."

BYU offers students COVID-19 relief funds

By SYDNEE GONZALEZ

BYU sent messages to students late Monday afternoon informing them of their ability to apply for COVID-19 relief funds.

"The global pandemic has impacted every person in many ways," reads the message. "After expending their own resources and seeking assistance from family members, individuals are counseled to turn to the church community."

All matriculated students, including international students and 2020 graduates, who were enrolled in winter semester classes as of March 13, are able to apply for the funds. Applications are submitted through a questionnaire linked

in the original Y message.

The questionnaire starts by asking students if they incurred expenses during March and April "that (they) were not able to cover with (their) own resources or with assistance from family." If they select "yes" to that first question, students are then asked to enter amounts for expenses like food, rent, utilities, medical costs or Spring tuition that they were unable to cover.

Once the questionnaire is submitted, students receive a message that reads: "Thank you for completing the questionnaire. You may edit your responses to this questionnaire until midnight (MDT) June 1, 2020. You will be notified of a decision by June 8, 2020."

A FAQ about the funds, which is only accessible with a BYU

login, states the money comes from university funds and is not part of the \$32 million earmarked for BYU in the CARES Act. "We believe we can assist our students without the CARES Act funds," the university said.

It's unclear how much money each student is eligible to receive, the total amount BYU will release or how BYU will verify students' survey responses.

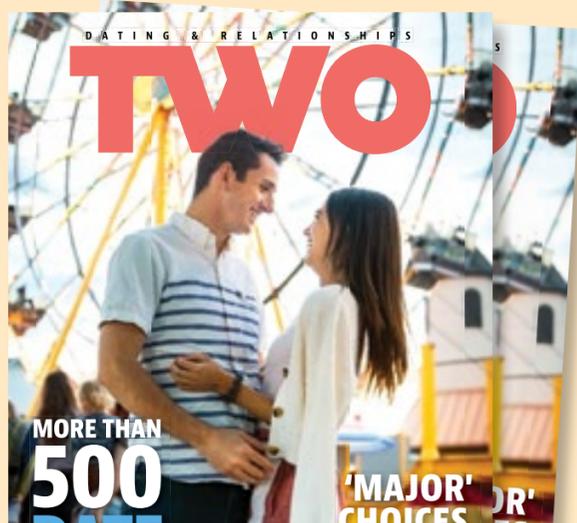
"An amount has been set aside that BYU will use to assist students with their needs," BYU spokeswoman Carri Jenkins said. "BYU officials will carefully review each request for assistance. If questions arise, they may reach out to students directly for more information."

The FAQ says "it depends" in whether students will receive the full amount they apply for.

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ENROLLMENT

Deciding on fall semester

Continued from Page 1

Kim Weeden and Ben Cornwell, professors at Cornell University, wrote a working paper published on osf.io on how connected college students are to their peers through classes and how that connectedness might impact the spread of a disease through Cornell University if students returned to classes this fall.

Their study found that 89.6% of undergraduate student-pairs take a class with a third student who connects them indirectly. For example, student A and student C are not in the same class, but student B is in separate classes with both students A and C. While the study used data from Cornell University, Weeden said she would expect similar levels of

connection at other universities.

In its research, the team also studied what effects different methods of conducting classes would have on the levels of connection and potential viral spread.

“Our research shows that if classes over 30 students, which at Cornell is about 15% of all classes, are taught online, connectivity in the network declines fairly substantially,” Weeden said. She also suggested block schedules where students take just one course per 3.5–4 week block, but meet every day for longer sessions.

Weeden acknowledged that the study only focused on student connections through the classes they take and not any connections outside of class like living situations and friend groups.

“University administrators can reduce the risk of exposure in classrooms by moving some courses or parts of courses online,” she said. “But all these efforts could be for nothing if a student decides to throw a

coronavirus party and a super-spreader — who may not even feel sick — shows up.”

USHE Commissioner Woolstenhulme said USHE is making plans for what its colleges and universities should do if COVID-19 cases do pop up on campus this fall. “We will have a plan in place to deal with those cases when they do come up, because we know they’re going to come up.”

While conducting classes virtually can help limit the spread of the virus, in many cases the quality of instruction may be diminished in online settings. “Even if everyone has excellent internet connections and no distractions at home and is in the same time zone, which are all big assumptions, it’s just much harder to read nonverbal cues over Zoom,” Weeden said.

Impact on students

In an informal poll on the Universe’s Instagram page, 53% of the 265 respondents said they

would not sign up for classes this Fall Semester if classes were held solely online. Respondents said poor experiences during Winter Semester and the price of tuition influenced their decisions.

BYU student Emily Bass said her grades plummeted last semester after classes moved online. “When classes transitioned to online, I feel like every single teacher adjusted what was expected and so many deadlines changed that I had a really hard time staying on top of anything.”

Bass said she would not sign up for classes this fall if everything was still online.

BYU student Christian Brewerton said he would sign up for classes only because he wants to graduate on time, but online classes also made it difficult for him to learn.

“I really struggled to feel engaged in my classes and to feel like I was a student,” he said. “Homework and projects felt like more of a chore than a learning opportunity, and collaborating

with group members and getting TA help was cumbersome and too difficult.”

Kitsell said he will sign up for fall classes to stay on track for graduation. “I’ve gotten to the point in my major where classes I need to take to graduate are only offered once a year and only have one section per semester,” he said. “This means that if I didn’t take the classes this upcoming semester, I’d have to wait until Fall 2021 to take them.”

Kitsell recognized why some students might want a tuition reduction, but he feels like that is not a good option for the university. “At the end of the day we’re blessed so much to have a world-class education that is subsidized as much as it is, and I don’t think we can realistically expect the university to subsidize costs further.”

Both Kitsell and Bass said a way that the university could help lighten the load for students would be allowing options

for cheaper textbooks. “Efforts should be made to ensure that all textbooks needed for classes are available digitally and that their costs reflect that,” Kitsell said. “It’s not only the fact that physical textbooks cost a lot and cost more than their digital counterparts, but also that shipping costs add to that.”

On the other hand, some students feel the online experience wasn’t worth the full price of tuition. “I wouldn’t want to pay full tuition for an experience that’s less than what I know and love about BYU,” said BYU student Emma Gardner. “I felt like classes weren’t as difficult, but yet it was harder to focus.”

Gardner would consider not enrolling in fall classes if there were no negative consequences like pushing back graduation, but she would feel comfortable attending in-person classes this fall. “I’m not super at risk, and as much as illnesses suck, I’d rather take the risk to have a better education.”

Dating six feet apart: Virtual dates becoming new norm

By LAUREN LETHBRIDGE

Provo resident Josh Woodland never would have gone on a date over FaceTime with a girl he had not previously met in person. But, with social distancing and fears of spreading COVID-19, in-person dates became an unlikely option.

Woodland said FaceTiming his date felt more normal than it would have before social distancing because it’s the only thing he can do to date right now.

Going on in-person dates isn’t out of the question for Woodland, but he said he feels hesitant to try because of how cautious everyone is. “I don’t want to make anyone uncomfortable.”

The FaceTime date went well and Woodland said he found it to be refreshing and exciting to meet and get to know someone new. Woodland said he and his date are considering meeting up for a hike sometime soon.

Woodland is among many in Provo who are finding it difficult to date and meet people. With quarantine and social distancing, the usual ways to meet people have disappeared.

BYU student Millay Davidson has gone on a few FaceTime dates. She and the boy she went out with first communicated over the phone and eventually moved to FaceTime.

“At first the phone calls were basically just us asking any question that popped in our heads to get to know each other. Eventually they turned into five hour long conversations talking about basically everything under the sun and realizing that we had a lot of shared interests,” she said.

Davidson said talking over FaceTime is nice because if she ever runs out of things to say, she likes to have a tab open on her computer of interesting things to talk about. Despite technology issues and lags in audio and video, Davidson said her FaceTime dates were meaningful and fun.

Many people often stress the physical aspect of a relationship. Davidson said because of past experiences, she gets nervous when guys make a first move too soon on a date.

“Having to talk over FaceTime and really get to know this boy before meeting him in person has really helped me feel like that level of anxiety over anything physical isn’t a hindrance to our relationship,” she said.

UVU student Matt Jones isn’t trying to meet anyone new since he was already in a relationship before the outbreak. He said the biggest challenge has been finding fun activities to do while respecting social distancing guidelines.

Jones said despite challenges, he’s been able to spend more time talking with the girl he is seeing, and they’ve both spent more time getting to know each other’s families.

Those that were engaged when social distancing and restrictions were put in place had to make hard decisions regarding how to continue with their wedding plans. For BYU student Capri VanDerwerken social distancing altered the time she and her



Preston Crawley

Dates through FaceTime once seemed ridiculous, but many people are seeking new ways to meet each other because of social distancing.

fiance would get married.

VanDerwerken and her fiance were originally supposed to marry on May 1. VanDerwerken said they are currently waiting for restrictions to loosen before they decide a new date.

The couple not only had to postpone their wedding but move home to separate states because of various circumstances. Though the main reason they separated is not because of social distancing guidelines, they are trying to continue their relationship despite the distance.

“The hardest thing is not being together,” she said.

Making plans has proven difficult because of differing work hours and schedules. VanDerwerken said it is difficult to plan because it’s unclear when temples will open or where she will be able to get her dress altered. “Literally everything is a big old question mark,” she said.

No matter the type of relationship a person is in, there are many challenges social distancing is creating.

Tammy Hill is a licensed marriage and family therapist and teaches a marriage preparation course at BYU. Her course requires participation both in and out of class. Her Spring Term course was moved online because of COVID-19.

Hill has taught online courses before, but social distancing required her to alter some of her assignments. One assignment students must do throughout the semester is complete a number of activities that encourage getting to know people and dating.

Hill revised these assignments by adding virtual options like participating in virtual museum tours together and playing games online using services like Kahoot or Jackbox Games.

There are many virtual dating activity ideas online, said Hill. One student sent food to a date using Doordash and they ate their food together over FaceTime.

Hill said she’s seen many ideas for gathering friends and not just dating. One of Hill’s students created a virtual book club where friends would listen to or read a chosen book and then get online for a discussion.

Social distancing is requiring people to put more thought in their dates and activities and

plan ahead, Hill said. It’s forcing them to get creative.

Recent BYU graduate Abby Karren has gone on many FaceTime dates with her long-distance boyfriend, David. Karren said they’ve spent a lot of time just talking and catching up but also spent time doing a variety of activities together.

“A lot of times we’ll FaceTime and watch our favorite TV shows or movies together,” she said. “It’s fun because we’d both be doing the same thing alone, but we get to see each other laugh at the same jokes and freak out at the crazy parts.”

Karren said she and David have also made brownies together and even participated in a virtual escape room.

Even though Karren had known her boyfriend for many years before they started to do FaceTime dates, she does think they can be a safer alternative than meeting up with someone you’ve never met.

FaceTime doesn’t require Karren to have to let roommates or friends know where she is going, find a public place to meet, decide whether to drive together or separate among other typical worries and decisions.

“I’d much rather chat with a stranger from the comfort of my own home than out in the real world,” she said.

Social distancing provides more opportunities to take time to just talk to people and get to know them.

“It’s a great way to get to know someone without having to put so much pressure on ourselves to look a certain way or to spend so much money,” Hill said.

Almost all of the virtual dating ideas Hill has found are free. For some, spending money has been a source of stress or a deterrent for dating, but virtual dates present more affordable options.

As people try to date and get to know each other despite social distancing, Hill still recommends trying dating apps like Mutual.

Online dating is not what some may consider normal, but Hill thinks it may be on its way to becoming the new norm.

“As long as you are checking yourself that you’re not choosing to spend time with someone that only looks a certain way, it can be really great way to get to know a lot of people,” she said.



Photo illustration by Addie Blacker

Germophobia is the pathological fear of germs, bacteria, contamination and infection.

Coping with germophobia in a pandemic

By ALICIA MATSUURA

Avoiding germs is a healthy practice — but when does that avoidance become a disorder?

The spread of germs is at the forefront of people’s minds. More people are wearing face masks, sanitizing surfaces and taking other precautionary measures to prevent contamination. For someone with germophobic tendencies, avoiding germs is more than just a precautionary measure: it’s an obsession.

What is germophobia?

Germophobia (also known as mysophobia) is described as a pathological fear of germs, bacteria, microbes, contamination and infection.

“People living with germophobia may experience stress and exhibit a hypervigilance towards their surroundings,” said Annabella Hagen, the clinical director for Mindset Family Therapy in Provo.

The anxiety can cause restlessness, fatigue, shortness of breath, headaches, digestion problems and other physical symptoms that can affect quality of life.

“Their relationships can also be negatively affected as they may neglect doing things with loved ones because of their fears,” Hagen said. “They may be too busy cleaning, obsessing and avoiding possible harm.”

Sydney Springer, a BYU junior from Laie, Hawaii, said germophobia is something she’s always struggled with.

“People offering me food directly with their hands freaked me out. Potlucks and luau stress me out because you have no idea what’s been in or near the food,” Springer said.

During the flu season of 2017 and 2018, Springer said she was so anxious about getting sick that she quarantined herself in her room and only ate food she prepared herself.

“I was basically acting how people act now. So maybe I’m freaking out less because everyone is doing what I do normally when scary illnesses go around,” she said.

Springer goes to therapy and takes medication to help her cope with germophobia. Teletherapy has been a helpful resource given the current circumstances, and it is something she hopes to continue using

during flu seasons in the future.

“Talking it out helps me from spiraling about getting sick. I probably rely on that tool the most,” Springer said.

While Springer has been able to cope well with the pandemic, there are others who have experienced an increased sense of fear and anxiety.

Mindset Family Therapy reported that 40% of its intake calls have been related to anxiety due to COVID-19. While the pandemic itself cannot cause people to have obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), those who have a genetic predisposition for the disease face the possibility of having their fears reinforced.

According to Hagen, most of the clients who come to the clinic also struggle with scrupulosity (religious or moral OCD). Due to feelings of hyper-responsibility, they may obsess about having the virus and the possibility of contaminating family, friends and others.

“They don’t worry about themselves; their main fear is spreading the illness and causing someone else to become ill or die,” Hagen said. “Though they didn’t have OCD targeting contamination fears, they do now, and we’ve had to help them work through those fears as well.”

Understanding OCD

There seems to be an increased awareness of germophobia and OCD. However, Hagen warns of some misunderstandings surrounding OCD. Someone who is a germophobe may believe they have OCD, but that isn’t always the case.

“Those being challenged by germophobia focus on cleaning to prevent or reduce the possibility of becoming infected by germs, viruses and other substances. Because that’s their focus, they may think they have OCD, but they probably do not.”

Hagen said a common phrase she hears is, “Being a little OCD,” where the letters “OCD” are used as an adjective.

“It’s done innocently, but society needs to understand that OCD is a serious and debilitating illness for many people,” Hagen said. “Their daily distress affects their functioning and quality of life. There is nothing ‘little’ about struggling with this illness.”

Hagen said someone who is challenged by OCD will constantly obsess about becoming contaminated and will perform

different types of rituals besides washing, cleaning and sanitizing to find relief from their everyday battle with anxiety or guilt.

Treatment methods

The standard for treating phobias and OCD is Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), a treatment designed to expose patients to their fears and help them develop the skills to avoid ritualistic behaviors.

Dr. Forrest Talley has worked as a clinical psychologist for over 30 years. He too has seen the effectiveness of ERP treatments with his patients. Talley said the pandemic can be a “perfect opportunity to start one’s journey to be free from this crippling fear.”

“Just like any fear, the key is to behave in ways that are the very opposite of how the fear would have you act. If the urge is to disinfect a countertop that was just wiped clean an hour ago, resist the urge to repeat that process,” Talley said. “Better yet, intentionally place your hand on the countertop and then go about your normal business.”

Talley also recommends people find activities like reading a book, gardening, working out, talking to a friend or anything else that helps shift the focus away from performing rituals.

Katie Lear, a licensed clinical mental health counselor, said the guidelines from the CDC and other major health organizations on preventing the spread of COVID-19 have the potential to be a trigger for people with OCD. Lear recommends that clients follow the CDC’s guidelines for handwashing and other hygiene protocols but also be mindful that these regulations aren’t feeding into OCD rituals.

“If the CDC says to wash your hands for 20 seconds before eating or when coming back from the grocery store, go ahead and do it,” Lear said. “But don’t let yourself wash for 45 seconds, or start going through the whole hand washing procedure every 10 minutes while sitting at home.”

Hagen recommends keeping a gratitude journal to help individuals become mindful of what is going on internally and externally. She said it can also help them “become more grateful for the small and simple things that bring them joy despite the challenges they are currently facing.”

“Some of us wear masks purely out of embarrassment.”



gary varvel
@garyvarvel



All the students on their webcams at 8 in the morning waiting for class to start

Brides: planning a wedding couldn't be more stressful
COVID-19: hold my bouquet



Me looking out the window at my car wishing I could drive to Target and spend two hours browsing aisles, touching everything, and buying things I don't need.



When your holiday has been cancelled by the coronavirus but don't want to give up the dream...



Tweet Beat

#BYU #BYUprobs

Want to see your tweet in print? Tweet something about life around you with #BYUprobs or #BYU and hopefully it makes the cut.

Leave comments at universe.byu.edu or @UniverseBYU

@mojo7795
After two months of living with my 14-year-old sister, I use words like "drip" and "finesse" and currently have pink beads in my hair.

@ZacharyBuell
My wife has been looking for a job and literally just this morning a girl she hasn't talked to SINCE HIGH SCHOOL messaged with an awesome opportunity she can do from home with unlimited earning potential. We are so blessed. God is so good and he has a plan for all of us.

@torrietunes
Sometimes I forget that almost every person I know is married.

@todd_corbett89
say what you want about BYU but byu creamery is off limits, she is sacred and holy and pure

@kruton_futon
No gonna lie, I might cry if @BYU is online during the fall

@akkerr12
Who would've thought going to the mall would be such a luxury

@thekwakuel
bro quarantine has me missing church! i can't wait to shave, wear a floral tie, make awkward small talk at munch & mingle, and have an awkward date w a girl in my ward and then avoid her for the rest of the semester

@emmakjar14
"Let's get together when all of this is over" is the new "we should get lunch sometime!"

@awkwardtylauren
Today I absolutely LOST MY MIND while driving because I saw a man running as fast as the traffic. I was literally screaming until I realized that it was just a dude on a motorcycle.

@notmarymartinn
one time I worked on a playlist for a guy the whole time he was on his mission but when he came home he got apple music.

@theGC_
My skincare routine consists of 5 steps now, the last one is chanting "covid be gone" 3 times in front of the mirror

@joewheat27
Utah schools relationship status:

BYU: strong, independent. Single but working on themselves rn.

Utah: their identity is totally wrapped up in their new boyfriend, who isn't all that into them

USU: says their ex won't go out with them again because they're too intimidated

Tweets are unedited.

STAFF OPINION

We need more — not less — sports in our lives

The Washington Post recently published a controversial editorial titled "The pandemic has reminded us: We don't need more sports in our lives — we need less." In short, the piece insinuated that while sports are on hold, any sports-related talk shows, articles and documentaries should also take a break. In response to the Post's op-ed, I would argue that the pandemic has actually reminded us that we do, in fact, need as much sports-related content in our lives as we can get.

Now, more than ever, people are realizing how much of an outlet sports provide from life's daily hassles. We could all use a break every now and then from the stress caused by the pandemic. What better way to do so than to read about a Compton native football player becoming a first-generation college graduate from his family? Or watch a university cross country head coach reflect on the challenges his team had to overcome to win the program's first ever national championship?

Sure, it can be tough for us working in the sports media industry to come up with relevant topics to talk or write about during the pandemic. Sure, you might come across the occasional article ranking the top 74 basketball sneakers ever worn by NBA players. But there are still plenty of inspiring storylines out there, and it's our job as sports journalists to dig a little deeper and bring those to light.

If there's anything to take away from ESPN's recent documentary series "The Last Dance" and its viewership numbers, it's that people do, in fact, want and need more sports in their lives. While the majority of sports leagues remain on hold throughout the world, sports media is still here to fill the void and give people more — not less — of the sports-related content we all want and need.

—Josh Carter
Universe Sports Editor

me trying to motivate myself to get up & change out of my sleep pajamas into my daytime pajamas so i can start the day



STRATEGIC CLEANUP FOR ZOOM CALLS



Due to the massive increase in deliveries, FedEx and UPS have joined forces and are now Fed-Up.

when Covid-19 hits and you have to take your classes online and you see your grades plummeting around you



OPINION OUTPOST

The Opinion Outpost features opinions and commentary on the latest hot topics from state and national news sources.

Stop the infodemic

"Fake news spreads faster and more easily than this virus, and is just as dangerous."

Those were the words of Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, spoken at a conference in February. They're just as alarming today as they were three months ago.

Instead of ignoring the rumors, individuals should take the initiative to research and push back when they encounter a false or pseudoscientific claim. Disinformation is actively harmful, and individuals should not rely on others or large organizations to take responsibility for fact checking.

—Editorial Board
Deseret News

Mortality numbers

Debate over the accuracy of the data being put out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has become a hot topic at the White House, according to reporting this week from Axios, to the point that the task force is reassessing the mortality numbers as part of "a much larger review of data quality issues," an administration official told The Times.

The White House needs to be transparent about this review and about any underlying concerns. Understanding how many Americans this disease has claimed is vital to organizing the response to it — and to honoring those lost to it.

—Editorial Board
The New York Times

Testing down

As higher education braces for the impact of coronavirus, the nation's largest university

system is poised to undermine the value of its own degrees by dropping admissions testing for political reasons.

Last week University of California President Janet Napolitano released a plan to stop using the SAT and ACT in admissions.

This will erode UC's reputation, and it won't work. The subjective parts of an application, like essays and extra-curriculars, can be most easily gamed and are most opaque to students who aren't acquainted with the process. Admissions without testing may be even more tilted in favor of the well-connected.

—Editorial Board
The Wall Street Journal

Open state and national parks

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul alike."

How bittersweet that observation from John Muir — the famed naturalist and explorer, who pushed successfully to create California's Yosemite National Park more than 100 years ago — during a global health pandemic that has confined millions of Americans to their homes, the nourishment of the outdoors is needed now more than ever.

When it comes to parks and recreation areas, both the state and the federal government should strive to maximize access

at a time when many familiar, cherished pastimes are on hiatus. Our leaders have a duty to accommodate Americans' love of the outdoors as much as public health considerations permit.

—Editorial Board
Chicago Tribune

Museums sell art

To survive the economic disaster brought on by a pandemic, museums can now consider doing what used to be grounds for public shaming

— sell their art. Selling off historic works of art is not a decision that should be taken lightly, particularly if the sale leads to closing off the public's ability to view treasured pieces of heritage. But museums also need flexibility; if they have to shutter from financial strain, their collections will probably end up dispersing anyway, and not necessarily to owners who will make the works accessible to the public.

—Editorial Board
The New York Times

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

The Universe encourages students, faculty and BYU staff to add their voice to ours by writing letters to the editor and guest editorials, or by submitting editorial cartoons.

- All letters should be submitted by email to universe.ideas@gmail.com. The topic of the letter should be included in the subject line.
- Letters should also include the author's name, hometown (for students), campus position (for faculty and staff) and phone number. Anonymous letters will

- not be published.
 - Letters should be no more than 250 words and may be edited for length, clarity or style.
 - Guest editorials should be 500 to 700 words and are encouraged from individuals with professional or academic expertise on the topic.
 - Original cartoons are also welcome.
- Opinion editor Spencer McWilliams can be reached at universe.ideas@gmail.com.

NCAA revenue cuts could affect BYU sports programs

By SYDNEY FLEMING

A world without college sports not only affects fans — it also creates a financial domino effect from the NCAA down to athletic departments across the country.

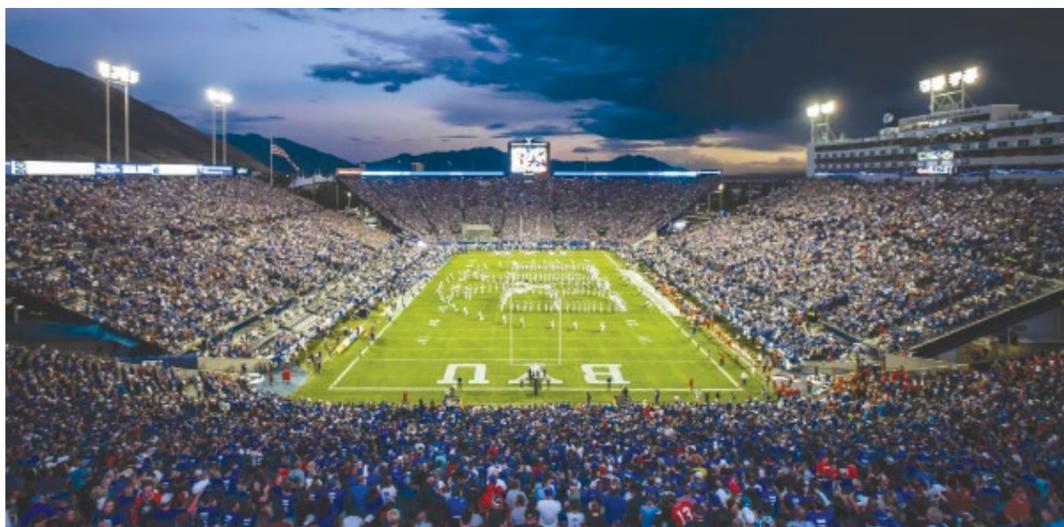
NCAA schools receive a certain amount of money each year to aid their programs in recruiting and other expenses. The governing body planned on distributing \$600 million to its Division I schools, according to the NCAA 2020 Division I Revenue Distribution Plan. But since the COVID-19 pandemic forced the organization to cancel March Madness and the remainder of spring athletic events, the NCAA will now only distribute \$225 million to Division I conferences and schools.

The original revenue distribution plan had \$600 million that was to go to certain departments: the Equal Conference Fund, Basketball Performance Fund, Sports Sponsorship Fund, Grants-in-Aid Fund, Academic Enhancement Fund, Academic Performance Fund, Conference Grants, Special Assistance Fund and the Student Athlete Opportunity Fund. These funds each tailor to a specific part of how athletic departments function and how the NCAA runs its organization.

Many of these funds, such as the Student Athlete Opportunity Fund, also directly aid student athletes. This fund provides “direct benefits to student-athletes or their families” as determined by the conference and NCAA guidelines, according to George Washington University’s fund page.

Now with significantly less money to work with, the Division I Board of Governors decided that \$53.6 million of the \$225 million will be distributed equally through the Equal Conference Fund. The fund will be split equally among Division I basketball conferences that are eligible for the NCAA tournament, according to The Athletic. The remaining money will be divided up and sent to the remaining funds.

This revenue cut could potentially affect Division I athletic departments in a few ways, such as cutting down on staff or freezing salaries. The



BYU Photo

A sold-out crowd watches the Cougar Marching Band perform during halftime at the LaVell Edwards Stadium during a game against University of Utah on Aug. 29, 2019.

University of Indiana already took precautionary measures by halting non-essential building and maintenance projects, as well as putting a freeze on new hiring, promotions and bonuses for the year. If the pandemic continues and the economy suffers, many schools may receive less money from donors and sponsors.

Some schools will be forced to reduce the number of scholarships given, while some schools may have to cut certain sports in general. The University of Cincinnati announced on April 14 that the men’s soccer program will be discontinued, seemingly in an effort to save money for other school projects or sports amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Utah’s larger universities will also be affected by the revenue cuts by the NCAA, though it’s hard to tell what those implications might be. There is already conflict when it comes to BYU and scholarships for the upcoming football season. Many recruits who sign with BYU end up serving two-year LDS missions, either after their first year of play or right out of high school. But many athletes’ missions were cut short due to the pandemic. While the fates of those players hang in balance, the

ultimate question is whether there will be enough funding for those who were promised scholarships for this season.

BYU is allowed 85 scholarships for its football team every season and there are 74 returning scholarship players from 2020. Of the 29 recruits, 12 plan on playing in 2020 under scholarship, including Utah-transfer Devonta’e Henry-Cole and high school All-American wide receiver Kody Epps. That’s 86 scholarships, which is past the number allotted by the NCAA.

The Cougars also have five returned missionaries expected to play in 2020: Tanner Baker, Ben Tuipulotu, Campbell Barrington, Connor Pay and Tysen Lewis. BYU is already looking at 91 total scholarships, and that’s without adding any of the players that came off of missions early. With many schools already adjusting programs and preparing to cut scholarships, BYU football will have to make some very difficult decisions.

There’s also a lot unknown about how BYU, Utah State and Utah will handle the financial impact of letting their spring sport seniors return for another year. The University of Wisconsin is well-known across college sports, especially in its football and basketball

programs. But the school decided not to allow spring seniors to return for another year, despite appearing to have plenty of money from its programs.

According to numbers from the Equity in Athletics data, most of the teams at BYU use up what little money they’re given, with the main exception being football.

Another potential effect of the revenue cut could have to do with recruiting. All NCAA coaches are currently under an in-person recruiting ban that was first established on Mar. 13 and extended through May 31 at the beginning of April. No recruiting also means that showcases and camps that were supposed to be held will be canceled.

When the NCAA does allow coaches to continue recruiting in the traditional manner, it likely won’t be the same. In an interview with The Philadelphia Inquirer, Villanova sociology professor Rick Eckstein, who has written books about how sports stadiums have been funded, had a fair warning for the coaches.

“Depending on how long it lasts, the big-time programs may face the prospects of paying for bloated athletic budgets with depressed revenues,”

Eckstein said. “I’m not sure this is purely economic, but with the youth sport pipelines all but shut down, it’s going to be harder for schools to recruit in the traditional manner.”

While the recruiting process for many has come to a screeching halt, coaches still have other ways to contact recruits and keep up communication. BYU Football media relations director Brett Pyne said although communicating through phone calls and texts isn’t the preferred manner of contacting recruits, every coach is currently in the same boat and will have to make do. For many schools with limited budgets, video conferencing and phone calls might become more common in the future.

Also affected by the recruiting ban is the BYU men’s basketball team, which finished its season early due to the pandemic. Assistant coach Chris Burgess discussed how the coaches have adapted.

“We have to get really creative — with our videos, with the way we try to sell our program, sell our university, sell our academics, sell our resources and nutrition and strength and conditioning, the way we travel and our conference,” Burgess said. “Everything has been little videos here and there of BYU. It’s the best we can do. I don’t like it, but I don’t think anybody does. You just gotta take the cards you’re dealt and do the best you can.”

The NCAA’s revenue cut is expected to impact college sports across America, from top universities like Wisconsin down to smaller universities like Southern Utah, which is already feeling the impact of the cut. As long as COVID-19 is rampant, colleges can expect things to get worse before they go back to normal. How long will that be? No one knows for sure. There is speculation that the 2020 college football season will have to be altered in some way, while some believe the virus will be gone in time to begin the season.

Despite the unknowns concerning the upcoming season, one thing is certain: COVID-19’s impact on college sports, especially athletic departments across the country, will be felt for years to come.

Division I couple support each other’s athletic careers

By TAYLOR OSTLER

BYU gymnastics is already up three points on Sacramento State. A hush falls over the crowd as Shannon Evans, who is the last gymnast to compete in the floor routine, takes a deep breath and steps onto the mat.

She’s practiced the routine thousands of times but still gets nervous. Her name is announced and she salutes the judges before she gets ready to present. The music starts, her head starts to bob and her teammates start cheering her on.

The routine is nearly flawless. She receives an almost perfect score: 9.900. She finishes the meet with an all-around score of 39.475, winning the all-around. She celebrates the victory with her teammates and family.

Her biggest fan and supporter, however, is over 500 miles away.

Life as a college athlete is busy. Between juggling school, practice and travel, there isn’t much time left for other things, especially when the season rolls around.

For BYU athletes Ryan and Shannon Evans, that means two schedules to balance — Ryan’s dive schedule and Shannon’s gymnastics schedule.

The two have been married since their sophomore year at BYU.

“It’s a blast. It’s so much fun,” Ryan says, grinning from ear to ear.

But that doesn’t mean it’s easy. The couple is always running from one thing to the next.

Ryan has weight training from 7 to 9 a.m. Then, he has an hour break before he hits the pool for two hours. He has class until around 3 or 4 p.m. and then tries to catch the end of Shannon’s practice.

Shannon has weight training from 7 to 8 a.m., class from 8 a.m. to noon, then practice from noon to 4 p.m. The two try to take one class together so they can see each other for at least



Ryan Evans

Ryan and Shannon Evans pose in front of the Richards Building pool at Ryan’s last home meet of the 2020 season.

one more hour per day.

Even though Ryan and Shannon have to juggle both schedules, a similar lifestyle has provided unique opportunities to support each other. Whether it is decompressing after a challenging practice, figuring out how to manage classes or seeking advice about how to land a new routine, they always know they have someone at home to help figure out a solution.

“It’s nice to come home to someone that also has the same experiences with coaches and stuff like that and be like, ‘Well, you should try this. Have you thought about asking this?’” Shannon said.

The two relate not just because they

are both Division I athletes but also because their sports are somewhat similar. Many gymnasts switch to diving because the maneuvers are alike — Shannon has to twist off of the beam and Ryan does twists off of the diving board. Shannon has to land on her feet while Ryan has to enter the pool headfirst, but the motions are nearly identical. This allows them to draw on each other’s experience to improve in their respective sports.

“Ryan will coach me through flipping faster and understanding the technique better,” Shannon said. “He’s made me a better gymnast because he understands the sport so well. I think that’s one of my favorite parts. Not only does he

understand my frustrations, but he can help with them because he knows how it works and the technique behind it.”

Shannon won her first all-around meet of the 2020 season against Sacramento State on Feb. 7 in the Smith Fieldhouse. Five hundred miles away at the Air Force Academy in Colorado, Ryan called Shannon to hear about her meet. He finds out she crushed it. He’s elated but not surprised, and he smiles because he helped her come up with part of her routine. The part where she knocks on the ground, opens it up and pulls out the remote to control the music; he helped her add that part.

It wasn’t the first time Ryan helped Shannon add something to her routine.

Back in 2019, Shannon wanted to model one of her routines after her favorite video game, Super Mario Bros. Ryan was part of the whole process. He helped her cut up the music so that the timing was perfect. It was his idea to give her star power part through the routine. He was there to help Shannon with the choreography, step by step.

Ryan, on the other hand, has been practicing most of the same dives that he performs now since high school. There isn’t as much variation in his sport. Still, Shannon manages to help him tweak things.

“Shannon will give me ideas on how I can improve,” Ryan said. “She coaches me through my form or when I get frustrated working on a certain skill.”

The payout for each of them comes at the meets when they both can showcase what they have been practicing.

“Watching Shannon perform is the coolest thing I’ve ever been able to do in my life,” Ryan said. “My heart gets in a tight grip. It’s just the craziest thing, but I just want the best for her whenever she’s performing. So much so that I almost start to have a panic attack.”

Ryan will anxiously pick at his fingers, hoping Shannon can pull off her various routines. And when she does stick the landings, Ryan is in the

crowd screaming and jumping almost as much as Shannon and her teammates on the floor.

When Ryan competes, Shannon loves seeing all the work he has put in come to fruition. There are so many intricacies when it comes to diving. Fixing a dive usually requires very small adjustments that would appear very minor to a new spectator.

“I enjoy watching him thrive under pressure,” Shannon said. “Even when it wasn’t his best dive, he stays calm and picks himself up for the next dive and does well. It says a lot about his character.”

Since they both have such busy schedules, they haven’t been able to be at the same place on the days that most couples never spend apart. For some, that distance creates a divide, but for Ryan and Shannon Evans, it makes their bond grow stronger. Although they have been married for almost three years, they have only been together for one New Year’s, one Valentine’s Day or one of Ryan’s birthdays.

Ryan and Shannon’s college careers both ended in March. Ryan dove in the team’s final meet, the Zone E Championships, while Shannon’s season was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic. Neither one of them will ever be graded from zero to ten again and there won’t be that perfect twist.

Although the end may have come sooner than expected, they both knew the sun would eventually set on their college careers. Now, it’s time for both of them to move on from their sports, something they have dedicated their whole lives to. Even though they will miss perfecting their craft, they will always have each other to lean on as they both go through the transition into normal life.

“Ryan and I are going to find out how that transition feels,” Shannon said. “We’re both going to find out how hard that will be at the same time. And that’s something I’m grateful for.”

Dilbert®

DO YOU WEAR MAKEUP UNDER THE MASK WHERE NO ONE CAN SEE IT?

OR DO YOU LEAVE YOUR SNOOT AREA ALL PALE AND PIMPLY?

STOP IMAGINING ME UNMASKED. I'LL REPORT MYSELF TO HUMAN RESOURCES.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN ME FOR LUNCH?

I DON'T EVEN WANT TO BE IN THE SAME ZIP CODE AS YOUR DISEASED MOUTH.

NO OFFENSE. NONE TAKEN.

Peanuts®

GUESS WHAT, MARCIE... OUR TEAM IS GOING TO PLAY CHUCK'S TEAM IN A CHARITY BASEBALL GAME!

BUT I'M NOT ON YOUR TEAM, SIR... I DON'T PLAY BASEBALL...

WE DON'T WANT YOU TO PLAY MARCIE... WE WANT YOU TO SELL TICKETS!

YOU MEAN GO FROM DOOR TO DOOR?

SURE

WHAT IF I GET MUGGED?

OKAY, MARCIE. HERE ARE THE TICKETS... GET OUT THERE AND SELL THEM!

THESE TICKETS COST FIFTY CENTS, SIR... WHO'S GOING TO PAY FIFTY CENTS TO WATCH CHUCK'S TEAM PLAY BALL?

YOURS IS NOT TO REASON WHY, MARCIE! YOURS IS TO SELL TICKETS! THIS IS FOR CHARITY!

I'M SORRY, SIR... I GUESS I'M ALWAYS "REASONING WHY"

STOP CALLING ME "SIR"!

Garfield®

I'M WEARING MY NEW INVISIBLE HIKING SHOES

ON MY INVISIBLE HIKE

HOW MUCH TARTAR SAUCE DO WE HAVE?

AQUARIUM

Pickles®

HOW MUCH DO YOU CHARGE FOR DOG GROOMING?

FOR A DOG THAT SIZE, FORTY-FIVE DOLLARS.

WOW, I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE THAT MUCH.

FOR AN EXTRA TEN I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO WITH THAT MUSTACHE OF YOURS.

DOESN'T ROSCOE LOOK NICE TODAY?

YEAH!

GRAMPA TOOK HIM TO THE DOG GROOMER FOR A BATH AND A HAIRCUT.

AND GUESS WHAT... SHE GROOMED GRAMPA'S MUSTACHE TOO.

THE SCHNAUZER CUT LOOKS CUTE ON HIM, DON'T YOU THINK?

Non Sequitur®

I THINK IT MEANS THE LEARNING CURVE HASN'T FLATTENED YET

HALFWAY Cafe

NOW OPEN FOR TABLE DINING SERVICE! FACE MASKS MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES

THE FOCUS GROUP SAYS IT NEEDS TO BE EDGIER

THE EVOLUTION OF MARKETING

Zits®

YOU SURE LOOK RELAXED!

I'M LISTENING TO AMBIENT SOUNDS

AMBIENCE IS RELATIVE.

I DIDN'T GET A CHOCOLATE EASTER BUNNY THIS YEAR!

TOLD YOU HE'D NOTICE.

THAT WAS SIX WEEKS AGO!

Sudoku

Use the numbers 1-9 once in each row, column and marked grid of 9. Puzzles increase in difficulty from left to right. Solutions are at universe.byu.edu/sudoku.

8	4	2	9	5	6				7	1			5			2	4	8					
	6			2	3	9	2	5		6	7	8	5	1		8	3	9	5				
2	3			7	6	4	5	7	9		1	7	8	3		1	4		6	7			
		4	6	7		4	7	1	6	3	2		3	9	2	7	9			2			
9		8	2		7	5	6	3	9	4	8		2	3	6	1	8			5	3		
		9	3	5			8	6	4	7			9	4	7	6			1	2		3	4
4	2			5	1	6	7	1	3			7		1		3			8	3		4	7
	7			8		5	6	7	1	3		8	7		1		3		8	3		4	7
1	5	9	6	3	5					4		8						9	4	6			

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz No. 0413

- ACROSS**
- Minute bits of water
 - What to do on the Sabbath, per the Bible
 - Fake
 - Large Starbucks order
 - Opera solo
 - Jay formerly of late-night
 - "Don't worry, everything will be fine!"
 - ___ pickle
 - Brainstorm
 - Heavens
 - Kind of economics, disparagingly
 - Restaurant handout
 - Team pulling a plow
 - Make more aerodynamic
 - "Ugh!"
 - Oktoberfest vessel
 - Nice poker holdings
 - "Thar ___ blows!"
 - Goofs up
 - Despises
 - "Enough already!"
 - Large Starbucks order
 - Mindless card game for two
 - Room with a sink and medicine cabinet
 - Raise with ropes and pulleys
 - "Me day" destination
 - Theatrical show featuring traditional Irish music
 - Pre-Communist Russian ruler
 - Very long stretches of time
 - Ballpark illuminators
 - "Now I've got it!"
 - Regarding
 - Vegetable in Creole cooking

- DOWN**
- Devices issued with some TV subscription packages
 - Really smell
 - Apt rhyme for "lonely"
 - School grp.
 - Four by four?
 - Element discovered by Marie and Pierre Curie
 - Guitarist Clapton
 - Material for ties or fine sheets
 - Big servings at a beer hall
 - Command to a base runner racing a throw
 - Committed to the pursuit of pleasure
 - All over again
 - Haunted house sound
 - Single-stranded genetic material
 - Old flames
 - Some diagnostic scans, for short
 - ___ in!" ("Get ready for a wild ride!")
 - Warm-colored pottery material
 - Spanish house
 - Easy as ___
 - One crying "Yer out!"
 - Nordic capital
 - "Hamilton" creator
 - Manuel Miranda
 - Subtly suggests
 - Sport one's biceps
 - N.Y.S.E. debut
 - Needs a rubdown, say
 - ___ safe distance
 - Dog collar attachment
 - Post-O.R. stop
 - Something to behold
 - "Untrue!"
 - The piper's son, in a nursery rhyme
 - Drink in a red, white and blue cup
 - Alike: Fr.
 - Save, in a way
 - Surf's sound
 - Emissions watchdog, for short
 - Knocked the socks off
 - Some customized cars
 - In the loop, so to speak
 - 007 creator Fleming
 - Kim of "Vertigo"
 - Company where the computer mouse was developed
 - Results of some Hail Mary passes, informally
 - Pesky fliers
 - Sunday newspaper section
 - B-plus beater
 - Nissan compact
 - "Giant" of wrestling and moviedom
 - Rushmore neighbor of Teddy
 - "The Bathers" Impressionist
 - Neither left nor right
 - Disney mermaid's name
 - Cloistered one, perhaps
 - "Let ___!"
 - "Jeez, that's too bad!"
 - Jersey
 - Oscar-winning Pitt
 - International retailer founded in Sweden
 - Mardi ___
 - Helper
 - Go over again and again
 - Preceder of com, org or edu
 - Deschanel of "New Girl"
 - Cultural flashes in the pan
 - Future atty.'s exam
 - It's near a temple
 - Prefix with nautical
 - Totally rules
 - Heinie
 - Seeks, as a price "for"
 - Impenetrable sculpture material
 - Not be up to date on bills
 - Beyond tipsy
 - Put on

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

A	C	L	U	A	G	O	A	P	A	R	T			
L	O	N	H	E	N	S	D	E	L	H	I			
M	R	S	C	R	A	T	C	H	V	R	O	O	M	
A	D	E	L	E	R	E	L	M	O	N	O			
S	A	Y	H	I	L	U	C	I	F	E	R			
C	O	L	D	O	D	E	T	O	T					
D	O	E	L	O	L	H	E	M	A	N				
S	P	E	A	K	O	F	T	H	E	D	E	V	I	L
S	P	E	E	D	O	A	R	A	C	E				
O	R	E	N	B	A	V	I	E	D					
O	L	D	N	I	C	K	A	N	S	E	L			
P	O	O	F	K	O	L	N	E	N	A	C	T		
E	C	O	L	E	B	E	E	L	Z	E	B	U	B	
R	A	N	U	P	E	A	R	S	E	L	B	A		
A	L	E	X	A	P	O	D	R	E	A	R			

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz No. 0414

- ACROSS**
- Spanish house
 - Easy as ___
 - One crying "Yer out!"
 - Nordic capital
 - "Hamilton" creator
 - Manuel Miranda
 - Subtly suggests
 - Sport one's biceps
 - N.Y.S.E. debut
 - Needs a rubdown, say
 - ___ safe distance
 - Dog collar attachment
 - Post-O.R. stop
 - Something to behold
 - "Untrue!"
 - The piper's son, in a nursery rhyme
 - Drink in a red, white and blue cup
 - Alike: Fr.
 - Save, in a way
 - Surf's sound
 - Emissions watchdog, for short
 - Knocked the socks off
 - Some customized cars
 - In the loop, so to speak
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 - Kim of "Vertigo"
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 - Results of some Hail Mary passes, informally
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 - Cultural flashes in the pan
 - Future atty.'s exam
 - It's near a temple
 - Prefix with nautical
 - Totally rules
 - Heinie
 - Seeks, as a price "for"
 - Impenetrable sculpture material
 - Not be up to date on bills
 - Beyond tipsy
 - Put on

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

S	P	A	N	S	T	R	A	W	T	A	L	E		
H	A	R	E	L	A	I	L	A	T	O	L	A		
A	C	E	R	A	S	C	O	T	Y	O	R	E		
H	E	A	D	I	N	T	H	E	C	L	O	U	D	S
F	E	T	E											
S	T	E	E	D	S									
O	W	N	S											
F	E	E	T	O	N	T	H	E	G	R	O	U	N	D
A	R	M												
S	K	Y												
A	N	O												
M	I	N	D	I	N	T	H	E	G	U	T	T	E	R
O	R	A	L											
R	O	T	I											
K	N	O	B											

PUZZLE BY JOE HANSEN

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Mission president couple in South Korea adjust to 'new normal'



By KENZIE HOLBROOK

The Korea Seoul Mission saw its numbers shrink dramatically in the blink of an eye. President Brad Taylor and Sister Ann Taylor were left heartbroken when about two-thirds of their missionaries left all at once.

The Korea Seoul Mission started taking precautions such as wearing masks back in January when the coronavirus first started to spread throughout the world. But just a few months later, the spread became uncontrollable.

"The big event occurred in mid-February when a church in the city of Taegu, South Korea, had a large scale viral spread amongst their congregation," President Taylor said. "That became the epicenter of a much larger spread throughout Korea, and that also became the catalyst for early quarantine and evacuation from Korea."

The Korea Seoul Mission went into quarantine on February 21. Two weeks later on March 7, all of the non-native missionaries were sent back to their home countries.

"It was a heartbreaking day," President Taylor said. "It's hard enough when we say goodbye to six or eight missionaries during normal times as they finish and return home on schedule, but to say goodbye to 101 all of a



Brad and Ann Taylor Sister Choi Jeongyun says goodbye to her companion, Sister Mia Millward, left. Sister Millward had to return to her native country of Canada.

sudden, and all at once, was one of the hardest things we've ever done."

"Most of our companionships were comprised of a Korean and a foreigner," Sister Taylor said. "Watching them say goodbye to each other, not knowing when they might ever meet again, was heartbreaking."

Sister Taylor said despite the

tears and sorrows, the young missionaries' faith never wavered. "They never questioned why this was happening to them, but rather asked the question, what does the Lord want me to learn?"

After more than half of their missionaries were sent home, the Taylors decided to make adjustments and move all the



Brad and Ann Taylor

Sister Lee Chaeun, Sister Ann Taylor and Sister Park Sion, bottom right, teach Jeong Junyoung, left, a recent convert. Evacuated missionary Isaura Guidi, top right, helps teach from her home in New Caledonia.

remaining missionaries closer to the mission home, with two companionships in each apartment instead of just one.

"Their physical location doesn't matter any more because all the work is being done online," President Taylor said. "This helped missionaries to feel the camaraderie of more people in their home. It got them closer together and closer to us in the office so that we can better help them with anything that comes up."

The Taylors have been using Zoom to stay close to the missionaries. They do nightly devotionals where they end the day in prayer together as a mission, as well as a virtual Monday night family home evening.

"Everyone participates by cell phone in a Kahoot game answering questions about anything from fun facts about their fellow missionaries to general conference trivia and Church history," Sister Taylor said.

Although the pandemic has created hardships for their mission, the Taylors have also had

many experiences that they felt were sacred.

"One that will stay with me forever was the experience we had sitting in a circle on the floor with our Korean sister missionaries partaking of the sacrament together after having gone several weeks without it," Sister Taylor said. She said the importance of that ordinance took on a new meaning that day. "The testimonies shared in that humble room sunk deep into my soul — it is a day I will never forget."

The missionaries that remain in the Korea Seoul Mission are now entering their thirteenth week of quarantining in their apartments and have had to take a different approach to missionary work.

President Taylor said that two of the mission's largest finding methods — approaching people on the street and teaching English — completely disappeared overnight.

Rather than viewing this event as a negative, President Taylor said it can be viewed as

a huge positive in several ways.

"Where we used to struggle sometimes to talk to even two or three people per day on the street, we are now sharing meaningful testimonies and gospel messages to thousands of people per day through the internet," President Taylor said.

Sister Taylor said many companionships in the mission are now teaching two to three lessons per day, whereas before the pandemic hit, they were only teaching two to three lessons in an entire week. "While nothing can take the place of a face-to-face lesson, it is a miracle how many people can be reached using technology," she said.

Another positive thing they've seen because of the effects of the pandemic is how the fulness of the gospel is taught in the missionaries' native tongue.

President Taylor said before the virus, his greatest concern was for the non-native missionaries who felt like they would never be able to learn the difficult Korean language. He said it was difficult to conduct gospel discussions in a deep and meaningful way when 80% of the missionaries were teaching in a language that was new to them.

"Now it is such a joy to see the native Korean elders and sisters teaching fluently in their native tongue," President Taylor said.

"We have had to trust the Lord and let Him guide our actions," Sister Taylor said. "As we have done that, we have witnessed that He is truly in charge. As Joseph Smith said 'no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing' — not even the coronavirus!"

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