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College of Arts and Sciences

Western Michigan University

Dear Broncos —

While we all work to stay safe and healthy, we want to let you know that the College of Arts and Sciences and the WMU Alumni Association are here for you. We are in this together!

Despite commencement ceremonies being postponed this month, we want to take a moment to welcome all new alumni into their next phase as Broncos, and we look forward to celebrating their achievements!

For some positive vibes, be sure to follow the WMU Alumni Association on social media for new stories, words of encouragement and more. Have an idea for something you'd like to see? Let us know on one of our social channels below!

Stay Tuned and Stay Healthy!

Faculty stepping up to support transition to distance education



Distance education has begun for all Western Michigan University students. The transition to online forms of learning is an effort to flatten the curve and mitigate risk associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic, and it's new territory for many students and faculty. Dr. Jeffrey Angles, a professor of Japanese who heads up WMU's Japanese language department, says language classes are particularly difficult to transition online because of the need for rapid back-and-forth interaction. But, he says, he's been working with instructors in his department to adapt to and overcome those challenges.

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Solidarity fund set up to help WMU employees and students



A newly established fund outside of Western Michigan University to benefit WMU employees and students has been created to channel help to the campus community as quickly and directly as possible. The new nonprofit organization was created by a small group of faculty, staff and students to provide aid for those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

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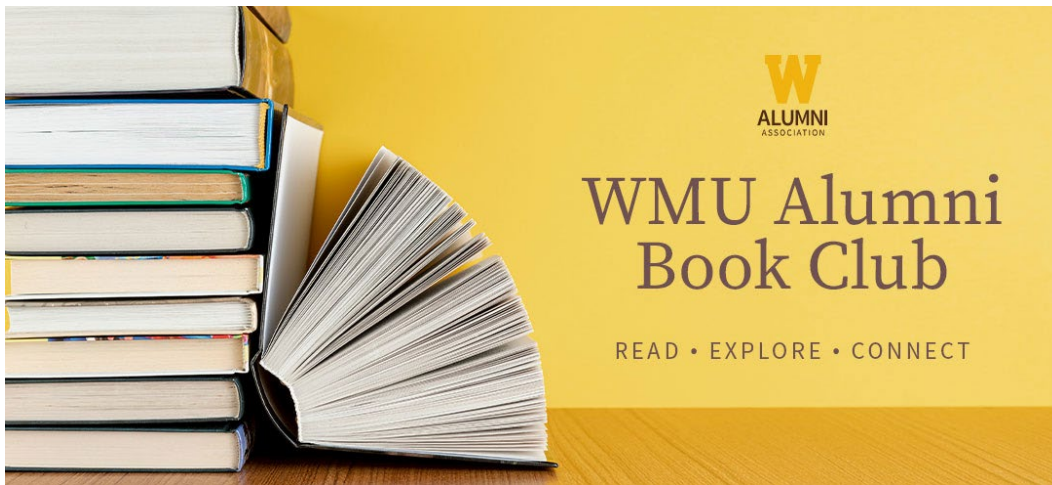
Recognizing Bronco Heroes



Our Bronco Nation is full of heroes within their communities and always has been. We would like to take a moment to recognize their impact – how they keep us safe, healthy and growing. Check out their stories with the link below to learn about how WMU alumni are making a difference every day. If you have a story to share about how you or someone you know are making a difference in your community as a medical professional, educator, food service worker, etc, please let us know [here](#)!

Read More

Launching the WMU Alumni Book Club



While we all work to stay safe and healthy, the WMU Alumni Association is excited to announce the launch of the WMU Alumni Book Club! In this online community, alumni can connect with each other virtually and enjoy books related to lifelong learning, social issues, literature, psychology, and other user-submitted ideas. There is no cost to participate — all you need is a copy of the book to enjoy. Learn more and register with the link below by April 23 to participate in the first book selection — *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg.

[Read More](#)

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- [Download a Bronco Family Fun Pack for activities to do at home — there's something for all ages!](#)
 - [Faculty stepping up to support transition to distance education](#)
 - [WMU 3D printers producing face shields and masks for health care workers](#)

Choose your impact.

Are you wondering how to help? Choose a fund that directly supports students in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

**Student
Emergency Relief**

**Student
Food Pantry**

**Student
Scholarships**

Faculty stepping up to support transition to distance education

Contact: [Erin Flynn](#)

March 17, 2020



Lucinda Stinson teaches a class via WebEx from her dining room while her dog, Snowy, looks on.

Follow the University's [COVID-19 response webpage](#) for the latest updates.

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Distance education has begun for all Western Michigan University students. The transition to online forms of learning is an effort to flatten the curve and mitigate risk associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic, and it's new territory for many students and faculty.

For **Lucinda Stinson**, a part-time instructor in the College of Health and Human Services, it means that her dining room has transformed into her classroom. The change seemed daunting at first.

"There was a wide range of emotions, running from fear to confidence that I can do this," says Stinson, who spent the weekend learning and preparing. "It really took a mental adjustment for me, because I'm a people person. I'm not overly computer savvy, but I know that I can figure it out."



Stinson reads from slides in her presentation.

Stinson took advantage of the help available through the [faculty technology center](#) to learn about using WebEx. She says the staff there walked her through the steps and she was able to pick things up quickly. Plus, she had her daughter on standby if there was something she didn't understand.

"She's a millennial," laughs Stinson, admitting that sometimes learning new technology can be a challenge. But she points out, she does have an advantage. "As a health care professional—I've been doing this for over 40 years—you always have to think on your feet. So, I can always go from Plan A to Plan B to Plan C very quickly."

Her flexibility and commitment to taking on this new challenge is something **Dr. Edwin Martini**, associate provost of WMUx, has seen from faculty members across campus.

"At the end of the day, we're all in this together. Students are learning new tools, as well," he says. "Our staff have been working long hours, into the night and throughout the weekend, to make sure that we can support our instructors and our students during this challenging time."

Students are supporting instructors, as well.

"My students have been absolutely wonderful," says Stinson. "They know that this is going to be a little tricky, but you know what, we're doing this all together."

Some classes are easier to shift to an online learning platform than others.

"Our faculty have been amazing," Martini says. "From the moment we announced the shift to distance instruction, they have organized, attended, and led workshops, shared ideas from their colleagues around the world, and are doing whatever is needed to shift their delivery methods to meet the needs of our students."



Dr. Jeffrey Angles, a professor of Japanese who heads up WMU's Japanese language department, says language classes are particularly difficult to transition online because of the need for rapid back-and-forth interaction. But, he says, he's been working with instructors in his department to adapt to and overcome those challenges.

"Over the last few days I've been trying to help part-time instructors reconceive of how to teach their classes," says Angles. "I'm trying to help them understand what we can do well on an online learning environment and help them focus a little bit more on those things."

Ultimately, says Angles, this is a "new adventure" for everyone involved.

"It is all hard work, and there will be bumps in the road along the way," agrees Martini. "But, if we continue to work together, we will get through this."

"I think that collaboration, that unity, that common denominator is really going to propel us," Stinson says. "As long as we keep it fun and let the students have a good experience, we're all going to be okay."

Solidarity fund set up to help WMU employees and students

A newly established fund outside of Western Michigan University to benefit WMU employees and students has been created to channel help to the campus community as quickly and directly as possible. The new nonprofit organization was created by a small group of faculty, staff and students to provide aid for those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.



"There are a lot of students and folks who were not making a lot of money to begin with that suddenly find themselves unable to pay rent," said Vickie Edwards, assistant professor of public affairs and administration, and one of the main organizers of the fund.

The [solidarity fund](#) is an independent 501(c)3 organization, governed by members of faculty, staff, students and some alumni. Edwards said a group of volunteers, made up of some staff, alumni and students, would review aid applications and help determine where the need is most urgent and who the fund will be able help.

For the latest WMU news and updates regarding the coronavirus, please visit wmich.edu/covid-19.

JOIN THE CAUSE

To join the cause and help support other Broncos in this dire time of need, please consider making a gift below:

[MAKE A GIFT NOW](#)

NOTE: This organization is not a part of or managed by Western Michigan University. The idea for this fund was generated among a meeting of concerned faculty members, and developed with input from staff and student workers who are affected by the University's move to online learning and staffing reductions.