


THE SOUTHEND



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Letters to the Editor

The South End welcomes letters to the editors regarding all inquiries and concerns from the Wayne State community. Please limit letters to 500 words. All submissions are subject to editing and may be published.

Corrections

The South End corrects all factual errors published online and in print.

Online Policy

The South End publishes articles online and in print. Visit our website at thesouthend.wayne.edu. While we support the right to free speech and expression, there are guidelines for morally and socially acceptable content. Comments and feedback deemed offensive are subject to editing or removal.

Publication

The South End is a daily online publication created by Wayne State students. The South End publishes special print editions at the beginning and end of the academic year. Copies of the print edition will be available free of charge at various locations throughout campus. The Student Newspaper Publication Board, established by the Wayne State University Board of Governors, acts as the publisher of The South End. The board establishes and ensures compliance with publication, editorial and news reporting guidelines. Business operations are handled through the Dean of Students Office. All complaints, comments and suggestions concerning the student newspaper should be directed to thesouthend.wsu@gmail.com.

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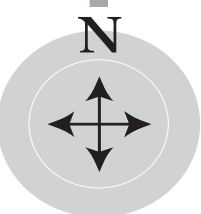
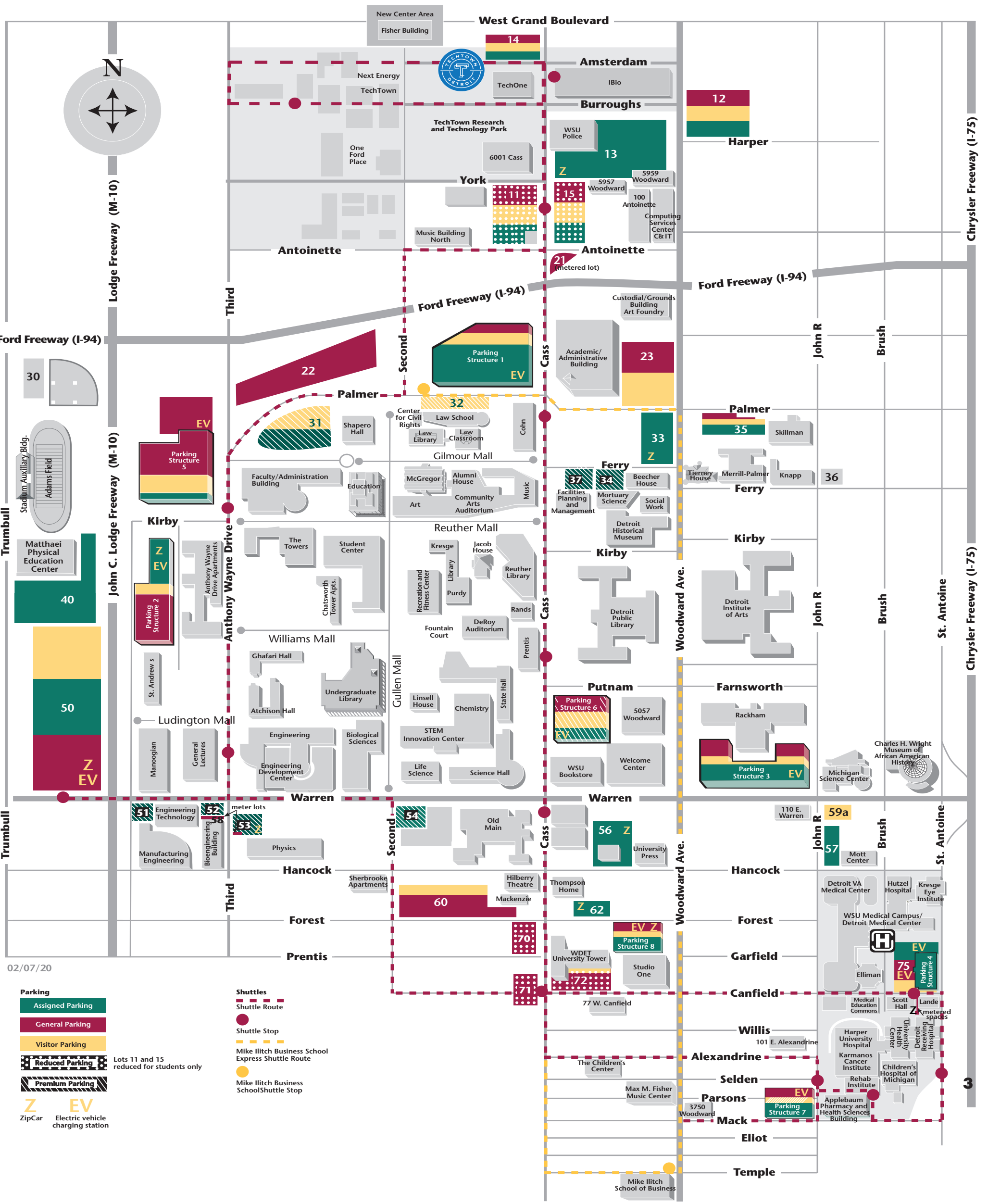
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Letter from the Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor :



Dear Warriors,

We are pleased to be able to produce a print edition again after going digital in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a symbol of Wayne State's campus return, The South End has shifted to hybrid operations and continued to adjust to cases in the Detroit area.

While the past year has presented many challenges, we have remained committed to producing news to keep our campus community informed. Being able to effectively adapt to a virtual newsroom has ensured TSE continued its coverage of key developments affecting WSU, including COVID-19.

Before the pandemic, we were correspondents for TSE. Over the last two years, we have learned a lot from our experiences, including working remotely, which have equipped us to succeed in our new editorial roles. As we navigate reporting amidst the pandemic, we will continue to lead TSE's coverage in an effective manner.



This edition will focus on the inner workings of WSU's institutions and stories about current and former WSU students. We will highlight stories on changing operations of campus life and take a look at the impact of campus history.

Throughout this year, we will bring our audience timely and accurate coverage of issues around campus. Whether it be administrative, student life issues or other topics, we are committed and focused on ensuring that your voices will be heard.

TSE strives to best serve our campus community. Please reach out to us via social media or email with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jenna Prestininzi and Irving Mejia-Hilario

Editor-in-Chief Managing Editor

Photos by Quinn Banks

Black graduation rate on the rise

By Amelia Benavides-Colón and Ashley Harris

Wayne State's Black graduation rate has been on the rise over the past decade, after officials began to prioritize the graduation of its minority students.

Only 10% of Black undergraduate students were able to graduate in six years, compared to 43.6% of white undergraduate students, according to a 2010 report.

These statistics categorized WSU as one of the worst universities in the nation for African American graduation rates.

Associate professor of African American Studies David Goldberg said in a Nov. 18, 2021 email to The South End that the expectations of WSU need to change in order to address this issue.

"It should also be said too that the four-six year graduation rate expectation set by the state is in and of itself racist and classist," he said. "Simply put, many people (Black students) lacked the resources and time needed to stay enrolled and complete their degrees within a six-year period."

The Strategic Graduation Action Committee focuses on giving individualized attention to students who are just shy of graduating. Members include administrators, college deans, advisors and Office of the Registrar and Student Accounts Receivable staff.

In its first year, the committee reported that the six-year graduation rate of the 2007 class had increased from 28% to 32%.

WSU also formed the Social Justice Action in Committee in June 2020, "to drive cultural change and further the university's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion."

WSU Chief Diversity Officer Marquita Chamblee said a group within the SJAC is pursuing effective solutions to improve Black student graduation rates.

"The Student Equity Working Group will focus on identifying and removing barriers to student achievement and success, with particular emphasis on students who have been historically marginalized or excluded," Chamblee said in a Nov. 18, 2021 email to TSE.

In March 2021, the SJAC completed its work and released its final report which said, "Student success is not one unit, it cuts across all aspects of the university and should be an integral part of the definition and evaluation of success for all schools, colleges, and units."

Director of Student Success Operational Excellence Darryl Gardner said in a Nov. 19, 2021 email to TSE that he has been working closely with SJAC members to address the remaining disparities in graduation rates.

"Access and equity are core values of the university. It is important for our institution, through education, to continue to provide opportunities for upward social mobility to all students." Gardner said. "Every student deserves an opportunity to learn, to thrive in college, to graduate in a timely manner,

and to enjoy the benefits of a college degree throughout their lives."

Graduation rates increased by 156% between 2006 and 2013.

Black student enrollment rates decreased by 22% from 2013 to 2020.

Goldberg said he's witnessed the fluctuating numbers over the last 10 years.

"Changes in admissions standards as well as the university's concerted effort to meet state-mandated four-six year graduation benchmarks to enhance funding have played a role in these changes," Goldberg said. "As a result, the percentage of Black students graduating has increased, but the number of Black students graduating each year has not."

In an effort to bring in larger numbers of minority students, WSU implemented the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge in 2019 to, "provide free tuition for eligible students who either live in Detroit or graduate from a high school within the city," according to WSU.

Gardner said that while there are obvious benefits to programs like the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge, they place a strict burden on students that can be counterintuitive to their education.

"These programs may have helped raise graduation rates," he said. "But some students that I've talked with feel that they're being surveilled, dehumanized, and overly burdened with time commitments without receiving a sense of belonging and acceptance or the support and encouragement they need to bounce back from setbacks."

Pan-African Student Syndicate President Kendra Jackson said she agreed with Gardner and she feels that lack of communication between faculty and students is also a factor in students' dissatisfaction.

"The university might provide the money, they might provide the different programs, but they're not providing the support to help the Black students," Jackson said. In a September 2021 Student Senate meeting, President M. Roy Wilson announced that WSU's Black student graduation rate increased by

almost 10 percentage points within a year.

The current Black graduate rate is 34.6% – a 9.8 percentage point jump from last year and a 355% improvement over the last decade from 7.6%, according to WSU.

The SJAC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council and The Student Equity Working Group, will look at the recommendations from the SJAC report and develop strategies,

Chamblee said.

In order to solve the disparities that remain, Goldberg said WSU must do more than acknowledge the struggles of Black students.

"Black students aren't as impressed with our still woefully low Black graduation rates as the media has been," he said. "To best address this question, the University must not only listen to Black students, but act on their complaints and advice."

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WSU budget adapts to pandemic hardships

By Kate Vaughn

Wayne State has encountered budget issues during the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing an already present strain.

A tuition increase, budget cuts and employee furloughs are among changes made, said Rebecca Cooke, former interim vice president for finance and business operations and chief financial advisor.

The Board of Governors approved a 3.9% tuition raise at its June 25, 2021 meeting. Chief Business Officer David Massaron said the tuition raise will not remedy WSU's financial challenges.

"The revenue generated by a 3.9% increase in tuition and fees is entirely offset by the estimated 4% decline in enrollment," he said in a Dec. 2, 2021 email to The South End. "As a result of these two factors, WSU is expecting a \$5 million shortfall in tuition and fees revenues for FY (fiscal year) 2022."

WSU is working to mitigate the tuition increase's impact on students, Massaron said.

"Over \$96 million will be utilized to meet the financial needs of our students," Massaron said. "In addition, great efforts are taking place in utilizing and increasing endowed scholarships in order to help our students with the rising costs of tuition and fees."

Massaron said he's not concerned about being understaffed, though WSU is showing effects of the nationwide labor shortage.

"Based on what I know and see, we have a budget that is adequate to do the services we need to do," he said. "Of course, we're going to continue to struggle to hire people as everybody in the country is."

The FY 22 Current Funds Budget Book outlines the recommended budget for FY 22.

The College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts received the largest percentage budget cut for fiscal year 2020 at 9%, according to the book.

The second largest budget cut was for the School of Information Sciences at 7%. The School of Law experienced the smallest percentage cut at 1%.

The total budget for schools and colleges within WSU was cut by \$10,902,141 — 5% less than fiscal year 2021's approved budget.

According to the FY 22 budget book, tuition accounts for approximately two-thirds of WSU's revenue in the general funds.

Massaron said Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund resources could be used to supplement pandemic deficits.

"There are also the use of HEERF to make up for lost revenue, so that we can shore up our budget so that we can continue to offer the same level of services to our students in our university community," Massaron said.

Massaron said the HEERF funds will also cover health and safety expenses WSU took on throughout the pandemic.

"It will fund things like the vaccine incentives, hardware to enable hybrid classrooms, the Campus Health Center, the testing vaccine and tracing programs, which obviously are substantial," he said.

The two mental health days WSU offered during the 2020-21 academic year will also be covered by the HEERF funds, Massaron said. He said the mental health days were budgeted at \$3.7 million.

Some funding from HEERF III has been set aside for Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning updates in the Art Building and Beecher House, said Robert Davenport, associate vice president of Facilities Planning and Management.

"We'll actually address two things. We'll address indoor air quality but then also provide cooling to that space," Davenport said.

Davenport said the cost for the modifications to the Art Building is budgeted at \$8.5 million, but the actual cost is anticipated to be lower. The Beecher House's budget is \$825,500, Davenport said.

Massaron said the federal assistance has helped WSU offer quality instruction and carry out infrastructure updates.

"The HEERF funding has given us ability to continue to serve our students to cover the costs of needed improvements to our campus and we're going to keep grinding away to ensure that we're as efficient as we can be and maintain services and classes at the same level that our students expect," Massaron said.

Student Senators push mental health advocacy

By Kate Vaughn and Victor Jackson

Wayne State Student Senate is focusing on several mental health initiatives with its newly formed Mental Health Project Group.

The project group includes the following working groups: the Eugene Applebaum Mental Health Working Group, The College of Nursing Mental Health Working Group, The Cultural Competency and Mental Health Working Group, the Mental Health Awareness Working Group and the Mental Health Resources Working Group.

Rajan Varmon, Student Senate School of Social Work representative and Mental Health Project Group chair, said he hopes to make changes that positively impact the WSU community through the working groups.

“We want to make sure — just to help shed some light on the topic of mental health in an empathetic and ethical manner,” Varmon said.

The Mental Health Resources working group is working to update the FYS 1010 course module that most first-year WSU students are required to take.

“We want to make sure it’s (the module) more applicable to college life,” Varmon said. “Just to make sure that college students are ready for college.”

The Mental Health Project Group, also plans to make some changes to the FYS 1010 course through its Mental Health First Aid Initiative.

Varmon said the initiative includes adding a Mental Health First Aid module within the FYS 1010 course to teach students how to “react in a mental health crisis in a respectable manner.”

Through the initiative, Varmon said he hopes to implement a designated triage person at the Campus Health Center in collaboration with Counseling and Psychological Services. The initiative was in the planning stages in December 2021.

The Mental Health Resources Working Group will also work to raise awareness of the mental health resources available on campus, Varmon said.

“We want to advocate for the improvement of all mental (health) resources available on campus to help ensure that they’re able to be utilized as effectively as possible for the overall WSU community,” he said.

The Mental Health Awareness Working Group, chaired by Fatima Hammoud, Student Senate treasurer and Mental Health Matters president, will advocate for various mental health conditions, Varmon said.

In a Nov. 19, 2021 email to The South End, Hammoud said she hopes to address mental health issues through the working group.

“I wish to raise awareness and highlight all the conditions, all in effort to de-stigmatize them,” Hammoud said. “We live in a society where mental health isn’t given the attention it

deserves.”

Varmon said the Mental Health and Cultural Competency Working Group is focused on advocating for mental health awareness in a culturally competent context.

“It’s (the working group) to advocate for the awareness of the topic itself...utilizing the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Code of Ethics and efforts to appropriately and ethically... help the WSU community become more aware of the topic of mental health in a respectful and empathetic manner,” he said.

Varmon said the Mental Health and Cultural Competency Working Group will work hard to destigmatize mental health.

“This working group is (aimed at) anyone whose cultures may have a stigma, a strong stigma, against mental health in general,” he said.

The Mental Health and Cultural Competency Working Group plans to work with CAPS and the CAPS Social Justice Committee on this initiative, though the initiative was in the early planning stages in December 2021, Varmon said.

The Emotional Abuse Prevention and Identification Initiative is working to update the Relationship Health tab within WSU’s Warrior Life and Wellness website to “make sure that the context of emotional abuse is more identified as well as the prevention efforts (being) labeled within it as well,” Varmon said.



Photo by Quinn Banks

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In a Dec. 10, 2021 email to TSE, Varmon said he met with CAPS and the CAPS Social Justice Committee, and they expressed their support for the Emotional Abuse Prevention and Identification Initiative.

Senate President Sailor Mayes said resources and attention on mental health are needed now more than ever.

“This is a very pressing topic of our time because mental health is now just starting to become very serious, back then people used to just brush it off, and now we realize this is very essential to being human,” Mayes said.

The Eugene Applebaum and College of Nursing Working Groups have similar goals, Varmon said.

“We want to make sure that the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy Health Sciences has more visibility of mental health resources overall within campus and we want to make sure and see the same thing within the College of Nursing,” Varmon said.

In addition to greater visibility, the Eugene Applebaum Mental Health Working Group will also advocate for Naloxone training, Varmon said.

Naloxone is a drug used to rapidly reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, and adults can be trained and certified in its administration.

“We’re also working towards the installation of NaloxBox boxes in all residential halls and housing units on campus,” Varmon said.

The Support Group and Group Therapy Initiative will work to promote CAPS group therapy events and the Psychology Clinic’s Peaceful Warrior Program, he said.

“We want to make sure that students are aware of them (mental health resources)... and we want to make sure that more students are able to know that these resources and services are available to everyone,” Varmon said.

Varmon said he is hopeful for the impact the Mental Health Project Group’s initiatives will have on the WSU community.

“It (the initiatives and working groups) will help de-stigmatize the conversation,” Varmon said. “It will make this a more normal thing to talk about mental health in a positive context. It will definitely help people talk to their close friends and family, and loved ones about this.”

WSU IT staff struggle to adjust to C&IT changes, lay-offs

By Nour Rahal and Amelia Benavides-Colón

Wayne State's WarriorIT Consolidation Project has raised concerns among some current and former employees.

The project launched Nov. 2, 2020, said Rob Thompson, interim chief information officer and associate vice president of Computing & Information Technology. Its purpose is to bring each information technology department at WSU onto one team under C&IT.

"We began planning the WarriorIT Consolidation Project in 2019 as a strategic initiative to create a single, strong and unified information technology organization for all Wayne State faculty, administrators, classrooms, researchers and desktop management activities," Thompson said.

Danielle Aubert, associate professor of graphic design and president of WSU AAUP-AFT Local 6075, said she and other staff members think the transition has been handled poorly.

"Our department got together and we wrote a letter that we sent to President (M. Roy) Wilson," Aubert said.

The letter was sent by the WSU Coalition of Unions to Wilson, the Board of Governors, Thompson, Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Carolyn Hafner and College of Nursing Dean Laurie Lauzon Clabo on March 17, 2021.

Nine essential employees from the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts, Mike Ilitch School of Business and the Law School were moved from their colleges "into the general C&IT pool, or, in a number of cases, have been laid off completely," the letter stated.

These nine employees were essential staff, Aubert said.

"People who helped us transition to online labs during the pandemic and know more about technology and when it's time to update the equipment — they're now gone," she said.

Any reduction in staff is difficult for WSU, Thompson said.

"It's a last resort for the institution but it does become necessary sometimes in order to save money or when you're restructuring," he said. "We were able to really minimize the effect of layoffs."

Though the project was in the works prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Aubert said WSU failed to take time to learn what each staff member does within their department.

"They did not communicate with faculty or staff to see how we interact or what our students need," she said. "So now we have all these guys who are trying to play catch up and learn how to do these other jobs."

Some employees lost their jobs and were forced to find employment elsewhere during the pandemic, while others took on more responsibilities with no additional pay, said Kelly Gottesman, a former C&IT multimedia specialist.

"While I think the idea itself is a good idea, and through time it will probably pay off... the nature of when this occurred — during a pandemic, during an academic term where students or staff or faculty can be impacted by anything, technologically speaking, as much of our stuff is online — I just felt that the timing couldn't be worse," Gottesman said.

Gottesman unexpectedly received a letter welcoming him to C&IT on Oct. 16, 2020, he said. This concerned him, so he brought the letter to the attention of Department of Communication Chair Katheryn Maguire.

"She was completely surprised because our dean (Matthew Seeger) informed her that nothing was going to happen to my position," Gottesman said.

In an Oct. 11, 2021 email to The South End, Maguire said that when Seeger spoke to Gottesman, he told Gottesman that "there wasn't going to be a substantial change in his duties."

Bryan Dadey, former senior associate vice president of finances and deputy chief financial officer, said during the Oct. 30, 2020 WSU BOG meeting that 27 employees would be laid-off from C&IT during the consolidation project.

The layoffs were going to begin in November 2020, but the BOG asked that they be delayed until the first quarter of 2021 to avoid layoffs going into the winter holidays, said Associate Vice President of University Communications Matt Lockwood.

The BOG approved the 2021 fiscal year budget at the Oct. 30, 2020 meeting, and by Nov. 2, 2020, C&IT transitions started to take place, according to the consolidation project's timeline.

Gottesman said he began reporting to a new boss — CFPCA IT Associate Director Gary Cendrowski — and had new teammates and responsibilities as soon as WSU's HR department moved all campus IT services under C&IT.

"In the middle of an academic term and the middle of the pandemic, I'm switching positions," Gottesman said.

C&IT's collaboration with HR, the Department of Employee and Labor Relations and the P&A Union was "regular, extensive, and included more than 40 meetings and discussions," between April 2020 and February 2021, Thompson said in a

"I just felt that the timing couldn't be worse," Gottesman said.

May 10, 2021 email to The South End. “Careful attention was paid to comply with the existing collective bargaining agreement between the union and Wayne State.”

However, according to the COU, WSU’s administration failed to follow the P&A Union Collective Bargaining Agreement, which “states in Article 14 section A, that ‘In the event of layoff, the University shall meet with the Union, on request, prior to the contemplated reduction to review how the reduction will be accomplished.’”

Thompson said the procedure in Article 14(a) of the WSU and the P&A Union collective bargaining agreement was followed during the consolidation project.

“Unfortunately, the statement from the Coalition of Unions contains many falsehoods that are simply indefensible, and this is one of them,” Thompson said.

The P&A Union requested to meet with the WSU administration to discuss the reduction in employees but the administration “refused to consult with the Union prior to the actual lay-offs,” according to the COU.

“According to our P&A Union president, there was never a seat at the table for these meetings,” Gottesman said. “At least he wasn’t officially invited to any talks with HR, Labor Relations or C&IT.”

Several meetings included P&A Union President Gary Morris as an attendee, Thompson said in a June 15, 2021 email to TSE.

Morris did not respond to repeated attempts for comment by TSE.

“The previous WSU (Chief Information Officer Darren Hubbard) held five one-on-one meetings directly with Gary Morris with the title ‘IT Consolidation,’ and I subsequently held seven one-on-one meetings directly with Gary Morris with the title ‘IT Consolidation Planning,’” Thompson said. “These 12 one-on-one collaboration meetings between C&IT leadership and Gary Morris were directly focused on the IT consolidation, and all occurred between June 3, 2020 and Dec. 23, 2020.”

The number of layoffs that took place during the transition was less than half of the initial announcement at the Oct. 30, 2020 BOG meeting, Thompson said. He declined to provide specific numbers.

Multiple IT staff members were bumped into new positions and had to get used to new software, Aubert said.

Bumping is a right ensured within professional unions, Gottesman said. If an individual is terminated or laid off after working at a company for many years, they can use bumping rights to transition into another position based on seniority, but the jobs are not always similar.

“I know several colleagues who have not bumped advantageously,” said Tonya Thomas, an adjunct professor of Media Arts and Studies.

Thomas’ previous area, Business Technology Solutions, was dissolved during the transition, Thomas and Aubert said.

Thomas was placed in Training, Marketing and Communications, but very little communication was done before the consolidation project took place, she said.

“Random assignments I think were made without really any knowledge or interest in taking the time to communicate, get to know people and what they did,” Thomas said. “I can’t say that they simply looked at job

titles or job descriptions. Because if that were the case then I wouldn’t have landed where I landed.”

The COU hosted an open forum on April 14, 2021 to share their discontent with layoffs and changes being made within C&IT during the pandemic. Aubert and Thomas said they both spoke at the event, along with multiple other former and current WSU IT staff.

Hafner and a few HR directors, including Brian Wittenberg and Cheri Nowak, attended the forum for about five to 10 minutes in the beginning and then left without saying anything, Thomas and Aubert said.

Hafner did not respond for comment on the lay-offs or HR attendance at the forum.

Former WSU business systems analyst Jessica Smith also spoke at the forum she was laid off during the consolidation project, she said.

“My team was split up and moved to C&IT as of November 2020,” Smith said. “When we were transferred, we were told to just continue doing our same job and just await further updates. It was the end of January (2021) that I received the letter that my position was being eliminated effective March 1 (2021).”

Smith chose to exercise her bumping rights, she said, as she had been an employee at WSU for almost seven years.

“Feb. 26 (2021), which was a Friday, is when I was told that they did not have another position to place me in, and my last day at Wayne State would be that following Monday, March 1 (2021),” Smith said. “It was very stressful at first, but I was determined to turn it into a positive.”

Smith said she has since accepted a new position at another company, whose name she declined to provide.

Transitioning employees under C&IT for the Law School and Educational Outreach was completed by April 1, 2021, while the College of Nursing, the College of Education and the Business School were expected to be completed by the start of fall 2021, according to C&IT.

In an Oct. 11, 2021 email to TSE, Thompson said the restructuring of the IT department was completed and no further personnel actions were expected.



Photo by Nour Rahal

COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act aims to address increased Asian American harassment

By Jack Filbrandt and Kate Vaughn

President Joe Biden signed the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act in late March, addressing increased instances of hate crimes and violence toward Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between March 2020 and February, 3,800 cases of anti-Asian discrimination and incidents related to COVID-19 were reported, according to the act. While the act addresses violence and hate over the past year, Asian Americans have faced centuries of discrimination in the U.S.

The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act remembers eight people who were murdered in the Atlanta area on March 16. Six of the people were women of Asian descent.

The victims are Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng, Delaina Ashley Yaun González, Paul Andre Michels, Soon Chung Park, Hyun Jung Grant, Suncha Kim, Yong Ae Yue.

“The people of the United States will always remember the victims of these shootings and stand in solidarity with those affected by this senseless tragedy and incident that have affected the Asian and Pacific Islander communities,” the bill said.

The act lays out six facts on its first page that address incidents of physical violence and increased hostility, said Victor Jew, University of Wisconsin-Madison senior lecturer of Asian American Studies and co-editor of the book “Asian Americans in Michigan.”

“The biggest thing that we can do is report incidents that we see,” said Stephanie Tong, Wayne State associate professor and director of the Social Media and Relational Technologies Labs at WSU, in a June 15 email to The South End. “The website

Stop AAPI Hate collects and reports incidents of hate and discrimination across the USA. If we, all of us, not just Asian Americans, don’t report or speak up, we will never know the extent of the issue and we will never see any progress being made.”

The WSU Office of Multicultural Student Engagement co-hosted a series of training, workshops and events that focused on Asian American experiences in March, said former director Leonard Savala. An Asian American history course was planned for the fall 2021 semester by the College of Education, but was not held due to low enrollment.

The SMART Labs at WSU focuses on research questions involving social media and how people use platforms within their relationships and friendships, Tong said.

“As we shifted our research focus during the pandemic, I began to realize that there were ‘darker sides’ to social media interaction,” Tong said. “In early spring of 2020, in particular, I noticed the uptick in the nature of online hate speech being directed at Asian Americans.”

Tong’s family faced verbal harass-

Research highlights online harassment towards Asian Americans

ment in the California Bay Area this past year, along with many other Asian Americans across the country, she said. This prompted the lab to dive deeper into harassment Asian Americans were facing online.

Using a survey of over 1,500 people, Tong found that Asian Americans experienced more negative emotions and were more aware of racial harassment connected to the pandemic. Witnessing the widespread amount of online harassment was surprising and sobering, she said.

Aspects of the internet make it easier for people to spread hate speech, often making a person’s identity unclear or anonymous, Tong said. This provides users the ability to spread hate speech without consequences. The ease of sharing, retweeting and reposting hateful content on the internet also makes it difficult to stop.

“But there are also some encouraging findings — such as Asian Americans’ resilience in the face of escalating discrimination,” she said. “Another encouraging finding was that in our survey, Americans of many different racial and ethnic backgrounds reported being aware of and outraged by the anti-Asian discrimination happening right now.”

WSU needs to help educate students on current issues Asian Americans face, but also past incidents of discrimination, said Rukaia Hussain, a senior biology major and treasurer of WSU’s Chinese Cultural Club.

“I think that Wayne State should bring up the issue about what has been going on lately,” Hussain said. “Not just now but even in the past. The reason for that is because many people don’t feel comfortable about discussing situations like this but should. And we also need to be able to discuss these situations so that in the future, students know that they have a voice to speak up and that they matter regardless of wherever they’re from and what race they are.”

Asians and Asian Americans have a history that spans over 200 years in North America, Jew said. Filipino Americans, escaping forced labor and enslavement, established a North American settle-

200 years of Asian American History

ment in St. Malo, Louisiana in 1763. Asian Americans were living in New York in the 1820s, California in the 1840s during the gold rush, and in the Midwest as early as the 1870s.

Jew starts most of his Asian American history classes in the 1870s, he said.

“That’s a good year to begin, because it emphasizes for students something they never really thought about most likely, that Asian American history in the Midwest is 150 years old,” he said.

While it’s difficult to pinpoint what brought Asian Americans to the Midwest, Jew believes a primary factor was increased violence and harassment in California, he said.

One of the worst instances of violence toward Chinese Americans at the time occurred when 19 to 21 Chinese men were lynched in Los Angeles on Oct. 24, 1871, Jew said. On the same night, Chinese women also faced violence and harassment.

“I would not be surprised that if that was a motivation, that the violence in California leading some Chinese to say, ‘Okay, I will just move east. I’ll just keep walking east to Chicago, or Minnesota or Detroit,’” Jew said. “So not solely restricted to that violence, but I can’t help but think that had some kind of relationship.”

Racism toward Asians in California came from the head of the state government, Jew said. Former governor John Bigler said that Chinese people were dangerous to the state, leading to an 1854 California State Supreme Court ruling barring Chinese residents from testifying in civil and criminal cases involving white residents.

Racist laws continued to impact Asian communities in the rest of the country, including Detroit.

Fourteen Chinese men were living in Detroit in 1874, according to Ethnic Layers of Detroit, a WSU project that focuses on collecting and sharing Detroit’s ethnic history. By the 1920s, the population had reached about 2,000 people.

Chinese Detroiters living throughout downtown found a cultural base at the On Leong Chinese Merchants Association building at 162 Randolph St. In 1917, the

association formed the city’s first Chinatown, buying surrounding property to construct a new headquarters, stores and apartments.

Chinatown was condemned by the Detroit Housing Commission in the early 1960s as part of a slum clearance program, similar to what Detroit’s Black community faced with the destruction of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, according to ELD. The bulldozing of these communities made way for the construction of freeways in the city.

The destruction of Asian communities and pressure of local governments to move was happening across the U.S., Jew said.

“In St. Louis they bulldoze away the Chinese American community to make room for Busch Stadium, which is the home baseball stadium for the St. Louis Cardinals,” Jew said. “There was always talk about doing that in Chicago. In Chicago, the Chinese American neighborhood actually had to move, because you know, noises about, you know, wanting them out of the way.”

After Detroit demolished the city’s Chinatown, two of the neighborhood’s central establishments — Chung’s restaurant and On Leong — relocated to the Peterboro district and created a second Chinatown, according to ELD. A school, restaurants, grocery store, and bars soon followed, but by the 1970s the neighborhood was seen as unsafe. Chung’s closed in 2000 and the neighborhood was abandoned.

“I’ve heard and read that after that demolition, it’s never the same,” Jew said. “Never the same for a number of reasons. Many Chinese Americans just moved to where they suddenly could, suburbs. You know, for a long time there was discrimination, so Chinese Americans can move to the suburbs.”

The current anti-Asian hate being witnessed during the pandemic also reminds SMART Lab researchers of the murder of Vincent Chin, Tong said.

Chin, a 27-year-old Chinese American, was killed in a racist attack by two white autoworkers in Highland Park who said, “it’s because of you mother****ers we were thrown out of work,” on June 19, 1982, Jew said. Wayne County Circuit Judge Charles Kaufman ruled that



Graphic by Dori Gross

the incident was nothing more than a bar fight that went bad. Both men paid \$3,000 and served three years of probation — never spending a day in jail.

“Unfortunately, you know, people use that standard that is still used today, that was used in the Atlanta killings,” Jew said. “‘Well, if he doesn’t say anything racial, then it’s not racial,’ but the very association is ‘because of you mother****ers’ and ‘you mother****ers’ are out of work’ there is already the deep association, right? There is already the deep taint.”

There are more than 200 years of repeated racist incidents toward Asian Americans, Jew said. It’s important to educate people on the repetition of this racism so more can be understood. Events in history also become forgotten, leading to a cyclical sickness.

“But history repeating itself isn’t an option,” Tong said. “By creating greater awareness and investigating the problem through empirical research, we can hopefully spotlight this issue.”

Education and introducing people to different cultures and experiences can push people beyond bias and stereotypes, Savala said. He views WSU as a place where people can come together to learn about different cultures and Detroit through programs.

“When you leave Wayne State, there’s two things that you should have,” Savala said. “You should get your degree but you should

‘History repeating itself isn’t an option’



also have a deep profound knowledge about Detroit. Those two are kind of critical. So you should almost walk away with two degrees.”

While researching social side effects of a pandemic is challenging because of the many ways it impacts people, understanding how people interact is important, Tong said. SMART Labs is currently examining the effect of hate speech on Twitter — specifically how people judge anti-Asian hate tweets, the source of the tweets and how hateful rhetoric affects one’s views of the pandemic and Asian Americans.

“When people’s fear morphs into anger and then into hate speech, we need to find out how this kind of interaction impacts our mental and emotional health,” Tong said.

Photos by Jack Filbrandt



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Music Department navigates education amidst pandemic

By Ashley Harris

Amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Wayne State's Department of Music has worked to maintain an optimal learning environment for students.

Many students and faculty have learned to adapt to technology and attend lectures virtually throughout the pandemic. However, the Music Department has faced its own challenges in creating and performing music in a virtual format.

Associate Professor of Vocal Music Education Abby Butler said that while many of those within the Music Department have become more accustomed to technology, certain aspects are still difficult to maneuver.

"I think we've really risen to the challenges, (but) we still need to be able to make music together," Butler said. "When you physically can't be in the same space, that's really, really, challenging."

Assistant Professor of Jazz Studies Vincent Chandler said his main setback throughout the pandemic has been not physically present with students.

"I am an inspired person, period, by myself," Chandler said. "...There's another thing to have an audience, and for me to no longer have that audience, I would say that it did take away from just my own excitement for teaching, and I know it took away from the potential excitement that the students could have."

Chandler said before the pandemic Music Department Chair Norah Duncan anticipated the length of COVID-19 restrictions and began to contemplate strategies for how the Music Department could adapt.

Butler said her own teaching has changed in response to moving virtually and she thinks the most significant issue has been supporting pre-student teachers.

"There have been some real challenges along with (assisting student teachers) — for example, when it was spring 2020 when all the K-12 schools went to completely online instruction," Butler said. "...We had student teachers who were out in the field...and they had to — all of a sudden — quickly adapt mid-semester to this totally new teaching environment."

Despite this, Butler said many student teachers and their mentors collaborated to maintain an engaging and insightful experience for music lessons with K-12 students.

Chandler said when it comes to a more individual scale, the journey of adaptation made him a better teacher than ever. The improvement of his teaching skills is due to his notation of each aspect of the teaching material.

"I had to be far more detailed — far more careful," Chandler said. "Because it's one thing to be able to make an impact by using a hand gesture, or saying something, or sitting at the piano, it's another thing to just try to put it in writing in a way that a non-music major could clearly grasp what you're saying."

Some students have shared their unique struggles in learning music virtually, Butler said. However, freshman music technology major William Carey IV said virtual learning hasn't changed much of his educational experience.

"Personally I like online school because I do a lot of my own personal music," Carey said. "I like (to be able to) be in class, have my class on Zoom, (and then) transition just right into (my music) and work on whatever I was working on."

However, Carey said the limitation in percussion instruments he can use during virtual learning has been a setback. Other music students' biggest setback would most likely be the lack of physical face-to-face instruction.

"(Not being able to) play with your ensemble — practice is kind of hard to do over Zoom, especially if everything is de-synced," Carey said.

As WSU resumed in-person classes on Jan. 31, Chandler said he could pair his improved instruction methods with the physical and visual elements of his teaching. He believes students will still be able to achieve the objectives of the class by the end of this semester.

Carey said he hopes for Music Department faculty to communicate more with students this semester.

Chandler said he believes the Music Department has done everything it could regarding the pandemic and the disadvantages it has caused.

"It's not ideal to go virtual for a music program, you lose students that way," Chandler said. "But we put our students first."

The Road Warriors were more than a football team

By Irving Mejia-Hilario

Famously nicknamed the Road Warriors, the 2011 Wayne State football team was the only team in WSU football history to make the NCAA Division II Football Championship.

But before the season began, the team faced a bigger challenge.

On May 6, 2011, Cortez Smith, former sophomore cornerback and 2010 WSU rookie of the year, was shot to death in the parking lot of Club Envy.

"It really hurt. I don't show emotions often, but I think all of us were in disbelief," said former quarterback Mickey Mohner.

Head Coach Paul Winters said Smith's sudden passing left an emotional impact on the team.

"I think it affected everyone differently. But as a team, we were all kind of rallying around the idea that we were going to try to do everything that season for him," Winters said.

Heading into the preseason, the Warriors were ranked 21st in the AFCA Division II Coaches Poll. Prior to 2010, the Warriors had never made a playoff appearance.

In 2011, the Warriors got off to a 6-0 start. By week 6, WSU had climbed to 6th place in the coaches poll.

On Oct. 15, 2011, the Warriors were dealt their first loss of the season in a 20-17 heartbreaker after Ashland University hit a

last-second field goal. Following the loss, WSU fell to 17th in the coaches poll but was still ahead of every team in the GLIAC.

Throughout the season, the Warriors carried the loss of Smith with them. Mohner said they played through the emotional pain and found inspiration in Smith's family.

"It was still hurting during the season. But through the whole process, we just kept looking at Mr. and Mrs. Smith (Smith's parents) and we just saw them carry on," Mohner said. "They came to the team breakfasts and they prayed with us and let us know that everything was always going to be okay."

Heading into the final week of their season, the Warriors were 8-2 and slipped to 22nd in the coaches poll.

The Warriors lost 43-42 to the University of Findlay on Nov. 12, 2011 in the final game of the season. This kicked the Warriors out of the top 25 in the coaches poll and left their playoff chances hanging in the balance.

Winters said he was not optimistic heading into the Nov. 13, 2011 selection show.



Photos provided by WSU Athletics



Cortez Smith
July 6, 1990 - May 6, 2011

“I didn’t even watch it because I was so disappointed,” Winters said. “I felt like I didn’t do my job and like I had let the team and everyone down.”

However, WSU’s name was called and the team was chosen as the final seed in the Super Regional Three side of the NCAA Division II Playoffs.

The Warriors went on an unprecedented playoff run through Minnesota, Nebraska and North Carolina. During their run, they upset #17 St. Cloud State University, #10 University of Nebraska at Kearney, defending national champions #6 University of Minnesota Duluth and #3 Winston-Salem State University.

WSU’s playoff run away from home earned the team the nickname The Road Warriors.

“I vividly remember going to class in the midst of that playoff run and people would cheer for us when we walked in,” Renel said.

In a story ripped straight out of a movie, the underdog Warriors were set to play against #1 Pittsburg State University.

In the first play of the game, Renel ran the opening kickoff back for a touchdown, giving WSU an early 7-0 lead. Injuries, turnovers and a mighty PSU team put a damper on the Warriors’ hopes to

win their first national championship, with a loss of 35-21.

Mohner said the 2011 Road Warriors formed a lasting bond during their tumultuous season.

“Football brings together so many people from so many different walks of life,” Mohner said. “To be a part of something so special and become a family, that’s what I’ll remember the most.”

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OPTIONS FOR REPORTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

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In cases of threats, imminent danger and other emergencies, contact the Wayne State Police at 313-577-2222.

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High standards of student conduct play a major role in creating an environment of excellence, and the Student Code of Conduct serves to uphold these standards.

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3. Describes disciplinary policies and procedures;
4. Specifies the rights of students and other parties; and
5. Specifies prohibited conduct and sanctions to be imposed if such conduct occurs.

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Section 4.20 of the Student Code of Conduct notes the following behavioral expectations related to COVID-19 Compliance: Failure to comply with University instruction pertaining to the containment of coronavirus or of COVID-19, including, but not limited to:

1. Completing the 'campus daily screener' each day before coming onto campus;
2. Following the direction of the Campus Health Center regarding a positive screen;
3. Wearing, at minimum, a cloth facial covering at all times when in public spaces on campus;
4. Maintaining a minimum distance of not less than six feet from others when on campus;
5. Complying with signage regarding directional hallways, elevators, common spaces, and stairwells.

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