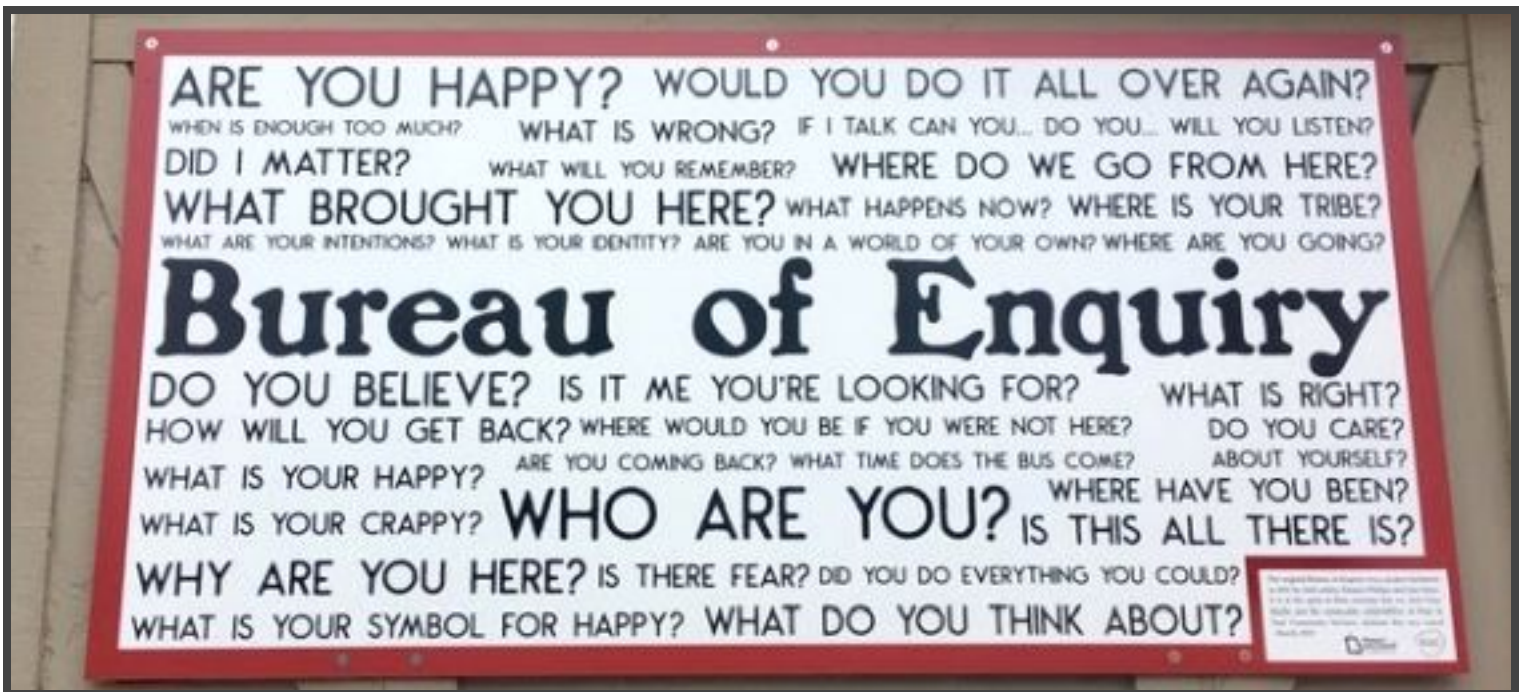


# STLCC ADJUNCT NEWSLETTER #2

April 17th, 2020

## Teaching in the Time of Coronavirus: Taking Deep Breaths, Looking Forward, & Contemplating the Power of “Collateral Beauty”



Art Installation By: Red Chair Studio (STL) / Original Project By: Eleanor Phillips & Jean Bates

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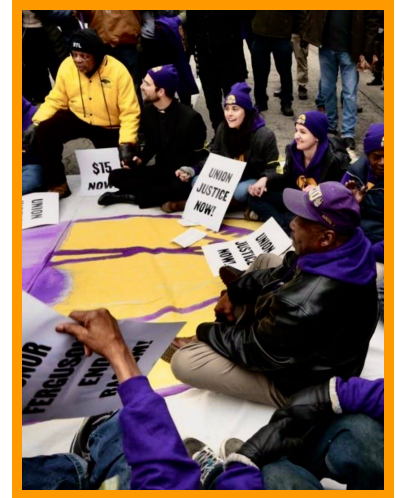
## An Update on Collective Bargaining

By: Kat Fossell, Chief Steward, English Department, Meramec

Hello lovely people! It is my honor to write to you once again. This month, I would like to inform you that our negotiations with administrators regarding our contract with STLCC have been pushed back. We currently do not know exactly when we will be reconvening at the bargaining table, but we expect to have set dates by May.

In the meantime, adjuncts have been working on a Collective Bargaining Survey which all of you will be receiving soon. Your feedback is very important! This survey is the main tool we have available to us at this time of social distancing to ensure that we can negotiate for the issues you find most important. If new issues are coming to light for you during this time, the survey is how you can let members of the bargaining committee know.

Thank you all for taking the time to review this important information. I hope that life in quarantine is treating you well, and I hope you are treating yourself well. Don't forget to take a break every once in a while.



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## Coping With the Changes

By: Liesa Hartin, Physical Education Department, Wildwood & Forest Park



Hi Fellow Adjuncts! Crazy times, Right?

I hope this finds you in a better place as we move into the second week of navigating online classes.

Personally this transition has been extremely stressful. I teach Yoga for the district. Trying to figure out how to do virtual Yoga was itself a major deal. Then you add technology that completely skipped my generation, and I was completely overwhelmed and STRESSED. (I thought ZOOM meant traveling fast.) Now I am almost an expert at ZOOM Classes. (Who knew?)

I was asked to share some thoughts on coping with the stress and anxiety this change has caused. Here are some tips that have helped me. Hopefully they will minister to you in this crazy time.

1. **BREATHE:** Just sit down and breathe. Closing your eyes, breathe 4 counts in through your nose and four counts out through your nose. Do at least four cycles and you will find your mind and body will start to slow down and relax. Have quiet time in the morning, with at least 5 minutes of mindfulness to start your day.
2. **Stay Connected:** Look for ways to stay connected with others. Remember the important people in your life. We might have to isolate physically but DO NOT isolate socially or emotionally. You need others and they need you. Think beyond yourself. Reach out to others. How can we make this situation better? This counts even if it is just for your loved ones.
3. **Enjoy:** Take the time given to write a new chapter in your life. Do things you have been putting off. Clean that closet or read that book. You could literally write a book. (Now there is an idea.) This is totally a FIRST in my lifetime, and I am sure your journey through this situation will be very interesting to future generations. Journal your thoughts, feelings and experiences.
4. **Take Care of Yourself:** You are a four-part person. If any areas get out of balance that is when your health suffers. **Physically:** Make good food and drink choices. You have to stay active, and move. Walking, biking, etc.: Engage in life! **Mentally:** Keep a positive mind-set. A growth mind-set. Be a “Warrior”. You will persevere, you will NOT quit. **Emotionally:** Connect with others, laugh, breathe, and be kind to yourself and others. **Spiritually:** Let Go Let God! Get out in nature. Pray, have faith, believe. This will pass, we will be okay.

I am glad we are not doing this alone. We have a great District and great fellow Adjuncts who are always willing to help each other. **If you would like to do Yoga during this time at home contact me. I will set up an Adjunct Yoga ZOOM class and lead you in some relaxation and Yoga poses. Seriously, I will!** Take-care of yourself.

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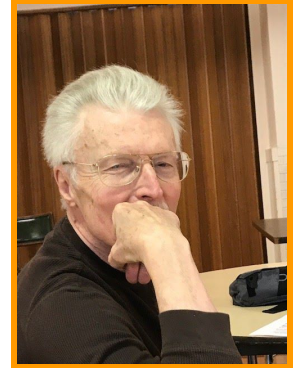
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## Some Thoughts on Education and the Next Pandemic

By: Dan Lehocky, Philosophy Department, STLCC Wildwood Campus, & UMSL

STLCC has been grounded. Like teens that broke curfew, we -administrators, faculty, and staff alike- are stuck in our rooms with boredom, fear, and computers as our best friends. Blackboard Collaborate offers some relief but everyone wants to “get back to normal”. I sure do.

But what will normal look like? I’d like to share a few thoughts on the constructive role STLCC can play in responding to future pandemics.



Addressing pandemics requires competent political leadership at all levels of government, a leadership capable of recognizing the seriousness of such threats and acting decisively to address them. This means, in turn, that plans and mechanisms must be put in place so that, when a pandemic threatens, governments and other institutions can quickly hit the ground running. As Covid-19 has demonstrated, speed is of the essence. Pandemics unfold exponentially. A delay of even a week can mean the difference between containing an outbreak and losing control over it.

STLCC and other educational institutions have a vital role to play in this preparation. Schools are places where millions of people congregate every day and, as a result, can be the incubators of epidemics. School administrations, therefore, have a special responsibility to formulate clear guidelines of how they will respond when an infectious outbreak threatens in the future.

What those guidelines should look like is a complex topic which I think will require the input of many stakeholders to define. I, as one of those stakeholders, have a few suggestions, here directed specifically at STLCC but likely applicable to other schools and institutions. **I encourage other readers of this article to compose their own lists and submit them to this newsletter.**

### Policy Definition Process

A process needs to put in place to develop a comprehensive plan to deal with future epidemics. Since all members of STLCC are vulnerable – administrators, faculty, staff, and students – all should be represented in formulating the plan. One possible mechanism for implementing the process is the STLCC Faculty Senate. The senate bylaws could be modified to include a mechanism of direct decision-making representation by stakeholders regarding pandemic preparedness.

### Self-Education

When school shootings were recognized as a chronic problem for which an organized response by educational institutions was necessary, one element of that response was educating school

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employees about what to do in an active shooter event. This was done by requiring employees to take online training so they could know what they should do. I suggest that a comparable type of pandemic self-education required of everyone -- administrators, faculty, staff, and students -- should be part of a pandemic preparedness package.

### **Curriculum Integration**

This recommendation is partly inspired by an old idea regarding the point of education which I think is in danger of being lost: **education is not just about imparting skills needed for jobs. It's also about equipping people with an understanding of the broader world they live in and how to navigate it as responsible citizens.**

This applies to pandemics, and in watching the way Covid-19 has affected every nook and cranny of society, it strikes me that the topic has a place in just about every course taught at universities, biology, history, mathematics, computer science - you name it. **Educationally, we are in a huge “teachable moment”.** By integrating the topic of pandemics into their course materials, instructors can dramatize the importance of the subject in student lives at a time when they are paying close attention to it. To illustrate what I mean, I use my own field, philosophy – the study of critical thinking. Here are some examples:

In my Introduction to Philosophy class, at Wildwood, we discuss the question of when governments are justified in forcing people to obey the law. The response to Covid-19 represents a globally massive exercise of state coercive power which severely limits personal freedom. Is that legitimate?

In my Introduction to Logic class, at Wildwood, we discuss the scientific reasoning behind clinical trials. Covid-19 has inspired an explosion of research into potential vaccines against the virus and treatments for its symptoms. All of these possibilities will require lengthy clinical trials. Covid-19 provides a timely example of what that process looks like and their rationale.

In my Bioethics course (taught at UMSL), one of our topics is when euthanasia (mercy killing) is justified. Covid-19 illustrates a painful example of this dilemma. When medical resources are in short supply, it becomes necessary to “triage” patients: decide who will be treated and who will not. If patients can't be treated, what should be done? Let patients die in misery or euthanize them?

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## Moving Online: Creating New Opportunities to Collectively Witness the Real, True, Good, & Beautiful

By: Jeanne Welling Sabbert Smith, Philosophy: STLCC, St. Louis University, & Maryville University

A few years ago when I was doing training for online teaching I got stuck on a question: What is your philosophy of online education? I got stuck because I love being in the classroom. I considered it the one benefit of my job, whereas sitting at my computer is what I am paid to do (no matter how little the pay). In fact, I never really wanted to teach online exclusively. I have used technology as it has become available, but I have always felt that an essential part of teaching philosophy is to help my students learn to become more comfortable being uncomfortable--with each other and with ideas that challenge their worldviews. There are things about being in a face-to-face classroom that facilitate this, though if I'm being honest I prefer the classroom because it is far more comfortable for me.

When we were thrust into emergency teaching and learning online, I was glad I had completed that training in online education. However, as I faced the complexity of learning and implementing new systems, the anxiety of students and peers, and a deluge of email with directives from three different institutions, I have been even more grateful for the time I have spent immersed in philosophy.

**While philosophers are not immune to anxiety, philosophy calls us to distinguish between our thoughts and feelings. It urges us to focus on what is Real and True and Good and Beautiful in this life so that we might distinguish what is worthy of our lives from that which isn't.** Awaiting his execution, Socrates said, "The aim of those who practice philosophy in the proper manner is to practice for dying and death." Each semester as I introduce my students to Socrates we ponder, "What does it mean 'to prepare for dying and death'?" For Socrates, this was not a morbid obsession with death or even a claim about life after death, rather he urged his fellow citizens toward a practice of virtue that would render death inconsequential. All of us will die one day. As mortals, that is a given. **How many of us will seize our opportunity to stand up for what is Real and True and Good and Beautiful?**

As I introduced my revised syllabi, I told my students that we would have new opportunities in the remaining semester for "applied philosophy". We would help each other get more comfortable being uncomfortable with things that none of us had planned. We would seek out what is most Real/True/Good/Beautiful in this new experience. Though I didn't pick the context, this is what I most hoped to share with them all along.