



MOVING FORWARD | THE DEAN'S VIEW



Persevering during COVID-19

Spring semester is typically a time when we celebrate faculty, staff, and students, and enjoy events that bring us together – particularly during graduation when we honor our students and their families.

While it is an extremely unsettling time, we are still together. We have adapted to a different daily life and I am heartened by efforts in this school to help others. Our faculty, for example, has produced videos to help parents reinforce reading and math with their children; established free mental health services through telehealth; and offered insight into the effects of COVID-19.

These are but a few examples, shared below. Stories like these convince me we will get through the pandemic, and we will emerge as a more flexible and compassionate school. Perseverance is a quality SMU and Simmons value. As we like to say, *Mustangs Keep Going!*

Stephanie L. Knight

ENGAGE



Professor Bing's Global Health Students Win Grant Funds for COVID-19 Campus Solutions

When the pandemic hit, **Professor Eric G. Bing** had to revamp his class, *Creating Impact in Global & Public Health*. His course requires students to work with community organizations in the Dallas area to improve public health, but with the outbreak, Bing was forced to suspend students' case work. Then an opportunity arose: a request for student proposals came in from **REVTECH Ventures** for \$5,000 grants to outline ways to tackle the spread of COVID-19 on college campuses.

Bing's students formed five teams and competed to submit the top proposals. SMU's online competition was judged by a panel of University officials and community leaders. From those, REVTECH chose two winners, **Team A** and **Team D**, to pursue solutions.

A physician and epidemiologist, Bing also has been tapped for media interviews on the pandemic. He recently offered expertise to **CBS News** for reports on easing restrictions in Texas.

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How to Help Young Readers

To help stay-at-home parents reinforce their children's early reading, **Professor Jill Allor** in Simmons' Department of Teaching and Learning offers **video guides**, based on her research on beginning and struggling readers, including those with learning disabilities.

Allor developed the literacy curriculum (**Friends on the Block**) with Simmons Professor Stephanie Al Otaiba and Jennifer P. Cheatham, Ph.D. The research received support from the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

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Center for Family Counseling Offers Free Remote Services

The **Center for Family Counseling**, which is part of the Simmons School's **Master of Science in Counseling program**, is now offering free telehealth counseling to anyone who needs it during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What started as a work-around to help the community during this period of mandatory social distancing has proved to be so successful that the center will continue offering remote counseling even after the staff returns to seeing patients in-person.

Counselors at the center are graduate students who have completed most of their coursework as well as clinical skills classes to prepare to work with clients under faculty supervision. The program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.

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Barbie Bungee Jumping? Home Math Activities Reach New Heights

Shelter-in-place requirements create new challenges for math learning – for students, parents, and teachers working remotely. To help families make math fun and relevant to these times of hand washing, neighborhood walks, and togetherness, Simmons **Associate Professor Candace Walkington** suggests Soap Bubble Magic, STEMWalks, and Barbie Bungee Jumping. See her **three videos** on how to do the activities.

Walkington specializes in making math relative and interesting to students. Her research includes engaging students in math by connecting their math skills to careers and outside-of-school interests.

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