Responding to COVID-19

STUDYING CHANGING COASTLINES

Q&A with DENISE SANATA
A message from the dean

In this issue of Progression, the magazine of the Gupta College of Science at Coastal Carolina University, we highlight some of our responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our faculty (and students) rose to the occasion and have performed extremely well as we sought to maintain our educational rigor in a challenging environment. We focus on three main issues: the University response; the college response; and the student response. I think these three articles will give you a good sense of the resilience of YOUR college and University.

We also provide a glimpse into what happens during the advising process through an interview with one of our first-year advisors. Further, you will find an article about how coastal regions and coastlines are changing.

Should you have any questions about our science programs, or want more information on any of the articles, please do not hesitate to contact me or the specific authors - my phone number and email are listed below; you can also follow me on Twitter at @CCUScienceDean.

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DEPARTMENT of BIOLOGY
John Hutchens, Ph.D.
Department Chair
The Department of Biology is home to about 500 undergraduate biology majors, 10 graduate students, 15 full-time faculty, and 10 lecturers. Undergraduate students earn a Bachelor of Science in biology. We also offer other programs of study that prepare students for entry into various health professions. Our department participates in the Master of Science in coastal marine and wetland studies and offers courses for graduate students in education.

Students have access to professors with expertise ranging from molecules to ecosystems. Faculty provide excellent opportunities for learning inside the classroom and out. Our faculty have varied research interests, and undergraduates can participate in that research.

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DEPARTMENT of CHEMISTRY
Paul Richardson, Ph.D.
Department Chair
Our department offers two Bachelor of Science degrees: chemistry and biochemistry. Our students often work with faculty on various chemistry research projects. Whether you are here for a course in science as part of the Core Curriculum or you are interested in becoming a chemistry or biochemistry major, please contact us with any questions.

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DEPARTMENT of HEALTH SCIENCES
Fredanna M'Cormack McGough, Ph.D.
Department Chair
The Department of Health Sciences is home to programs that incorporate evidence-based best practices for disease prevention, health assessment, health management, quality care, and patient safety. Through community collaborations and diverse faculty research interests, students can participate in research activities that connect theory to practice. The department offers Bachelor of Science degrees in public health, health administration (completion program), and nursing (2 + 2 Nursing Residential program and RN-to-BSN completion program). The 2 + 2 Nursing Residential program is a collaborative between CCU and Horry-Georgetown Technical College and is for first-time freshmen only.

The nursing completion program is committed to advancing the education of registered nurses to meet the local and global growing health care needs. The health administration completion program builds on foundation courses in associate degree and other four-year degree programs. The public health program focuses on the art and science of promoting healthy communities and healthy behaviors.

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DEPARTMENT of KINESIOLOGY
Gregory F. Martel, Ph.D.
Department Chair
The Department of Kinesiology at CCU is a dynamic unit of faculty, staff, and students who study and promote human movement (kinesiology) as applied to a variety of physical activity, sport, and therapeutic settings. The department houses a major in exercise and sport science (EXSS), minors in EXSS and sport coaching, Physically Active Living Skills (PALS) classes, and Community Fitness Testing program. Nationally, regionally, and locally, there has been an increase in demand for kinesiology-related services and programs; this is reflected in the rapid growth of the EXSS major since beginning at CCU in January 2008. The EXSS major is now the third largest on campus. Our role is to provide students with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes for effective leadership in the field of kinesiology.

We excel by providing quality teaching and by engaging students in hands-on research, community service projects, and field-based learning and leadership opportunities.

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DEPARTMENT of COMPUTING SCIENCES
Jean French, Ph.D.
Department Chair
The Department of Computing Sciences offers three undergraduate degrees, serving roughly 400 actively enrolled majors in computer science, information systems, and information technology. The department offers minors in web application development, scientific computing, and computer science. Both the computer science and information systems major programs are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology Inc. The department also offers a completely online Master of Science in information systems technology, which has a dual concentration in both security and data analytics. The department supports the University Core Curriculum and other majors and minors of study with course offerings in web development, programming, and business applications.

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DEPARTMENT of SOCIOLOGY
Robert Jenkot, Ph.D.
Department Chair
This is an exciting time to explore the Department of Sociology. Sociology has a strong history of being student-centered in teaching and research. We offer our students a wide variety of educational opportunities to explore the social world and to take part in changing that world. In order to maintain our student-centered approach to education, all of our professors are active researchers. We bring our experience with various topics into the classroom so that our students get to see what sociology is, how it works, and what it can be used for in the world around them. Importantly, our students are invited to work with our professors on research projects that interest them. Our students have access to professors who teach courses in: sexuality and gender; race and ethnic relations; social inequality; crime and deviance; religion; popular culture; social justice; health and medicine; sports; HIV/AIDS; juvenile delinquency; and the social relations of the South.

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DEPARTMENT OF MARINE SCIENCE
Craig Gilman, Ph.D.
Department Chair

The Department of Marine Science offers one of the largest undergraduate marine science programs on the East Coast. In addition to undergraduate studies, the department houses the Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies master’s program and the Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science doctoral program. Lecture, laboratory, and field experiences are integrated to provide students with an outstanding and well-rounded education. With our ideal location near the coast and collection of research-active faculty committed to undergraduate and graduate education, our strength is in providing individual attention and hands-on opportunities.

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DEPARTMENT of PSYCHOLOGY
Andrew Terranova, Ph.D.
Department Chair

The Department of Psychology enrolls more than 500 undergraduates. We offer a Bachelor of Science degree and emphasize the scientific nature of psychology and experimental research methods. Our 13 full-time faculty have expertise in a wide variety of areas, including experimental, social, developmental, cognitive, biological, school, and clinical psychology. Our faculty are excellent teachers and active researchers in the field, presenting at conferences, contributing articles and books to the research literature, and sharing their findings and expertise with the media. Through our research methods sequence, students gain extensive knowledge and experience by designing and conducting research. Motivated majors may find additional opportunities to join faculty research labs as research assistants.

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DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ENGINEERING SCIENCE
G. Wesley Hitt, Ph.D.
Department Chair

The Department of Physics and Engineering Science faculty and staff create an atmosphere of learning and scholarly work, applying the scientific method from a liberal arts approach. The faculty is committed to developing strong student competencies in physical and engineering science and its applications in a technology-rich, interactive, student-centered learning environment and to preparing students to successfully compete for employment or to succeed in graduate school. We take pride in our high-quality teaching using current pedagogic techniques, our proactive mentoring and advising, and our outreach to the local community. We strive to be a focal point for disciplinary scholarship and expertise within the college, and to collaborate with our colleagues in the college to actively contribute to the advancement of science. The faculty supports the goals of the University's Core Curriculum through general education courses in physics and astronomy.

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DEPARTMENT of RECREATION AND SPORT MANAGEMENT
Colleen McGlone, Ph.D.
Department Chair

The Department of Recreation and Sport Management enrolls more than 300 students as well as houses a graduate program in sport management. Recreation and sport management professionals create, plan, market, implement, and evaluate leisure and recreational activities in both the private and public sectors, as well as in both nonprofit and for-profit industries. In other words, our work is your play. The program works with the CCU Department of Athletics in several capacities and events, training students in specialized ticketing technology and sales techniques.

The faculty have a wide range of experience in the field, which they bring to the classroom to enhance students’ abilities to connect theory and practices. In addition, faculty maintain very active research agendas in which students frequently assist.

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DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS
Thomas Hoffman, Ph.D.
Department Chair

The goal of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics is to improve students’ mathematical understanding and competence. However, we also strive to illustrate the importance of mathematics, both as an interesting and challenging subject on its own, and as a tool that can be applied to other disciplines. Our two degree programs (applied mathematics and statistics) are designed to develop a high degree of mathematical proficiency, as well as extensive reasoning and problem-solving skills. We recognize the interdisciplinary nature of the modern mathematical world. Therefore, students may choose to concentrate their studies in analysis, applied mathematics, discrete mathematics, mathematics for secondary education, or statistics while still obtaining a solid mathematical background.

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Tom Hoffman can be reached at thoffman@coastal.edu or 843.349.2249.
Responding to COVID-19

Fall 2020 posed many challenges for faculty, staff, and students. But many of the challenges became opportunities.
Delivering valuable and relevant science education within the confines of 50-minute lectures and three-hour laboratories is a challenge even when facilities are perfect and students are present. When Gupta College of Science faculty learned that the return to campus in Fall 2020 would likely involve widespread remote learning due to the novel coronavirus, they knew that this would be a unique challenge but also perhaps an opportunity to leverage some distance learning approaches already in use.

Before the virus hit, student lab or field experiences typically involved 15-24 students, often working together on group projects. Unfortunately, the coronavirus greatly restricted the gathering of students in groups, and some augmentation of these lab and field experiences was needed. Angelos Hannides, an assistant professor in the Department of Marine Science, quickly adapted his smart phone video and livestreaming skills and began producing content for student consumption.

“The quality of the product is more than sufficient and the technology can fit in one’s pocket, a development unthinkable a few years ago,” says Hannides. While Hannides was a first adopter of teaching lab skills via videos and streaming, he still prefers hands-on teaching and hopes that “this will be an opportunity to show society why in-person science training is so important.”

Science faculty quickly recognized the need for multiple distance learning platforms and technologies, creating a steep learning curve at the beginning of the semester. “I have used Moodle for discussion forums, assignments, and tests, Screen-Cast-O-Matic to record lectures, Zoom for small group and individual student meetings, Moodle messaging to encourage students, and also...
text messaging and phone calls,” say Sharon Thompson, a professor in the Department of Health Sciences. Her experience so far has been positive, and she thinks other faculty share this opinion. The virus has “provided an opportunity for a higher education reboot, giving faculty the creativity and freedom to examine innovative ways to engage students.”

The transition to remote learning at Coastal Carolina University was facilitated by a bulk purchase of iPads and iPad stands with distribution within the Gupta College of Science managed by Prashant Sansgiry, associate dean. These devices allowed faculty to livestream lectures, labs, and even some field activities.

A final assessment of how the Gupta College of Science responded to the social restrictions imposed by the coronavirus is not complete, but there are some interesting and potentially positive outcomes. First, science faculty learned that good science teaching in a remote learning environment requires variety. “We can no longer be fixed in one method of teaching, but must embrace many different methods as the situation dictates,” said Paul Richardson, professor in the Department of Chemistry. Students also may be learning in new and different ways. Thompson thinks that “online education encourages students to take more personal responsibility for the learning process.”

Regardless of when the coronavirus pandemic ends, it is clear that science and science education are more important now than at any time in history. It is critical that science participation be broad and that science support be deep. The Fall 2020 Semester showed that scientists in the Gupta College of Science are flexible and adaptable in their approaches to teaching and research. This is a good sign for the future as “universities (and students) that are able to effectively handle remote technologies will thrive,” says Michael Roberts, dean of the Gupta College of Science.
Carissa Medeiros, CCU emergency management director, answers some questions about the campus reopening in Fall 2020.

**Q.** What was the biggest challenge in preparing CCU for the return of students in Fall 2020?

**A.** The biggest challenge in preparing the University for the return of students in Fall 2020 was the unknown. There were no best practices for responding to a pandemic caused by a novel virus without therapeutics or a vaccine. The coronavirus didn’t fit into a predefined scenario or pandemic plan. The CDC guidance was changing constantly (and continues to do so) and no one, not even public health experts, could say what the situation would look like days, weeks, or even months later.

**Q.** How did you address this challenge?

**A.** To address the challenge of the unknown, we instituted what we did know, what we were confident in when it comes to emergency/disaster response and planning. The University has successfully responded to and recovered from multiple large-scale incidents and six presidentially declared disasters since 2014. We instituted what had worked with previous disaster responses and recovery efforts, yet remained flexible in our approach, planning, and response. The CCU Emergency Operations Framework serves as the University’s guide for responding to large-scale emergencies and disasters, and provides the emergency operations organization. The concept of operations and organization served as the foundation for COVID-19 response and planning efforts. During emergency responses, we use a functional approach to coordinate resources and provide strategic direction through the Emergency Operations Center. These functional areas were utilized as the basis for the COVID-19 Reopening Planning Team. We expanded the functional areas to include non-traditional emergency response functions such as academics, athletics and recreation, international students and programs, etc. I also adopted some hazard mitigation planning processes to guide the action planning process for the committees. Each committee performed an impact assessment – not on how COVID-19 would impact their areas, but how the COVID-19 Prevention and Mitigation Standards impacted their areas/activities (6-ft. physical distancing, face coverings, etc.). This approach gave us the ability to plan for the “known” instead of the “unknown,” keeping in mind that we must remain flexible.

**Q.** How are we monitoring and managing the pandemic on campus?

**A.** We are monitoring the campus community spread and impacts of the pandemic on campus, in the surrounding communities, and the region. The COVID-19 Transition Advisory Group established specific metrics criteria where data would be collected, monitored, and assessed to determine the level of risk and trends on campus. The data provide snapshots of the impact of COVID-19 and are also used to develop weekly and biweekly risk assessment and progress trends. The Group meets weekly to review the data, assess the COVID-19 risk level on campus, and review and interpret strides made to maintain low levels of cases on campus. The COVID-19 Transition Advisory Group produces a biweekly Risk Assessment and Gating Criteria Report for the Emergency Management Executive Group.

We are managing the pandemic with two distinct yet overlapping missions: preventing/mitigating community spread on campus, and responding to the impacts of COVID-19.
Prevention and Mitigation: In June 2020, then-President David A. DeCenzo and the Emergency Management Executive Group adopted the COVID-19 Standards, proposed by the COVID-19 Task Force, which define the campus public health prevention and mitigation measures to prevent/mitigate community spread. The COVID-19 Reopening Planning Team (now known as the COVID-19 Operations Planning Team) then developed functional area action plans detailing the strategies or solutions to implement the prevention and mitigation measures on campus for Phase One. The COVID-19 Operations Planning Team committee chairs continue to meet weekly, assessing the Phase One action plans and updating processes and/or procedures as new guidance is released. Phase Two transition planning is underway.

Response: The University has also adopted testing and infection containment measures as part of its COVID-19 Standards, however, they are only deployed in response to a potential or actual campus case of COVID-19 and resulting potential exposures on campus. This includes symptomatic viral COVID-19 testing provided by Student Health Services, contact tracing and cluster investigations, COVID-19 case management services, and resident student quarantine and isolation operations.

Q. What changes do you see for the future?

A. At this point, I cannot predict or make assumptions on the changes for the future because I believe our biggest challenge of the unknown will remain. As with any novel virus, scientists will make discoveries that will result in changes to the CDC guidance. Even with the promise of a vaccine and new therapeutics, we must keep in mind that these important steps are also new, so the challenge of the unknown continues. I am, however, sure of one thing: the resiliency of our students, faculty, and staff. All of the planning that has taken place wouldn’t have been successful without the coordination and collaboration of faculty and staff. As we work through this fluid situation, we will continue to recognize that our success as an institution is dependent on our individual responses.
That was one of two topics students in my social psychology class could have chosen to write about. When I prepared the question about the political conventions, I thought that it would make a fascinating subject for most students. I was wrong. No one chose this topic and all 32 students instead chose a second topic: COVID-19 impacts.

In this short essay, I report what my students said about COVID-19 and how it is affecting the lives of college students. The questions about COVID-19 had four parts:

1. How has COVID-19 changed your life?
2. Discuss two positive ways COVID-19 has affected you.
3. Discuss two negative ways COVID-19 has affected you.
4. How has COVID-19 changed the way you are perceiving and preparing for your future?

The following summarizes their responses: COVID-19 is dramatically changing the lives of college students. Their most obvious priorities have become self-care and personal hygiene. They now also have a new behavioral norm – social distancing. “I cannot go into the doctor’s office with a loved one when they need me.” “I cannot go into the vet’s office with my new puppy, who is terrified of the vet, and does not know why her mom is leaving her.” “The worst was the passing of my neighbor’s mother, whom I had known since the age of 4. It was hard to watch her go from a distance. At that time in New Jersey, only two people at a time were allowed to go to a funeral.” They can no longer honor and support even those most dear to them. They missed visiting their grandparents.

On a personal basis, students have discovered ways to make the best of a bad situation. Whereas they forgo many activities, the time spent apart from...
others also enables them to reflect upon their lives and their goals, to come to terms with their new limitations, and to assess or revise their future plans. They have begun to appreciate more what they have long taken for granted, such as having a meal inside a restaurant, going to movies, and traveling around the country and abroad. Many students have picked up new hobbies, such as cooking, painting, reading, home improvement, etc. They relish the extra time with their family, and they are reconnecting with old friends.

Many students report becoming more independent and organized. They have become more future-oriented. They have realized that societies can change abruptly, and they need to replace worry with patience, persistence, and planning for the future.

“I communicate with my friends through social media or by texting or FaceTiming. At first it was okay, but eventually I got tired of not being able to see other people.” Clearly, something significant—physical contact, comfort—is missing from online communications.

As for their education, students prefer face-to-face instruction. They don’t want to sit with a computer in a room. In addition, students like to go on campus because that’s where their social life is located. Many students, however, are quick to point out that online learning has its benefits. For example, it gives them greater flexibility in managing their time. They establish more efficient work routines, improve their productivity, and enjoy extra discretionary time. Apparently, they seem to adapt quickly to the use of the various educational channels. Unfortunately, online learning does not come with a stable learning environment. Learners may set up anywhere—a bedroom, kitchen table, or café. As a result, the student may struggle against many distractions and temptations, such as watching TV, napping, etc.

As I reviewed my students’ responses to this assignment, I learned how much and in what ways COVID-19 is affecting their lives and future. I was reminded of Albert Einstein’s words to his son, Eduard, who was going through a difficult time. Einstein wrote, “Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.” I applaud students who continue to move forward, to make plans, to adapt to circumstances, to remain upright against the headwinds of social change. For them, that bicycle Einstein was talking about is the human spirit—our best hope for constructing a better future.
Growing up, I spent each year in eager anticipation of a single, fun-filled week: our family vacation to the beach. The beaches of Brunswick County, N.C., were our usual destination – a temporary home away from home – where we would spend the days swimming, collecting sea shells, playing mini-golf, and watching the summer sunset dip lazily behind the salt marsh cordgrass.

Every day during our vacation, the beach looked slightly different. Tides diligently rolled the shoreline across the beach; sand bars shifted to-and-fro; and waves were large and energetic during storms, and small and docile during fair weather. To me, this daily unpredictability – and impermanence – made the beach exciting and unique. Unlike fast-changing beaches, many other processes that shape the surface of the Earth are imperceptibly slow. Tectonic plates, for example, creep along at roughly the same speed that your fingernails grow. Mount Everest – the tallest mountain in the world – was formed by tectonic forces thrusting the landscape gradually upwards by a fraction of an inch each year. But beaches are different. They are geologic cheetahs, and can change dramatically within hours in response to waves, storms, and tides.
Impermanence is part of what makes the beach so unanimously appealing. In the U.S., between 1970 and 2010, the population of oceanfront counties grew by 39%, and growth is expected to continue. Globally, population density is significantly higher in the coastal zone compared to inland areas. In China, for example, population growth in coastal urban areas outpaces the national average population growth by nearly 200%. But, the same alluring impermanence that drives coastal population growth also makes the beach a risky place to live: the beach and ocean water levels are constantly changing and exposing homes, hotels, roads, and other infrastructure to flooding from waves, tides, and storms.

Along the East and Gulf coasts, hurricanes – Hazel, Katrina, Florence, and Harvey, to name a few – have caused the U.S.’ costliest natural disasters, in part because the coastal zone is so densely populated, developed, and vulnerable. On top of population growth, oceanfront homes are also growing larger, even in places that have experienced major hurricane impacts in the past. This perplexing trend of ‘building back bigger’ after homes are destroyed or damaged by hurricanes further increases the risk to coastal property from future storms.

In addition to growing coastal populations, climate change is causing global sea level to steadily rise. By 2100, nearly half of the world’s beaches may be 100 meters further inland than where they were in 2010. While the landward migration of the shoreline – also called erosion – will probably shorten the walk from your vacation home to the ocean, sea level rise combined with a growing coastal zone population poses a significant problem. Worldwide, up to 630 million people may be vulnerable to sea level rise-related flooding during the 21st century. Low-lying areas, such as those along the U.S. East and Gulf coasts, are particularly at risk, including New York, Boston, Miami, and New Orleans. Rising seas mean that the elevation of low tide and high tide will continually shift upwards. Think of it like a toy boat bobbing up and down in a bathtub as the tub gradually fills with water: the upward and downward bobs, like high and low tides, move higher as the tub fills – or as sea level rises. In Boston and New York, sea level has risen nearly a foot during the past 100 years. High tides – the natural daily upward bob of the ocean – now reach a foot higher than they used to, bringing the ocean closer and closer to people and infrastructure. With rising seas, storms
are no longer a prerequisite for coastal flooding: high tides alone can cause minor daily floods by overtopping barriers or rising up through ocean-connected storm drains. In the U.S., high tide ‘nuisance flooding’ occurs twice as often today as it did just 30 years ago.

On the U.S. West Coast, the San Andreas Fault – famous for its recurrent earthquakes, like the great San Francisco quake of 1906 and the Loma Prieta quake of 1989 – zigzags through California like a geologic zipper, separating two tectonic plates. As the plates move relative to each other, earthquakes are triggered, and the land is slowly squeezed upwards to form coastal mountain ranges, such as Big Sur and the Santa Monica Mountains near Malibu. As a result, steep rocky coastal cliffs line the coast, providing higher elevations (relative to the East Coast) for people and property, in many cases beyond the watery grasp of high tides and rising seas. While higher elevations help offset the immediacy of sea level rise impacts in California, other unique problems exist: rising seas are accelerating the landward movement of coastal cliffs, and beaches. In Los Angeles, San Diego, and Santa Barbara, by the year 2100, coastal cliffs could retreat landward by as much as 62 to 135 feet, and up to two-thirds of Southern California’s famous beaches may be lost, impacting between $90 billion and $150 billion of property and roughly 600,000 people.

To prepare for our warming future, scientists need to better understand how sea level rise and storm impacts will affect the coastal zone. At Coastal Carolina, research on beach behavior, erosion, and flooding is underway. Undergraduate students are measuring marsh erosion caused by boat wake along Myrtle Beach’s Intracoastal Waterway, for example, and assessing the effectiveness of beach nourishment – the practice of pumping sand onto the beach to slow down coastal erosion – using global satellite imagery. We are also working with the U.S. Geological Survey to predict the response of California’s coastal cliffs to rising seas, and providing our findings to the general public.

On your next vacation, look beyond the sun, sand, and surf. The beach is a comforting place to unwind, but it is also an impermanent – and complex – connection between land, sea, and society.
Q. What path led you to your current position as an academic advisor?

A. When I was an undergraduate student at Penn State, I had an awesome relationship with my academic advisor. She pushed me to be a better student and was the reason I got involved in the psychology department. I was the peer leader in her First-Year Experience course, and she helped me get connected with a summer internship. Early in college, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my degree. But during my junior year, I studied potential careers. I discovered I could pursue a graduate degree in higher education that would allow me to work in a variety of jobs, including academic advising. I thought it would be so rewarding to pursue a career where I could help students like my advisor did for me at Penn State. I applied to several graduate programs and eventually completed my master’s degree in student affairs in higher education at Slippery Rock University. I had a phone interview with CCU the Monday after I graduated, and I’ve been here ever since!

Q. What does your job entail?

A. My job is cyclical based on the academic calendar; my duties vary depending on the time of year. In summer, I am busy with orientation for new students. I give lots of presentations to students, help introduce them to CCU, and get them setup with fall schedules. The fall semester is probably the craziest time. In the Professional Advising Center in the Gupta College of Science, I work with a team of advisors, and we mainly help first- and second-year students. We welcome new students in the fall and help them adjust to campus life. We meet with each of our students individually at least once per semester, and we typically have caseloads ranging from 250-300 students. Individual meetings with students are a huge part of the job. At these meetings, we typically talk about how classes are going, major choice, and registration for classes for the upcoming semester. Conversations vary, and we are here to talk through other issues or questions students may have. Throughout the spring, we continue working with our students. Most students are transferred to departmental faculty advisors after their first year. It’s rewarding to be one of the key contacts for first-year students to help get them become comfortable with their new home at CCU.

All of our professional advisors also teach UNIV 110S: The First-Year Experience, which all students take in their first semester. We discuss common issues and provide students with a lot of information to help them succeed at CCU. We cover topics such as resources on campus, time management and goal setting, academic advising, managing finances, career exploration, stress management, and more. It’s a fun class to teach, and I love getting to know my group of students each fall. I have a framed picture of my very first class from Fall 2014 in my office, and it makes me so happy!

Q. What advising challenges are posed by the novel coronavirus?

A. The fact that students can’t easily meet with us face-to-face or drop by when they need something has been a challenge. During busy times like the first week of classes, most advisors have open walk-in hours to accommodate students and make it easy to address concerns. Since that is not an option in order to manage social distancing, things are slightly more difficult. Advisors are doing their absolute best to keep up with emails and phone calls, and our inboxes are constantly flooded since this is our main mode of communication. Being constantly “plugged in” to so many platforms (email, phone, Teams, Zoom) can be overwhelming for advisors, and I’m sure for students alike.
A. Email your advisor, and try to be patient. As I mentioned before, we are doing the best we can to address your concerns in a timely manner. Your advisor should get back to you within 48 business hours, and if you do not hear anything by then, you can try emailing again or calling. When you send an email, please give the necessary details for us to help you. We often get really short, unclear emails from students, and this takes more back-and-forth for us to figure out how best to help.

Let your advisor know if you find it easier to talk on the phone or video chat. Sometimes a question can be answered or a problem can be solved much more easily via a phone or Teams call. Remember, we are always here as a resource for you. In these trying times, we all need to give each other some grace. Winter break will be here before you know it!

Denise Sanata can be contacted at 843-349-6989 or dsanata@coastal.edu.

Q. How has advising in the Gupta College of Science addressed these challenges?

A. Advisors are available via email, phone, Teams, or Zoom during normal work hours. Throughout the day, advisors are managing these multiple platforms to help students. This fall, we conducted all of our pre-registration advising meetings through Teams, which gave us the ability to see each other “in-person” and also to share our screen with students to show them important information that was helpful for advising and registration (program evaluation, WebAdvisor, University catalog, etc.). The University has also implemented an Advising Common Hour on Mondays and Tuesdays from 1-2 p.m., where students can drop in to meet with us via Teams.

Additionally, the University has streamlined approval processes and advisors/students can complete paperwork electronically. This avoids students having to visit multiple offices for signatures. With the help of many others across campus, we are making virtual advising work. I think that our students and advisors have adjusted well so far.

Q. Do you have any advice for a student seeking help from an advisor?

A. Email your advisor, and try to be patient. As I mentioned before, we are doing the best we can to address your concerns in a timely manner. Your advisor should get back to you within 48 business hours, and if you do not hear anything by then, you can try emailing again or calling. When you send an email, please give the necessary details for us to help you. We often get really short, unclear emails from students, and this takes more back-and-forth for us to figure out how best to help.

Let your advisor know if you find it easier to talk on the phone or video chat. Sometimes a question can be answered or a problem can be solved much more easily via a phone or Teams call. Remember, we are always here as a resource for you. In these trying times, we all need to give each other some grace. Winter break will be here before you know it!

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CCU FACULTY RESEARCH PROJECTS

William Ambrose, Ph.D.
School of the Coastal Environment
Received $21,768 from the National Science Foundation for Research Networking Activities in Support of Sustained Coordinated Observation of Arctic Change.

Derek Crane, Ph.D.
Department of Biology
Received $10,099 from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission for a project titled Estimating Population Size and Age Distribution of Muskellunge in the French Broad River.

Paul Gayes, Ph.D.
Burroughs and Chapin Center for Marine and Wetland Studies
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