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Stampede: E-newsletter for students

Western Michigan University

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Stampede April 1, 2020

Western Michigan University

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April 1, 2020

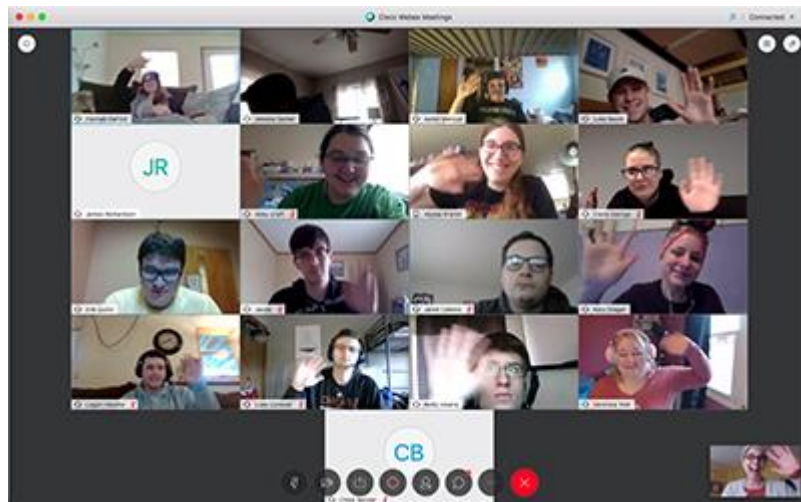
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SPECIAL EDITION

Students navigate the challenges, and even advantages, of distance education

From language courses, to fine arts and even rocket science, students across WMU are finding their way through the transition to distance education. Class by class, students are navigating the changes to procure new skills and a newfound sense of success with a growing number of online resources.

[Explore your resources](#)



It is with heavy hearts that we recognize the recent passing of chemical engineering student Bassey Offiong. Bassey was a young man of enormous potential who was scheduled to graduate in just a few weeks. The entire Bronco family grieves this tragic loss of life. On behalf of our community, I have extended my condolences to Bassey's family. Please keep them in your thoughts during this difficult time.

—President Edward Montgomery

WMU still serving students



[Faculty stepping up to support transition to distance education](#)



[Counseling Services helping students cope with pandemic-related anxiety, stress](#)



[Invisible Need Project changes, broadens some services in response to pandemic](#)

Sew worth it—Broncos use skills to craft masks for hospital workers

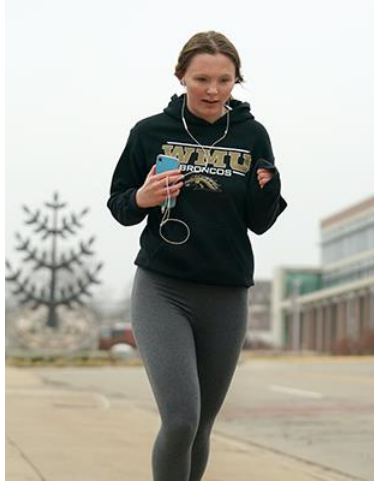


Stitch by stitch, fashion design students are using their skills to better protect medical professionals from COVID-19. They made more than 50 masks in just two hours to donate to Bronson Hospital, and they're not done yet.

[Help their cause](#)



[Jazz student takes composing experience to new level, livestreaming process online](#)



[How to keep your body healthy during COVID-19](#)



[Six ways to fight boredom during isolation](#)

Sindecuse Health Center is open with some changes

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, WMU students are still able to utilize Sindecuse Health Center on campus or from home. Hours and access to some services have been adjusted, including the addition of telehealth counseling services. All patients are asked to call before they arrive for any service.

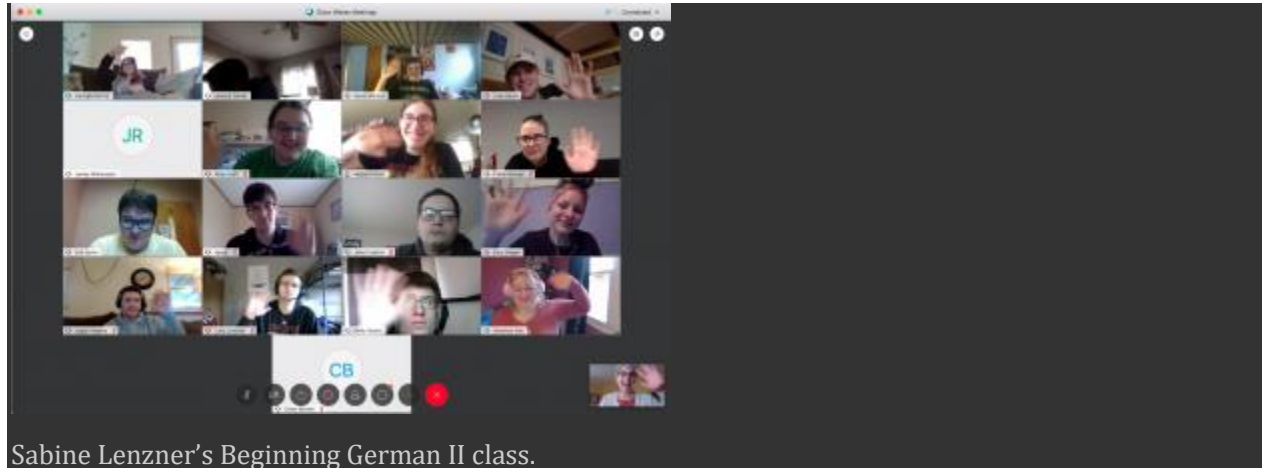
[Learn about the changes](#)

Students learning to navigate, adapt to challenges of remote education

Contact: [Erin Flynn](#)

March 25, 2020

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—From lecture halls to living rooms, the move to distance education has changed the learning environment for Western Michigan University students. While today's students are often technologically savvy and comfortable with online communication, it's still been a challenging transition for many. WMUx—the evolution of Extended University Programs—spearheaded a campuswide effort to make the shift as smooth as possible.



"The WMUx and Office of Information Technology teams have partnered with dozens of offices from across the University to make sure students have access to services, including academic advising, tutoring and other academic support teams," says **Dr. Edwin Martini**, associate provost for WMUx.

[A number of resources are now available](#) to improve student success. [They include information](#) about maximizing the educational experience and minimizing stress and anxiety. Plans are also in motion for a weekly email communication explaining various services and resources being offered.

"Our staff and faculty have come together to do whatever is necessary to serve our students during this difficult time," Martini says.

ENGINEERING SUCCESS

Learning via WebEx meeting isn't rocket science. If it was, **Grace Dybing** says her aerospace engineering instructors would pass with flying colors.

"I think that they have done a great job with getting their classes online, and now when I put on my headphones, it's just like being in the classroom," she says, adding professors have been able to keep the classes active by using chat functions.



Grace Dybing works on her computer alongside her dog, Zeke.

"My project-based classes have changed a bit more, and anything that was supposed to be a group presentation has become more challenging. But my professors have lots of ideas on how to make it work."

Dybing, who graduates this semester, found software that allows her and her senior design project partner to control their lab computer remotely. She also learned some new skills to help record lessons for the labs she runs as a teaching assistant.

"Learning how to edit the videos has definitely made me think creatively and in different ways than I'm used to," she says, joking that she could fall back on a career as a Youtuber.

Dybing admits being nervous when she first heard about the shift to distance education, but she's discovered the silver lining in new opportunities—like being able to go back and listen to lectures after class because they're recorded now.

"Now that we are beginning to figure out how to complete our projects, it's only a minor inconvenience," Dybing says. "I think the faculty are working really hard to give us the best education they can, and it shows."

It's not surprising the WMU community is stepping up to adapt to this challenge. That, she says, is what Broncos do.

"They stick together in herds and put up a strong fight when threatened. I think our professors in particular, but also our maintenance and custodial staff, Dining Services and Residence Life, are doing a great job of getting us through this."

NEW SPIN ON LEARNING



Jolin Cramer participates in a dance class in her living room.

Dance is about conveying and evoking emotion through movement. Senior dance major **Jolin Cramer** has plenty of inspiration with the changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Personally, my biggest challenge is dealing with the grief of leaving my senior year behind," she says. "It was hard to process being a production major with no more productions, a dancer with no more performances and a student with no more warm-ups, naps in the student lounge or improv jams with my friends."

Cramer has come to terms with the fact the end of her college career will look a little different than she planned.

"My graduation dress came in the mail the day commencement was postponed—that hit hard. I was sad for a while and everything felt like a simulation, but then I got inspired. Inspired by my friends, faculty and people from all over the world who I have never met."



Cramer dances in her room.

While classes have changed through distance learning, Cramer has come to find comfort in sharing space with her classmates—even if that space is on a computer screen.

“I am pleasantly surprised by the efforts of the College of Fine Arts and their commitment to giving us the best possible education they can,” Cramer says. “As students who are privileged with great studio spaces, virtual dance classes can be difficult, but we found a new way to normalize the circumstance and ‘crank our personal volume’ during a time of uncertainty.”

Cramer’s classes meet every day at 9 and 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., during which students push their furniture aside or find a spot in the basement to dance in unison. Those sessions have quickly become her favorite moments in the day.

“We reflect on our classes and incorporate certain tasks into our daily life.”

One class even had a virtual birthday party for a professor. She and other students each held a candle and sang happy birthday, blowing out the flames in unison. Those classmates have become her family, and WMU, says Cramer, has become home.

“I have always been of the mindset that this is something much bigger than all of us,” she says. “I am not surprised by the constant support, uplifting messages and desire to help from the community. It’s overwhelming in the best way to know that we are all in this together.”

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [WMU News](#) online.

Faculty stepping up to support transition to distance education

Contact: [Erin Flynn](#)

March 17, 2020



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

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

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

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

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



Stinson reads from slides in her presentation.

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

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

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

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

Students are supporting instructors, as well.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [WMU News](#) online.

Counseling Services helping students cope with pandemic-related anxiety, stress

Contact: [Joy Brown](#)

March 23, 2020



KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Western Michigan University’s Counseling Services has been helping a greater number of students cope with pandemic-related anxiety and stress, and is committed to doing so for the duration of this crisis and beyond.

Located at Sincuse Health Center, Counseling Services is now offering telehealth counseling for qualifying students both on and off campus, as long as they meet eligibility requirements.

Along with health-related fears for themselves and loved ones, and disruption to routines, “there has been some grief associated with losing out on experiences as a result of cancellations and also frustration,” says Dr. Brian Fuller, director of counseling services. “This has had an impact on sleep patterns, appetite and focus at times.”



Western Michigan University Counseling Services Director Brian Fuller, Ph.D., LLP

He wants to reassure WMU students that Counseling Services is open and available to offer emotional help virtually. They are scheduling crisis appointments, continuing to work with established clients and helping students now residing at home to find local mental health providers, all while prescreening everyone who still needs to access services in person at Sindecuse Health Center to reduce the potential for COVID-19 spread.

“Things have been evolving rapidly and, as a result, we have and will continue to adapt to help meet the needs of our WMU students,” says Fuller. “We are working very hard to plan carefully how to continue to support all WMU students during this difficult time.”

Sindecuse Health Center is encouraging anyone in need of counseling services to call (269) 387-1850 to talk to an intake counselor for prescreening. Any student seeking telehealth counseling must meet the screening criteria and eligibility requirements, which one can [read through online](#).

Fuller says for anyone experiencing mental health issues, your support network is a good place to start.

“Stay connected and check in with others on a regular basis and ask them how you can best support them at this time,” Fuller says. “Also, focus on your own self-care so that you are in a good space to help support others if needed.”

For those suffering from anxiety and stress, Fuller suggests the following reduction measures:

- Try to limit the time you spend consuming COVID-19 news. Maybe check in once a day.
- Visit state and local government sites for up-to-date closings information, and visit reputable sites such as the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for correct information about the virus.
- Do your best to maintain a regular sleep schedule. Try to go to sleep and wake up at roughly the same times.
- Develop and maintain a routine with regard to study, relaxation, meals, exercise and sleep.
- Maintain good nutrition and regular meals.
- Limit intake of caffeine and alcohol.
- Stay active and spend time outdoors, if possible.
- Do yoga, meditation, deep breathing and similar practices.
- Maintain social distance, but stay in touch with friends and family.
- Reach out for support if needed.

Online resources to help put these methods into practice include the [CDC, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) and [WMU Counseling Services](#).

Fuller urges people to seek professional help “when anxiety is causing a significant functional impairment in some way. You will want to assess for the impact it is having on your social connections, family, job, academics, sleep, appetite, concentration, etc.”

Here’s a list of places to visit for mental health emergencies:

- Borgess Medical Center ER, 1521 Gull Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49048; (269) 226-4815
- Bronson Hospital ER, 601 John St., Kalamazoo, I 49007; (269) 341-6386

After-hours hotlines:

- Gryphon Place: 221 or (269) 381-4357
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: (800) 273-8255
- Crisis Text Line: Text “START” TO 741741. A trained specialist receives the text and responds quickly.
- Michigan Voices4 Sexual Assault Hotline: For sexual assault victims seeking help and support. Text request for help to (866) 238-1454.
- STEVE Fund crisis line: For young people of color who are feeling stressed, depressed or anxious. Text “STEVE” to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [WMU News](#) online.

Invisible Need Project changes, broadens some services in response to pandemic

Contact: [Erin Flynn](#)

March 27, 2020

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—The COVID-19 pandemic has broad-ranging impacts, and it's taking a toll on all of us—physically, emotionally and financially. [The Invisible Need Project](#), which works to ensure Western Michigan University students have their basic needs met, is broadening some of its services to accommodate these new challenges.

“Students are scared. Some students are away from their family and don’t have a local support net outside of the University,” says **Kelly Reed**, committee chair of the Invisible Need Project. “It doesn’t take care of all of the concerns and anxiety at this time, but INP can at least help with food and urgent expenses.”

For the safety of students and workers, the food pantry is extending service to **Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** Visits, however, will be allowed [by appointment only](#), and will not include physically shopping in the store. Instead, items will be collected and provided by pantry staff. Students can access the pantry once every two weeks.

Right now, Reed says, the top priority of INP is fundraising for the [Student Emergency Relief Fund](#)—SERF—which is available to all WMU students for urgent, emergency and unexpected costs. The scope of assistance has broadened in response to the pandemic. Requests that have not typically qualified for SERF in the past, such as rent and utility assistance, will now be considered.

“A student could have done everything right – planned for expenses, gotten an on- or off-campus job, budgeted, but COVID-19 changed all of that,” says Reed. “Thinking back to the intent of the fund, we felt that if students were in need with immediate, urgent, unexpected and/or emergency expenses, donors would want us to use that money to help.”

Information about donating to both SERF and the Invisible Need Project are [available online](#). The programs are fully funded by the generosity of individual donors, from both campus and the community. While non-perishable food item donations are always welcome, monetary donations can often have a much larger impact.

“Through our partnerships with the South Michigan Food Bank, and Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes, your dollars go so much farther, and we are able to purchase food at a reduced cost—sometimes as low as 19 cents per pound!” Reed says. “That means the same \$4 spent on a box of cereal from a local grocery store could get us up to 20 pounds of food with the food bank.”

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [WMU News](#) online.

Sew worth it—fashion design students use skills to craft masks for hospital workers

Contact: [Erin Flynn](#)

March 27, 2020

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—As the influence of automation grows, some have called sewing a dying skill. That skill, however, is now helping protect frontline medical professionals from the potentially deadly threat of COVID-19.

Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services made an urgent [plea for volunteers to sew face masks](#) as demand for personal protective equipment increases exponentially. Several members of the Western Michigan University community are lending their skills to answer that call.

FASHIONING PROTECTION



Carly McKay sews a mask.

The news is hard to escape. Every day, a constant stream of updates on the COVID-19 pandemic trickles through various forms of communication. Senior fashion design student **Carly McKay** saw a clip about the need for hospital masks and realized, finally, there was a way for her to pitch in.

"This was an awesome chance to bring together design students who normally only have the opportunity to sew together when it's required for a class," she says. "We were able to do something together that was bigger than us and forget for a moment about the chaos around us."



Rose Soma irons masks.

She rallied together a group of fashion design students Monday to get to work. **Al Mauriello** brought along a few of her Chi Omega sorority sisters to help out as well.

"We were able to teach them how to cut the fabric, so while they cut, we sewed," Mauriello, a senior majoring in fashion design and development, says.

The group made a little more than 50 masks in two hours and have continued the project separately over the course of the week, donating what they've crafted to Bronson Hospital. Mauriello also says she's seen an outpouring of support and people interested in helping since posting a photo of the mask-making session on social media.

"Taking on this project allowed us to have a sense of unity during a time when many people are feeling alone," says Mauriello.

"It was empowering to come together to do something for the community," adds **Rose Soma**, a junior majoring in fashion design. "There's no greater feeling than doing something you love and helping people at the same time."

ADDING PERSPECTIVE

In addition to filling a critical need, the project also renews the students' appreciation in the skills they've developed in WMU's fashion design program.



Al Mauriello sews a mask.

"It made me realize that practically—regardless of passion, inspiration or personal desire that comes with fashion design—sewing is a skill people need, and I should never take my education for granted," says McKay.

It also opened the door to new career possibilities outside of the fashion industry.

“I hadn’t thought about designing/making things like hospital gear, so it may have diversified our career path considerations,” Soma says. “We also had to use teamwork to get an assembly-line system going in order to make production the most efficient. It was an awesome example of working with people with a variety of skill sets!”

Above all, Mauriello says, it helped keep her busy during this time of isolation and gave her an outlet to continue doing what she loves.

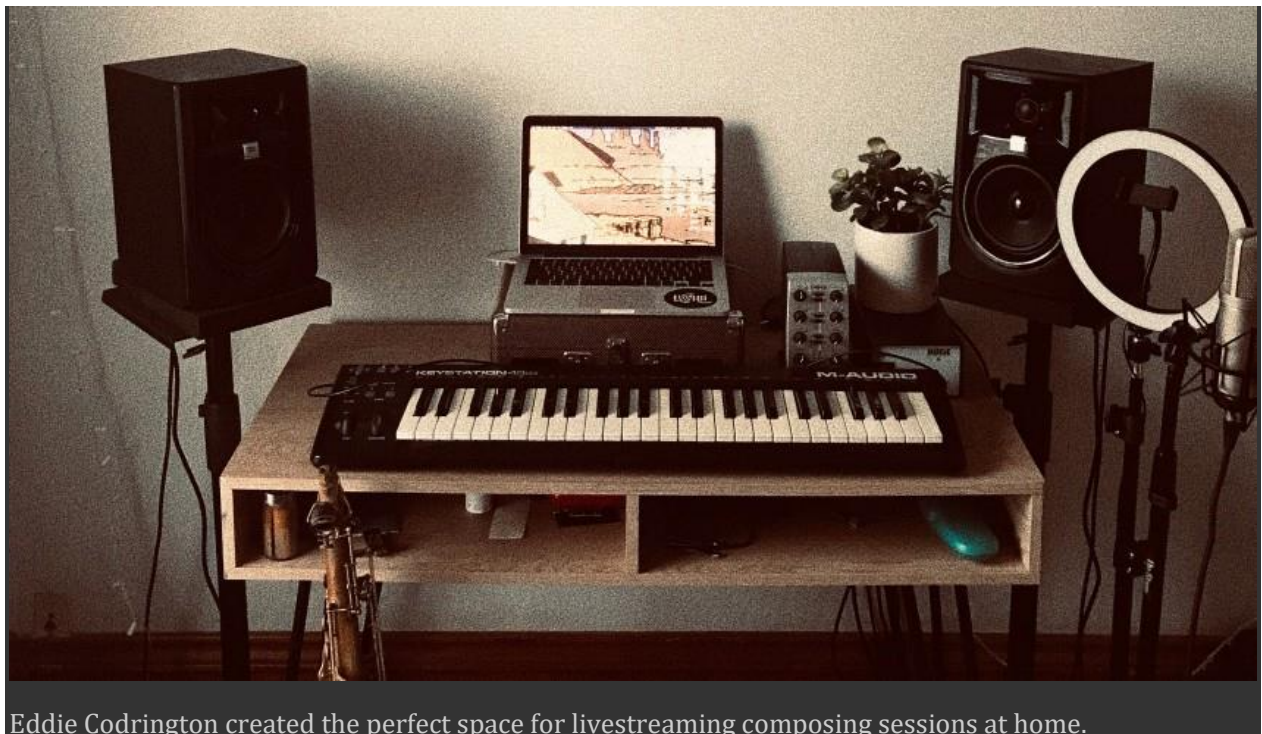
“We are all here to change the world one small step at a time, and I am just doing what I can to get that movement started.”

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [WMU News](#) online.

Jazz student takes composing experience to new level, livestreaming process online

Contact: [Erin Flynn](#)

March 27, 2020



Eddie Codrington created the perfect space for livestreaming composing sessions at home.

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Social distancing is spurring creative connectivity around the globe. As physical connections become scarce, people are exploring virtual collaboration opportunities. But, it's nothing new for **Eddie Codrington**. The highly lauded jazz student is always looking for ways to push the boundaries of composition.



Codrington plays saxophone during a composing session.

In December, he linked up with friend and Bronco alumnus **Yakiv Tvietinskyi**, who lives in Ukraine, for a "virtual big band" collaboration. The pair composed and arranged a song, recorded all of the parts themselves, mixed, mastered, edited the video and then [released the finished product online](#)—all from thousands of miles apart.

Now that they have some extra time on their hands with the new stay-at-home orders related to the pandemic, they decided to try it again.

"Oddly enough, the (isolation during the) pandemic has had a rather positive effect on my work," Codrington says. "I have been incredibly fortunate that it's worked out this way for me."

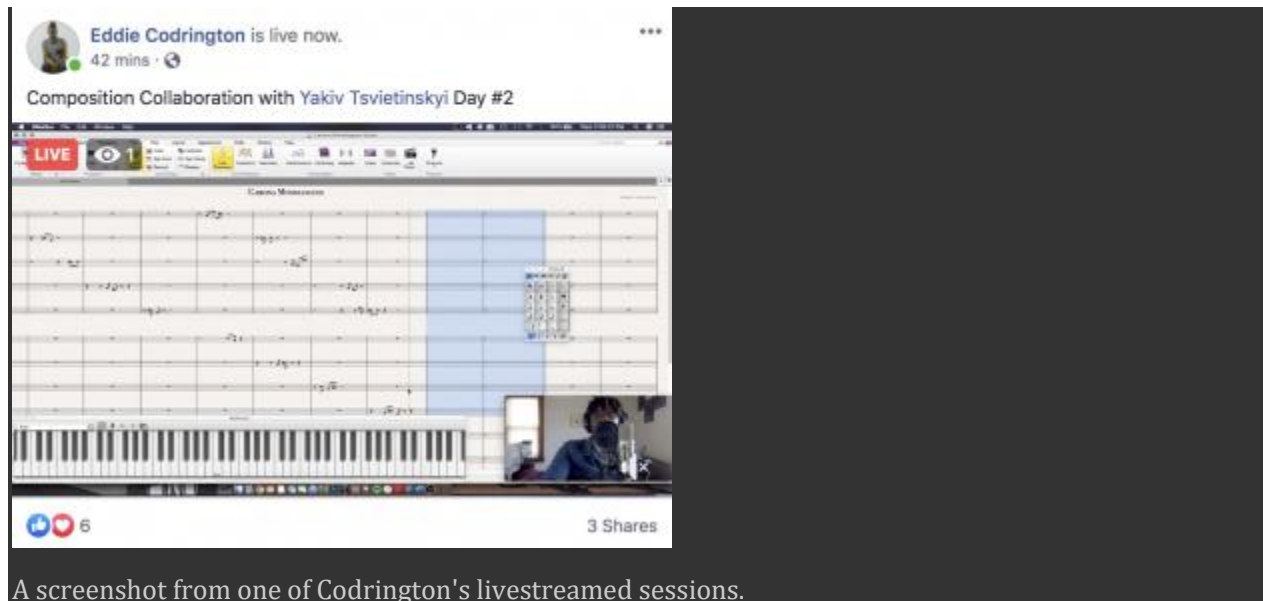
This time, he took the collaboration to a new level by livestreaming his composing sessions.

"I'm hoping the live composing will give people a chance to connect with me so that we can learn from each other," says Codrington. "Hopefully this helps us become a stronger community of musicians."

He and Tvietinskyi are working on two pieces each, with plans to create an EP.

"The response has been fairly positive so far. Students seem to enjoy seeing how the two of us approach composition, especially in a setting that's entirely virtual."

STAYING BUSY



A screenshot from one of Codrington's livestreamed sessions.

This isn't the only project keeping Codrington—who will graduate this semester with his master's in jazz studies—busy. Fresh off winning his second Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award, he recorded his first solo album a couple of weeks ago. It features some of WMU's world-class music faculty, including bass professor **John Hébert**, piano professor **Matthew Fries** and a string quartet made up of current students and alumni. The album should be ready for release in the fall.

Just as he thrives on and finds solace in creating music, Codrington acknowledges the catharsis of experiencing it. It's something, he says, we all need to survive.

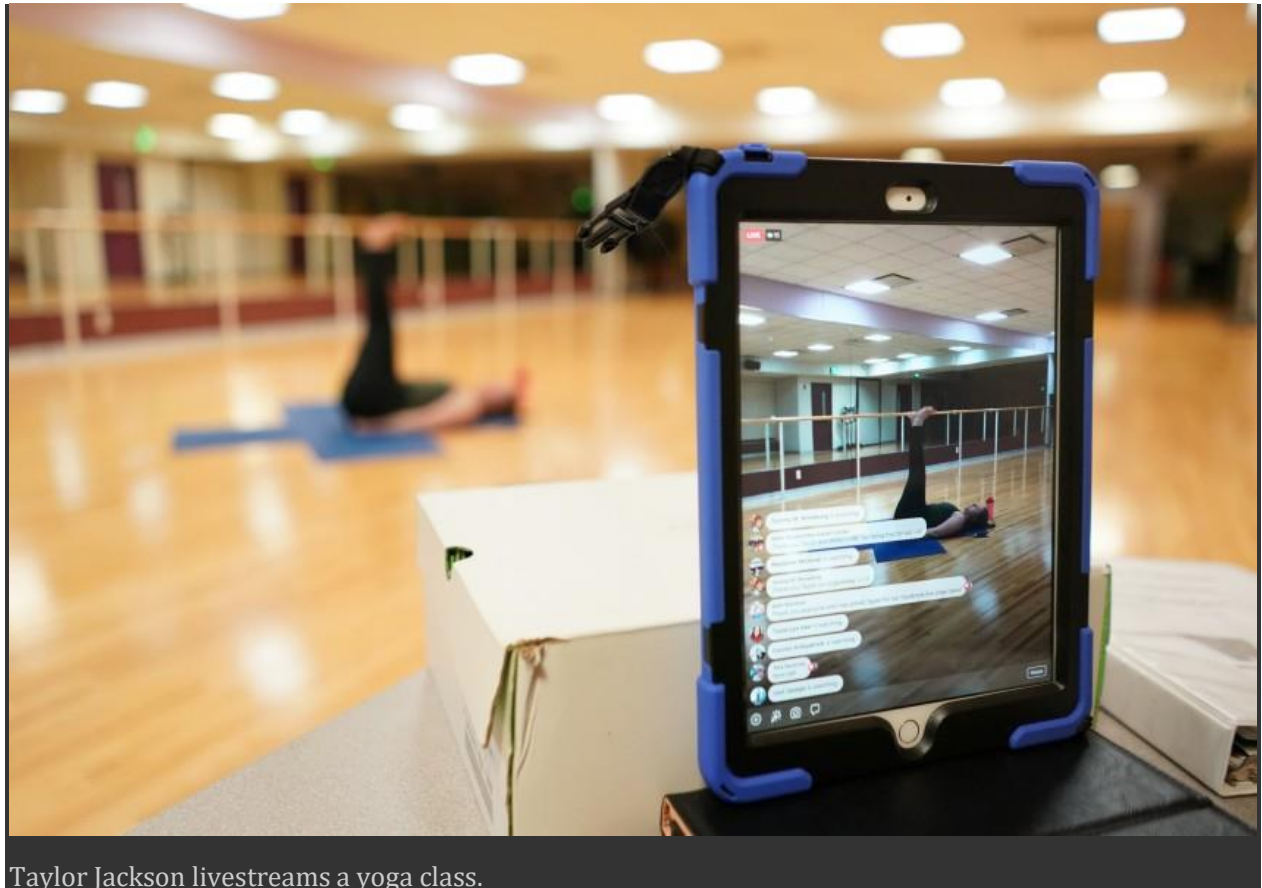
"Music—and I'm pretty sure all forms of art—is what every human being is now turning to," he says, pointing out things like dance challenges, virtual performances and shared playlists sweeping social media right now. "This sort of thing gets taken for granted when people aren't quarantined, and hopefully this time it helps people realize how important art is to this society."

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [WMU News](#) online.

Thinking outside the gym—SRC gets creative to promote wellness

Contact: [Erin Flynn](#)

March 18, 2020



Taylor Jackson livestreams a yoga class.

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—An executive order from **Gov. Gretchen Whitmer** closed all gyms and athletic facilities across the state until at least Monday, March 30—including Western Michigan University's [Student Recreation Center](#)—to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. But that action, says University Recreation Director **Amy Seth**, doesn't mandate inaction.

"Staying active during this difficult time is really important," she says. "Stress can affect our brains, and the rest of the body feels it. Exercise and physical activity can help keep us grounded. If your body feels good, so does your mind. A little movement can go a long way to keeping us positive."



Jackson focuses on meditation during her class.

With SRC services physically offline, the staff is getting creative and rolling out live and on-demand workouts online.

"After we found out that we needed to close and not have in-person classes available, this was the next best thing," says **Beth Northuis**, assistant director for fitness and wellness.



Students bike on campus.

She and her graduate assistant, **Taylor Jackson**, started brainstorming classes that could be either recorded or streamed live on the [WMU SRC Facebook page](#). So far, they've tackled yoga, cardio and strength training and high intensity interval training. The first livestreamed yoga class has already been viewed more than 2,100 times. The pair also has plans for some outdoor classes as well as mindfulness and mental health exercises.

"Going out and doing something intentional is really going to help keep you sharp, active and alert," Northuis says.

Instead of heading to the SRC, many students took advantage of Tuesday's sun to get out and enjoy some fresh air with activities like skateboarding and biking.



Ryan Keough plays tennis with friends.

"I'm taking as many precautions as I can to make sure that I'm doing my part and making sure that I'm staying safe and healthy," says **Ryan Keough**, who kept social distancing in mind when he and his friends chose to hit the tennis court.

The SRC will update its Facebook page as more activities are scheduled. All of the workouts and livestreams are free and available to everyone—from students, faculty and staff to parents in the community home with their kids.

"We're trying to provide a wide variety of options and trying to really meet the needs of a wider population," says Northuis.

Wellness is more than a hobby for her and the rest of the SRC staff—it's their mission.

"My staff feels passionate about keeping our Bronco family positive, healthy and active during this time period," say Seth.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [WMU News](#) online.

Six ways to fight boredom amid COVID-19 isolation



Posted by Megan Looker on March 26, 2020

ENHANCE YOUR COOKING SKILLS

If you have some extra time on your hands, you can hone in on your culinary abilities. Whether you are a beginner or a budding chef, WMU Dining Services wants to help you through breakfast, lunch and dinner with these recipe cards featuring ideas to stay healthy and fed.

[Blueberry overnight oats](#)

[Breakfast cookie in a mug](#)

[Burrito bowl](#)

[Stuffed sweet potato](#)

STAY ACTIVE

You don't necessarily need a gym to get exercise. WMU's Student Recreation Center has gone virtual, [offering free classes](#) on their Facebook page with a variety of workout techniques to keep your body healthy and your mind sharp. If you're looking for something a little more unique, the Orchesis Dance Society is [livestreaming their classes](#) on Instagram, teaching novice dancers a few moves and ways to stay in shape. When in doubt, while practicing social distancing, don't rule out an old-fashioned walk or bike ride to see the beauty of nature, rather than staring at the walls of your bedroom.

CRACK OPEN A BOOK

You can ride with Huck and Finn down the Mississippi River, attend a party in East Egg or get to know the mysterious Boo Radley all from the comfort of your bed. [University Libraries offers remote access](#) to books and media, journals and research online. If you don't find what you need, you can also connect virtually with librarians to request access to a book online or have it shipped to you.

GET BACK IN THE GAME

Social distancing doesn't mean sports are out of the question. There are plenty of intense competitions you can get into right from your home. The WMU Bronco Men's Basketball Team certainly can give you a few pointers on [how to up your game](#).

CHECK OUT ONLINE CONCERTS

Your love of music doesn't end with your playlist. WMU students are [taking their talents to social media](#) to [provide free concerts](#) and tunes for anyone [looking for entertainment](#). A number of celebrities are also offering free livestreamed shows for anyone missing out on a live concert because of COVID-19.

EXPLORE YOUR ARTISTIC SIDE

Creativity strikes when you least expect it, self-isolating or not. There are plenty of ways to express your emotions through art. This could be a great opportunity to test out your drawing skills, try your hand at creative writing, belt out your favorite song or adorn a simple coloring book. If you find yourself getting some much-needed fresh air, don't forget to play photographer and capture the sights.