



Dear Faculty, Staff, Students, and Alumni of University Studies,

This edition comes to you a little later than we would have liked to get it out; much like most of the world, we have had to make many adjustments over the past several months. There is little doubt these unprecedented times will offer opportunities for reflection and change. There is a brief parable commonly attributed to Irving Zola:

You and a friend are having a picnic by the side of a river. Suddenly you hear a shout from the direction of the water – a child is drowning. Without thinking, you both dive in, grab the child, and swim to shore. Before you can recover, you hear another child cry for help. You and your friend jump back in the river to rescue her as well. Then another struggling child drifts into sight....and another....and another. The two of you can barely keep up. Suddenly, you see your friend wading out of the water, seeming to leave you alone. "Where are you going?" you demand. Your friend answers, "I'm going upstream to tackle the guy who's throwing all these kids in the water."

The Spring 2020 term ended much differently than any of us expected. I am hopeful though, University Studies students who have been accustomed to taking high-quality online courses were relatively unaffected by the transition the rest of the university had to make to online course delivery. One reason for this is our commitment to looking upstream for opportunities to problem solve and modify systems. You may not be aware that all our Full-Time faculty have additional training and experience in the development, delivery, and administration of online courses and programs. Many of our part-time faculty also have additional training and extensive experience in teaching online courses. Our faculty and student services staff strive to provide a high-quality online learning experience for all our students.

A few briefs:

- We launched two new minors/areas of concentration in Computing Applications and Integrative Studies in Healthcare Organizations.
- We welcomed the award-winning Chess Program as part of our Integrative Studies area, led by Grand Master Alex Onischuk and

Dr. Jeff Day; <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/ttuchess/>. They will offer a 1-hour online course in Fall 2020.

- University Studies academic assessment plan was rated as Exemplary a high achievement at Texas Tech. Less than 5% of departments receive such a rating.
- Spring and Summer 2020 Commencement Ceremonies were held virtually for the first time in TTU history.
- We are excited to announce our first Alumni recognition awards. Learn more about them, nominate someone or yourself, http://www.depts.ttu.edu/universitystudies/bus/Awards_Criteria/Awards_Accolades.php

As you can see, although we have had to find different ways to work over the last few months, we are still hard at work for you!

I want to express my continued thanks to the Student Services team; they were instrumental in moving all advising online, developing an online orientation, and have continued to serve students in new and innovative ways. I also want to thank our Faculty who have worked to help students overcome difficulties related to the pandemic during the Spring and Summer terms. Finally, but not least, I want to thank Nicole, our Academic Administrative Coordinator, and my assistant. She has been with University Studies for 1 year as I write this and has quickly become an integral hub for all things University Studies.

All of us at University Studies are hard at work for our current students, alumni, parents, and friends. We welcome you back for this upcoming Fall term and our virtual Open House, currently scheduled for October 16th from 3-4 pm.

We could not do all that we do without you, students, alumni, parents, and friends of the program. Thank you for being a part of our program and giving back to us!