

# CAMPUS UPDATE



March 2020

## Pierson's Perceptions

We are #TigerStrong! It is no exaggeration to say that March winds blew in many challenges. We faced them together. Students, faculty, and staff have been incredibly resilient and are adjusting to the changes the COVID-19 virus has forced upon us.

Our student who was studying abroad made it home safely even with the closing of airports. Statewide competitions that were to be completed in person moved to a virtual platform, and ECU students were successful.

Faculty adapted very quickly to teaching remotely and our students are being innovative and finding ways to be successful.

Our alumni, along with our current students and employees, are giving to the Share account so that we can help our students through these difficult times.

The University has delivered PPE to area hospitals, and our HHFS faculty and students sewed reusable masks for area healthcare workers.

Even though the storm is here, together we can weather it because we are #Tiger-Strong!

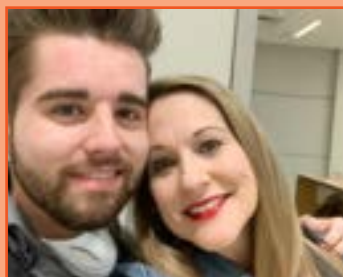


Dr. Katricia Pierson  
President  
East Central University



## HHFS students making face masks for workers

Students in ECU's Human Development, Hospitality & Food Service department are working to make 400 sewn fabric face masks for hospital workers. See Page 3.



## Lone ECU study abroad student is home safely

One ECU junior was studying abroad in Spain when the coronavirus outbreak hit Europe, but thanks to quick thinking and a little luck, he's home safe. See Page 4.

## Nursing school, health services donate PPEs

The ECU School of Nursing and Health Services gathered up personal protection equipment and distributed it to several healthcare facilities in need. See Page 3.



# TIGER TALES

## Biology student selected for Research Day

Daphnee Jones, a Biology major from Stratford, was one of 22 Oklahoma undergraduates selected to represent ECU at the 25th annual Research Day at the state Capitol in Oklahoma City. Jones's research project focused on bovine leukemia virus in milk. She did her research work in the Dr. Raniyah Ramadan Center for Undergraduate Research at ECU. Her work has been supported by NASA, McNair and OK-INBRE grants. The actual event was canceled due to COVID-19.



## Alum earns lifetime achievement award

The Oklahoma chapter of the National Association of Social Workers honored ECU alum Benita Erwin with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Erwin, MSW, LCSW, BAS, has more than 30 years' experience as a clinician, educator and consultant. Erwin earned her bachelor's degree in Social Work from ECU and a master's degree in the same field from the University of Oklahoma. She is a licensed clinical social worker and board-approved supervisor with the Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Workers.



## ECU places 4 teams in Love's Cup finals

The coronavirus pandemic has certainly slowed down daily life, but it has not curbed the competitive fire and intellect of East Central University Business students. ECU placed four teams (five students) in the prestigious Love's Entrepreneur's Cup finals, which instead of being canceled is going virtual this year. The finalists will compete in an online format on April 16-17.

Casey Black, of Chickasha, will represent ECU in the Graduate High Growth division with her entry "WhiCount." Representing ECU in the Undergraduate Small Business division are Tanner Jack and Halen Ogles, both of Ada, with "UBrew"; Chris McMahan, of Ardmore, with "Crop Cut"; and Cullen Edens, of Ada, with "Eco-Snap Tiles."

The Love's Cup is a collegiate business plan competition open to students on any Oklahoma campus. Students take what they have learned in a classroom setting and apply it to real-world opportunities as they assemble teams, identify products, research markets, formulate financial projections and write business plans. The competition comes when teams pitch their concepts to a panel of potential investors, much like the popular television series "Shark Tank."

"Our ECU students have spent much time and effort in preparation," said Dr. Stacey Bolin. "We are excited the competition will continue virtually rather than be canceled."



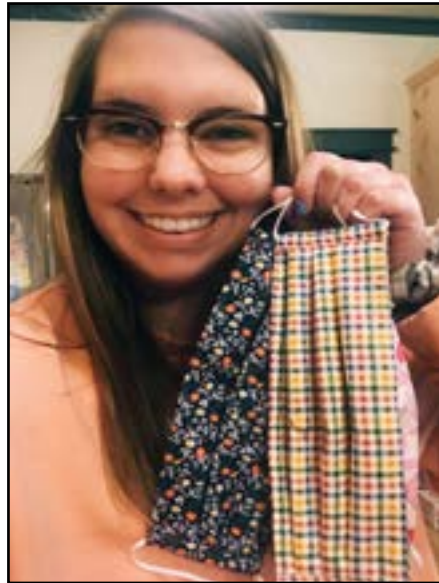


## HHFS students make masks for workers

In the midst of a global pandemic, some East Central University students are utilizing their skills to help keep local healthcare workers protected.

ECU Human Development, Hospitality and Food Science (HHFS) students are making sewn fabric face masks for local hospital personnel. The masks will help curb the unnecessary spread of germs and disease in those medically sensitive environments. The ECU student organization of Family and Consumer Sciences is also assisting with the effort.

“The idea for this project started when ECU had to take classes online due to the pandemic,” said Jan Long, HHFS instructor.



Kim Prince, an HHFS student from Talihina, shows her handiwork.

“Since I teach an apparel design and construction class, the idea was perfect. The students were all

in, even though some won't have access to sewing machines. They just want to help the project in any way they can.”

Long has made arrangements to get cotton and elastic, the two ingredients of the face masks, to students off campus. Before that she has to secure materials, which has been an adventure all its own. For example, elastic – in short supply locally – is currently coming from McAlester.

“This is very exciting to be able to help make a difference during such a difficult time,” Long said. “Everyone is helping make this pandemic more bearable by working together.”

See “Masks” on Page 5

## Nursing school, health services donate PPEs

With on-campus classes transitioned online for the rest of the semester, East Central University is looking for ways to assist healthcare providers during the coronavirus pandemic.

“We have been so blessed,” said Darcy Duncan, ECU School of Nursing director. “We have received support for our faculty and students from all of our clinical facilities in so many ways over the years. We know there is a growing need for PPE supplies, and we wanted to help.”

Both ECU's Ada and Durant Nursing campuses gathered the personal protective equipment they had on hand last week and donated it to healthcare facilities in Ada, Shawnee and Madill.

“We spend a lot of time teaching our students



about compassion and empathy,” Duncan said. “Sometimes it works best to teach by example. A gesture that might seem small, like donating a box of gloves, may mean the world to someone else.”

To date, ECU's School of Nursing has donated in excess of 5,000 pairs of gloves, 400 masks, 350 gowns, 300 head covers, and 300 pairs of foot covers to area healthcare providers.

“We are fortunate to have wonderful partners such as our healthcare facilities,” said Katricia Pierson, ECU president. “We cannot do our job educating nurses without them and we are happy to assist them in protecting our community.”

See “Donations” on Page 5

Give back at [www.ecok.edu/donate!](http://www.ecok.edu/donate!)

## ECU's lone study abroad student dodges virus to get home safe, healthy



Talkington quarantined in his room in Spain.

When East Central University student Jacob Talkington left for a semester of study abroad a couple of months ago, the coronavirus was only a blip on the radar.

“I had heard about it but had no idea of its severity or the implications it could pose,” said Talkington, a computer science major from Pauls Valley. “At the time, no one knew it would become such a big problem.”

Just two short months earlier, it was still business as usual. Talkington was all set to further his education at the University of Extremadura in Cáceres, Spain. His mother, Angela Doss, had other concerns at that time. This was her son's first trip abroad, academic or otherwise.

“The fact that Jacob was so far away was enough to nearly panic me at times,” Doss said. “I tried to stay focused on my job and trust God with my son. It was totally beyond my control, so I coped with these feelings through prayer and by being as proactive as possible in every situation that arose.”

Doss was understandably filled with conflicting emotions. Her son was realizing his dream of international travel but was suddenly facing an expanding and very real nightmare.

“We all wanted Jacob to experience his trip to the fullest,” she said. “I didn't want to see this end for him, but I knew we had to use wisdom. Once we made the decision to bring him home, the anxiety of something catastrophic happening weighed heavily on me. I was fearful that I couldn't get him home.”

Talkington, keeping one eye on his studies and the other on the spreading virus, also started to worry about a path home.

“It was a very odd feeling,” he said. “Sometimes I felt calm, like things were under control, and that people were overreacting. Other times it seemed like people weren't taking it seriously enough. My main concern was not getting sick. I was afraid that flights could start getting shut down and that I wouldn't be able to get back.”



Jacob Talkington arrives at the DFW Airport after flying back from Cáceres, Spain.

On March 14, less than two months after his arrival, Spain ordered a quarantine because of the coronavirus. By this time, arrangements had been made to bring Talkington home. Although he knew it was for the best, he felt disappointed his trip would be cut short.

“I couldn't initially bring myself to accept that I had put so much work and effort toward this goal and it was about to be taken away,” Talkington said. “It's definitely been one of the most taxing things on my mental state in the recent past.”

After spending six days under Spanish quarantine, Talkington flew home safely to the delight of not only his immediate and his ECU family as well.

Once home, Talkington started a two-week quarantine safely distanced from the rest of his family. On March 24, just to be certain, he was tested for the coronavirus; three days later the results came back negative – much to his and his family's relief.

“It's been stressful at times,” Talkington said. “Ultimately, however, what I've experienced has changed my perspective and my life. It has been a wild ride and I have no regrets.”





## Tiger Science

*ECU students Lizbeth Robles-Fernandez and Fernando Salazar-Salas flank President Katricia Pierson at the annual Oklahoma Research Day on March 6 in Weatherford. The two students presented their project along with instructor Dwight Myers titled “High Temperature Study of the Reaction of Silicon, Titanium and Yttrium Oxides.” Approximately 45 ECU students and faculty presented their research this year.*

### From Page 3

Long’s students are working from their homes making the face masks – one as far away as Arkansas.

Once a student has a batch of masks finished, Long will arrange to pick them up in a manner that honors social distancing guidelines. She will then transport them to local hospitals in sealed plastic bags, where they can immediately be sterilized in a washing machine before use.

Long said her students would be making and delivering face masks throughout April, striving toward a goal of 400 masks. Although she doesn’t anticipate a surplus after meeting the needs of healthcare workers, she said any leftover masks would be made available to local businesses and individuals as requested.

## Donations

### From Page 3

ECU is also working directly with Mercy Hospital to house clinicians who may eventually treat area COVID-19 patients.

If this scenario plays out, healthcare workers cannot go home and will have to be isolated from their families and the general public. Should it become necessary, the University will provide temporary housing for Mercy employees based on availability.

“As COVID-19 becomes more prevalent in the community, it

is not entirely unexpected that we would have co-workers who would need to be isolated in order to continue serving our patients,” said Terence Farrell, president of Mercy Hospital in Ada. “We sincerely appreciate and value the community collaboration with ECU and their willingness to help us answer our call to serve.”

Duncan noted that ECU will continue to provide whatever resources it can to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus in the area.

“I am extremely proud of our

full-time and adjunct faculty, our students and our clinical partners,” she said. “They all want to be out there to do what is needed and are proud to be a part of this amazing profession. I’d work alongside anyone of them, any day.”

The ECU COVID-19 Response Plan website provides the most up-to-date information on the University’s course of action in joining global efforts to halt the pandemic.

To learn more, please visit [www.ecok.edu/covid-19info](http://www.ecok.edu/covid-19info).