On Wednesday, March 25, from 4-5 p.m., a virtual town hall forum with UNC Greensboro Chancellor Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. and Provost Dana Dunn will be hosted by Faculty and Staff Senates. The town hall will be held online only, and can be accessed in the Faculty Senate’s virtual meeting room located at uncg.webex.com/meet/facsen. Instructions on using Webex are found below, as well as instructions for participating by phone.

The Chancellor and Provost will spend the first half of the forum addressing the most pressing questions and then open it up for general Q&A. The session will be recorded and posted on both senate websites. The agenda is here.

There are two options for joining the forum:
1. **Attend via video conference:** uncg.webex.com/meet/facsen (User Guide | Text Version). You can use chat, video, and audio (please remain muted at all times unless recognized by the floor). We recommend testing access at least 30 minutes before and you will automatically be muted upon entry. Two moderators will be standing by via chat to assist you with any questions or concerns once you enter. During the forum, you can submit questions via chat to the moderators.

2. **Attend by calling in:** 415-655-0002, Enter Access code: 801 035 104

### Suddenly homeschooling: K-12 resources and guidance

Dr. Heidi Carlone and a young student at the UNCG Wetlands in 2019

In these unprecedented times, with schools closed for the prevention of coronavirus spread, parents and caretakers worldwide are now teaching their children in their own homes. This task comes with enormous challenges, in working with curriculum to support children’s learning and in maintaining healthy family dynamics in a time of stress.

UNC Greensboro’s Healthy Relationships Initiative created a simple graphic to help guide parents in managing homeschooling, and the School of Education Department of Teacher Education and Higher Education faculty offer guidelines and resources below.
What are some practical tips for having school at home?

“The most important thing is that your children feel loved, cared for, and safe,” says Hooks Distinguished Professor of STEM Education Heidi Carlone. “Give yourself permission to not do this thing perfectly. It’s likely not going to look exactly like what you think school should look like, and that’s okay.

Provide your child with a sense of structure. A schedule helps, but remember that some of the schedules floating around on social media right now may be unrealistic for some families. A schedule does not have to be rigid or devoid of joy and choice. Make up something that works for your family. Your schedule will not look like school, and enforcing a reproduction of a school-like schedule will frustrate teachers, students, and parents. Additionally, expand your definition of ‘meaningful learning.’ Everyday activities like baking, cleaning, building, fixing, painting, and outdoor walks have potential for ‘meaningful learning.’ Also, arrange learning in 30-minute chunks, and take plenty of breaks.

Limiting screen time is likely to be tricky in many households, but try to do so. Children and adults get cranky after too much screen time and, let’s face it, we do not want additional reasons for crankiness. So, expect boredom. From boredom, imagination can bloom. This is uncharted territory for many youth. Remember that you do not have to entertain your children; provide them opportunities to be bored and to invent ways to entertain themselves.

Infuse technology in intentional ways. What are some ways to do this?

- Access information to figure something out (how to make a recipe, how to embroider my jeans, why are there so many birds in our yard right now?)
- Make connections to others (Zoom conference with friends and family, ask a scientist, (or another scientist), or ask a question of an author)
- Get feedback from others about one’s work (send a piece of writing to a family member)
- Create with technology (digital storytelling with tools like book creator; voicethread; comic strip creator)
- Engage in citizen science activities, where you collect data and send it to scientists (CoCoRaHS: community collaborative rain, hail, and snow network; School of Ants; Cornell Lab’s Citizen Science Projects about birds.)

Remember that it doesn’t have to be all academic! Watch movies, learn a craft, listen to music, play games, go outside. Make time to engage in activities that feel grounded and joyful for your children and for you. What does your child want to learn? Build from their interests. Let them create a list of things that they want to learn and pursue those. If they
are having trouble coming up with ideas, start slow. Build a list over time, starting with observations. What do you notice on the nature walk? While baking cookies? When your skin gets dry after repeatedly washing your hands? Everyday observations lead to meaningful and investigable questions.

Individualize learning experiences. In our National Science Foundation funded project, BRIDGES (Broadening identities for diverse youth engaging in STEM), we provide learning experiences for different modes of engagement – tinkering, designing, investigating, inventing, being a conservationist or altruist. So, you could take one central problem and tackle it from different modes of engagement. For example, a question about the types of birds that visit our bird feeder can be addressed with an investigator lens (identify the species, provide counts; systematic data collection) or an inventor/designer lens (can you design a bird feeder that will attract a wider range of species?)

Encourage youth to interact with their own spaces and their own lives – kitchen gadgets, cooking, toys, gardening, washing, construction). Since I’m a science educator, I’ll stress here that you can do internet searches that include the ‘science of [everyday activity]’ and find a lot of information here.

Good teaching isn’t about transmitting knowledge. It’s about giving youth opportunity to make observations, find patterns, ask questions, come up with possible solutions to problems, critically evaluate two sides of an argument, generate a piece of writing that persuades others or create a piece of art that reflects one’s mood.”

**Do you have any tips for schooling children of different ages simultaneously?**

“Find a project (or topic) everyone can get involved with such as researching a place, animal, person, history event, science topic, etc. Everyone works together and contributes what they can,” says Associate Professor of Literacy Education Melody Zoch.

“And taking time to preview the resources and understand them is very beneficial. Get to know what’s out there. There is a [good resource list here](#) .”

**How can parents work with educators in this situation and what outcomes are important?**

“Parents should consider what their child’s teachers are asking of them and try to cooperate but also be mindful that what teachers are being asked to do is way outside of what they’ve had to do before and they are also probably juggling their own crazy situations at home. In other words, don’t be too judgmental and it’s a good time to ease up. Everyone is uncertain and we just have to keep doing what we can, knowing it won’t be perfect.”
How can parents help kids understand what is going on?

“This social story about coronavirus may be helpful for pre-school age children,” notes Carlone. “Here’s a link to a podcast that is a helpful resource that explains coronavirus to kids, along with the science of soap. Here’s a link to a good comic that explains coronavirus.”

Could you give us some subject-specific tips and resources?

“Information overload is real, and more resources are being added rapidly. It’s time-consuming to sift through all of them, but I do have a few favorites.”

Resources for Science

“In science, we use a thinking routine that includes the following two questions: ‘What do you notice? What do you wonder?’ Then, you can prompt youth to come up with possible explanations for their questions and/or ways that they might answer those questions. This way, they are invested in their own learning and motivated to answer their own questions. Here’s an example of a nice notice/wonder activity with M&Ms for elementary students.
But, you could easily do something like this with nature walks, mechanical toys, kitchen gadgets, or an interesting, interactive website like this one.

Some museums and zoos are providing good online resources such as video series, hands-on activities, and other creative activities, such as those of the New York Hall of Science.

There’s also The Exploratorium’s tools for teaching and learning.

The Council of State Supervisors learning menu for K-12 learners has lots of great activities here that are inquiry-based, situated in everyday phenomena, and do not require a lot of resources or extra materials.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology (K-12 resources here): Activities that help connect kids to nature, organized by science theme, and have lessons and activities for grade level clusters.

Mystery Science includes many science “mysteries” and activities that can help youth solve the mysteries. These activities are inquiry-based and engage youths’ curiosities. They recently made their lessons available for free through June, with resources available in Spanish and English. Many of these resources require parent help, but they are currently working on an app that children can use on their own.

The National Science Teachers Association has interactive eBooks available for free right now on all sorts of subjects and for K-12 grade levels.

The Phenomena for NGSS: Virtual Science Education has some elementary, middle, and high school lessons that are excellent models for hands-on investigations that provide robust opportunities for observation, question-asking, and youth-centered explanations.

The BSCS Science Learning has an Educator Resource Center that provides online resources for free right now – primarily middle school resources – that are research-based and innovative.

**Resources for Social Studies**

“In social studies, you might ask youth for two different news stories on a current event. Which one is more compelling? Why? What evidence do both articles use?

There is a compilation of literacy, social studies, and science online resources that accompany the book ‘Read the World: Rethinking literacy for empathy and action in a digital age.’ You do not have to buy the book to make sense of the resources – the free online
resources are excellent on their own.

Lots of other educational sites are currently free too, such as Scholastic and Newsela.”

**Resources for Literacy**

Scribd is offering free access to ebooks for 30 days.

Your local library, if you have a library card, provides you with access to free audiobooks, movies, and ebooks. Download the app called Libby.

Kate Messner, a former classroom teacher and children’s author, has a website with a growing collection of resources, including read-alouds and mini-lessons.”

**Resources for Writing**

“When teaching writing, it is common practice to have youth consider their audience and purpose. The more authentic the audience and compelling the purpose, the more motivated youth will be to produce text,” says Carlone.
Dr. Amy Vetter, who directs the UNCG Summer Writing Camp, offers the following tips and resources for teaching writing:

“Kids can document their time at home by taking or drawing a picture and writing a caption about it. It might be nice to have them document something they learned each day.

Mo Willems, a children’s book author and illustrator, is offering [drawing lessons for kids every day at lunch](#). Not only is this a great lesson for drawing, but also for storytelling. My 6-year old drew six drawings. We stapled them together and then I helped her write out a story (K-3).

[Storybird](#) is another great resource for telling stories with pictures. This is good for kids who can write on their own, but need some inspiration from pictures to help them tell their stories (Grades 3-6).

The New York Times has [thousands of writing prompts](#) for older kids (Grades 7-12).”

Carlone adds: “[Kids Ask Authors](#): A podcast/website where kids can submit questions to authors, submit a book review, a poem, or a joke. And for the makers in your life, there’s [Three Weeks of Makerstations](#).”

**Resources for Math**

Associate Professor Holt Wilson has helped build [The North Carolina Collaborative for Mathematics Learning (NC2ML) Project](#) a research-practice partnership that includes the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, universities, and school districts across the state of North Carolina. Through this partnership, teachers, district and state leaders, mathematicians, and researchers work together to support mathematics education in North Carolina. Wilson also recommends the following sites:

[Kentucky Math Center](#)

[Youcubed](#)

[Desmos Global Math Art Contest](#) (For ages 13-18)

[Illustrative Mathematics](#)

[The Math Forum](#), which Wilson says helps parents to adopt the “notice and wonder” framework.
Food resources for Greensboro and High Point during COVID-19

Several partners across Guilford County – including Guilford County Schools, the Weaver Foundation, UNC Greensboro’s Department of Communication Studies and LEAP Project, the Greater High Point Food Alliance, the Greensboro Community Food Task Force, and Guilford Education Alliance – have worked together during this COVID-19 crisis to create a list of food resources for Greater Greensboro and Greater High Point. The lists include resources for:

- Food assistance
- Grocery store information
- Farms and farmers’ markets
- Local restaurants for takeout and delivery
- Volunteer opportunities
- Donation opportunities
The organizers are providing the following Google Docs to help locate food and communicate with communities. These lists will be updated regularly. If you see a resource that needs to be added to the list, please contact Marianne LeGreco at melegrec@uncg.edu or Kathleen Edwards at leap@uncg.edu.

The link for Greensboro is http://bit.ly/GSOfoodDoc

The link for High Point is: http://bit.ly/HPfoodDoc

These lists originated from several merging conversations about organizing food resources. The partners related to the conversation are listed on the document below the menu. The goal is to pull together all of the people who are organizing around food, and to reduce confusion about where to go to find it.

This effort grew out of:

- Guilford County Schools publicizing their summer meal network to make sure K-12 students had access to food.
- Work by the Greater High Point Food Alliance to network resources.

UNCG is a partner in this effort, and the leadership is dispersed among several groups who are working together at the moment.

Also, see the recent article on nutrition advice by experts for ensuring good nutrition while homebound.

Please contact Marianne LeGreco at melegrec@uncg.edu or Kathleen Edwards at leap@uncg.edu if you have any questions.
Dr. Christen Blanton Mack has made videos her students can rehearse with, no matter what instrument they play.

Making music is a social pursuit.

In very significant ways, live music feeds our social culture, locally, regionally, and internationally. Many depend on it to make connections, whether they are casual listeners, avid fans, or performers.

What happens when the live, social part of music is removed for an extended period of time? It’s not something most Americans have ever experienced or even thought about. How can we have a music community if we don’t have each other?

School of Music faculty member and alumna Dr. Christen Blanton Mack is making sure the UNC Greensboro Old Time Ensemble stays connected during this time, and continues to rehearse, even if the connection isn’t face-to-face. See one of her inspiring videos below, where Mack plays four different instruments so that her students can rehearse with her from home. And read more about Mack’s time with the ensemble and the experience of going all-online through her innovative videos.

Old-Time music has been important in the culture of the American South and North Carolina
for centuries. This semester, there are 35 musicians in the Old Time Ensemble, which is cross-listed as an undergraduate and graduate course. The players are a mix of music and non-music majors, and there are always a few faculty members as part of the ensemble, and often a few community members. Like most Old-Time ensembles, it’s made up of banjos, fiddles, guitars, bases, ukulele, and, this semester, autoharp. And as Mack says, “everybody sings.” They typically perform several times each semester, including at the Harvest Home concert with the UNCG Choral Ensembles.

Mack has been leading the Old Time Ensemble since 2016, when she began co-teaching with Mark Dillon. She also plays Old Time music with the Zinc Kings and has taught in the Lillian Rauch Beginning Strings Program and at Moss Street Partnership School. She currently co-leads a program at Leaksville-Spray Elementary in Rockingham County called Piedmont Instrument Classes for Kids (PICK), for third through fifth graders, which allows the elementary school students to receive free instruments and instruction from Old Time Ensemble members. As Mack says, “inter-generational learning and mentorship is a really important piece of traditional music.” She is currently preparing online materials for those students so they can continue the instruction they began in September.

Christen Blanton Mack performing with the Zinc Kings at the Festival of Lights
Tell us a bit more about the Old Time Ensemble and how it operates.

“We are a unique ensemble in the School of Music in that we don’t require an audition and anyone across campus can join the ensemble. Every term, I have people who live, breathe, and sleep Old-Time music and people who have never held an instrument before. Everybody’s success relies on everybody else’s support in the ensemble. I have people who have been in for four or five semesters, and everybody has helped each other at some point. Mentorship is important.

Old-Time music is not exactly in its element in academia, usually – it’s not really the natural habitat for Old-Time music. So, one important thing I can do is make sure that students have a lot of community resources, like knowing what jam happens every Monday or Thursday and where the festivals are in North Carolina – the natural habitats. What we set out to do in class is to create a community in our practice room, a microcosm of the Old Time community at large.

And right now, across the arts, we’re pulling out all the stops, all the bells and whistles for online content. For the Old Time Ensemble, we’re using the resourcefulness that Old-Time musicians thrive on. We’re going to let students know we’re thinking about them, and that they can still turn to other artists and musicians to improve on their craft.”

What are you doing in these videos?

“Old-Time music is about locking into playing music with other people – it’s more about with whom you’re playing than the music you’re making. It was really important to me that my students could still see my face. So, I’m using an app called Acapella. The video won’t be exactly like we are in class, but you can jam along. I play several parts on different instruments, and my husband is the bass player.

They do take some time to make. The ones I’ve finished so far were songs the Old Time Ensemble was going to be working on as a group, but I’m also doing individual videos for each instrument.

What’s the value of making them yourself?

“The people are the point. Social community connection is the point, more than having the music be perfect. Having them click on a video with someone they don’t know isn’t the same as having them click on me, see me, and know I care about them and want to play with them.”

What has been the reaction from students so far?
I’ve had people asking me for more already, for the jam-along format and individual teaching lessons. I’m using the Youtube page and also resources like Canvas Studio, where I can annotate it in the videos and the students can post videos too and we can interact and they can get one-on-one feedback and individual instructions.”

**What messages would you like to pass on to any student or artist or musician?**

“Don’t stop making music. Find a way to reach somebody else through art or music or dance. There’s definitely a way. Right now, we have to get really creative to make those connections, so look for those resources that make you feel connected to your community – even if it’s not about music. Reach out – and somebody will be there.”

*Interview by Susan Kirby-Smith, University Communications
Videos and video still by Christen Blanton Mack
Photography by Martin W. Kane, University Communications*

**New podcast explores collaboration, play**

*L to R: Dr. Nadja Cech, Justin Harrington, Dr. Lalanja Harrington, and Dr. Omar Ali chat*
during a winter podcast recording session in the University Teaching & Learning Commons studio.

The room goes silent as the co-hosts silently nod that they’re ready, and the “Recording in Progress” light goes on. They wait a beat, and the friendly and enthusiastic voice of Dr. Nadja Cech registers on the mic. “Welcome to the ‘Yes, and Café,’ a podcast that explores, learns, and creates with ordinary people who do extraordinary things.”

In the new UNC Greensboro podcast, Dr. Nadja Cech (Chemistry & Biochemistry) and Dr. Omar Ali (Lloyd International Honors College) speak with a diverse lineup of guests to dig into how the themes of play, openness, and working across boundaries and identities enhance their work, their research, and their lives.

And what does the title of the new show mean? Dr. Ali explains.

“Yes, and’ is the powerful, intentional, and creative practice of building with other people. The name comes from improvisational theater. It involves paying attention, affirming, and building on what others give you.”

Guests include UNCG faculty, administrators, staff, alumni, visiting guest speakers, and local community members. During each episode, the main guest is joined by a current student, allowing for a variety of perspectives and voices on any given issue. The first four episodes are now online and include interviews with Steve Haines (School of Music), Lois Holzman (director of the East Side Institute in New York City), Annah Awatarni (chef, organizer, Greensboro Farmer’s Curb Market vendor), and the mother/son duo of Dr. Lalenja Harrington and Justin Harrington (performers, teachers, activists).

The new series is the latest in a long list of collaborations between Cech and Ali. They have co-taught courses, conducted workshops and conferences together, and co-led creative endeavors such as “The Underground Railroad Tree: Explorations in History, Science, and Art” exhibition in downtown Greensboro. The exhibition was the culmination of creative output and reflection by faculty, students, and staff that focused on the famous Underground Railroad Tree in the Guilford Forest of Greensboro. Participants in the project engaged with the historic tree through the lenses of history, art, and science.

This cross-disciplinary approach to teaching and learning is typical of Cech and Ali, and it’s the underlying philosophy of the new podcast series. The new show aims to forge connections across disciplinary boundaries and to introduce complexity into what it means to teach, learn, and create.

For more information and to access the full list of episodes, visit the “Yes, and Café,”
website at https://news.uncg.edu/yes-and-cafe-podcasts/ or click on the “UNCG Podcasts” link in the footer of the UNCG News homepage.

Other UNCG-related podcasts to check out:

**Aria Code with Rhiannon Giddens**
Aria Code is a podcast that pulls back the curtain on some of the most famous arias in opera history, with insight from the biggest voices of our time.

**Healthy Relationships Initiative**
The Healthy Relationships Initiative (HRI) aims to promote happy, healthy, and safe relationships of all kinds in Guilford County and beyond. More info on the HRI at https://moocs.uncg.edu/hri/about-us/

**Sustainable -E Podcast – “When Entrepreneurship Gets Organic!”**
This program explores sustainable entrepreneurship in the Triad of North Carolina and globally. Dr. Channelle James, who teaches sustainable entrepreneurship at UNCG, and her production assistant Fahbej Allen, bring thought-provoking entrepreneurs to listeners each week, encouraging each of us to think again about sustainable value. The podcast is supported through a grant from the UNCG Bryan School VF Virtual Collaboratory for Sustainability.

**Teach’n Tips – University Teaching & Learning Center**
A deep dive into the topics covered in the UTLC’s popular “Teach’n Tips” newsletter.

If you have or know of other UNCG-related podcasts and would like to submit them to this list, please contact Matt Bryant at m_bryan2@uncg.edu

*Story by Matthew Bryant, University Communications*  
*Photography by Martin W. Kane, University Communications*

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: Classes and more**
The University is closely monitoring the rapidly changing Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in coordination with the Chancellor’s Office, Provost’s Office, Student Health, and UNCG Emergency Management. UNCG has established a website to provide updated information and university announcements related to the coronavirus (COVID-19). It will be updated as additional guidance becomes available from those offices, public health officials, and the UNC System.

The site includes links, resources, and other information to help our community stay informed. It is not intended to replace student health services or other emergency information channels.

Receiving mail during modified operations

Each department or office can designate a point of contact to notify designees of received mail or parcels normally delivered directly to the departments via national courier services (UPS, Fed Ex, DHL, etc). Mail is available for pickup at Print Shop (525 Tate St) between the hours of 12:00 pm and 3:00 pm. Parcels are available for pickup at the Business Center (106 Moran Commons) 10:30 am – 1:30 pm during modified operations at the University. Go to this form to register your point of contact.
How will COVID-19 impact the U.S. economy?

We are already seeing COVID-19’s effect on the economy. You see it in the closed restaurants and stores. You see it in the empty aisles at the grocery store. What other outcomes can the nation expect, and how can it handle the current issues and the aftermath?

In the Q&A below, Dr. Martin Andersen, an assistant professor in the Bryan School of Business and Economics at UNC Greensboro, discusses COVID-19 from an economic perspective. Andersen’s research focuses on health economics with an application to health policy.

What was the outlook of the global economy before the COVID-19 outbreak versus the outlook of the economy now? Are we heading into a recession?

My impression of the economy prior to the coronavirus outbreak was that it was in relatively good shape. However, there were some concerns prior to the outbreak that the global economy was heading for a recession because of the long period of anemic growth we’ve had over the last 11 years following the 2008 financial crisis. Of course, no one could predict this outbreak, and I would say we are now heading into a recession. Though by
technical definition, a recession typically has to have two quarters of GDP declines, so if we get lucky, we’re going to just miss being in an official recession by definition.

How would this recession compare to the 2008 recession?

2008 was a very different beast because it was largely a financially-driven crisis caused by banks running into trouble. This recession will be pandemic-driven due to the number of people that are without work. I think it could be a worse recession, but on the flip side, I think we will see a much faster recovery.

What is the short and long-term economic impact of this global pandemic?

I think near-term we are going to have a fairly severe contraction due to a significant reduction in demand for services as people stay home. By practicing social distancing, that unfortunately means that our service-driven economy cannot survive well. I think the long-term impacts won’t be as harsh. It is unlikely for there to be a lot of destruction of productive abilities or assets, so I expect to see a relatively quick recovery once this is over. How long we have to practice social distancing will determine how quick the recovery will be.

How will small businesses be affected versus large corporations?

I think the biggest difference between the impact on small businesses versus large corporations is the ability to take on risk. The response to COVID-19 has imposed supply reduction, like we’re seeing with toilet paper. There’s also a reduction in demand as businesses are partially or completely closed. Small businesses aren’t in the best position to handle swings in demand like that, whereas large corporations have deeper pockets and the support of banks, so they can absorb the shock a little better.

What policy recommendations have been made or can be made, like offering a universal basic income (UBI)?

Right now we need to limit the damage, while taking into account the risks to life. I applaud the idea of giving everyone cash because the population is scared and hundreds of thousands of people are losing their jobs. I think you can bet on receiving a UBI. Also, hopefully instead of laying people off, we can effectively use paid sick leave so employees continue to get paid even if they are not showing up to work. I also think federal intervention into the plumbing of the global financial system makes a lot more sense than cutting interest rates to near zero, which has been done.

We’ve also seen the U.S. Small Business Administration grant the state governor’s request
for a disaster declaration for small businesses that are suffering economic losses. This kind of assistance could help these businesses get through the current crisis. Depending on what these small businesses do with the money may also help the local community by not laying off workers. These moves to increase access to testing, provide people with money, and give loans to small businesses are all helpful policies that have been considered or have been passed. Many of these policies don’t necessarily help economic behavior, but they encourage people to stay home, which is the best thing we can all do.

**Are there any steps policymakers can take to address some of these issues immediately and to be better prepared to support people with low incomes?**

There’s a lot they can do. The Families First Act provides significant support and addresses some of the major holes in our social safety net by providing paid sick leave. It is also important to relax eligibility standards, especially work requirements, for Medicaid, SNAP, and other benefit programs. States that haven’t expanded Medicaid should do so. Steps like that are really vital because those barriers to Medicaid mean that individuals with low incomes aren’t going to be able to get treatment for the coronavirus when they need it. These are the steps we can make right now that will allow people to get treatment both now and in the future.

**What can Americans do to protect themselves from the economic impact of the pandemic?**

The economic impact is secondary. The impact on life is so much larger. The best thing you can do is be prepared to stay home and do exactly that. You don’t need to liquidate your 401k, but you should find enough cash to buy two or three weeks’ worth of groceries.

**Would it be better for the economy going forward to increase the number of beds per capita in hospitals to prepare for possible future outbreaks/pandemics? Or is it better to utilize more extreme measures when there is an epidemic?**

The United States has very few beds per capita compared to other countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). We have on average 2.77 beds per 1,000 people. The average is 4.7 per capita. Italy has 3.2 beds per capita, and Spain has just under 3 beds per capita. That means a couple of the countries currently most affected by COVID-19 have more beds and are still strained, so this is a real issue.

However, hospitals are not well positioned to absorb swings in demand for hospital beds associated with pandemics, so it makes more sense for the government to own excess capacity. Some states are finding creative ways to increase the number of beds available by moving people who are dealing with a trauma-related ailment or an illness other than an
infectious disease to be treated in other settings like an army hospital. This opens up beds in the hospital where infectious diseases can be properly handled, and allows hospital staff to focus on those patients.

**How will this affect job seekers, like those graduating in May?**

There will be fewer jobs, so it will be harder to find a job. It is important for job seekers to put their best foot forward when applying, because companies will be hiring high-performing individuals and will probably pay them more as well.

*To follow university updates as they relate to COVID-19, visit go.unmc.edu/coronavirus.*

*Interview by Alexandra McQueen, University Communications  
Photography by Bert VanderVeen*

**Newsmakers: Lenstra, athletics, Touron, and Hortal**

- Dr. Noah Lenstra was featured on 6abc for his “Story Walk” project, which brings reading outside, and in a Social Work Today article on the important of libraries in social work. The articles are [here](#) and [here](#).
- Men’s golf senior Jonathan Brightwell and men’s basketball senior James Dickey were interviewed by WFMY News2 on the effect of coronavirus on their season. The videos are [here](#) and [here](#).
- Dr. Dayna Touron was quoted in a Next Avenue article about how worrying about memory loss can worsen it. [The article](#).
- Dr. Alejandro Hortal wrote a piece for the Behavioural Public Policy Blog about the relationship between immunization and public policy. [The piece](#).

**Dr. Penelope “Nell” Pynes**

![Dr. Penelope “Nell” Pynes](#)  

*Dr. Penelope ‘Nell” Pynes (International Programs) was selected by Diversity Abroad for the 2020 Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion in International Education Trailblazer*
Award. The award is open to administrators, faculty, or staff in the U.S. and abroad who have made significant contributions to advancing diversity and inclusion in the field of international education and exchange.

**Dr. Evan Goldstein**

*Dr. Evan Goldstein (Office of Research and Engagement)* received new funding from the National Science Foundation for the project “IRES Track II: The Coastal Processes & Machine Learning Advanced Studies Institute.” Dr. Somya Mohanty is co-principal investigator on the project.

Coastlines support commerce, infrastructure, and diverse ecosystems that provide habitat to endemic flora and fauna; provide valuable tourism and recreational opportunities; and protect people and critical infrastructure from storms and flooding. Future sea level rise and storminess will cause dramatic changes along the coastline, and a deep understanding of coastal systems is key to mitigating against impacts.

To study coastal systems, scientists are presented with a growing volume and type of data, much of it open and ‘FAIR’: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable. There has been a concomitant rise in tools and techniques to harness this data revolution, specifically machine learning (ML) methods. Unfortunately, coastal scientists and students do not have often have formal training in these modern tools – they have not been embedded within the curriculum for coastal engineering and earth science. Even if students do have training (from a ML class), the example problems and datasets are not coastal in nature.

The researchers propose to develop an Advanced Studies Institute (ASI) for senior graduate students from Coastal Science, Earth Science, and Coastal Engineering who are interested in developing research expertise in the use of ML in a coastal context. Their goal is to train the next generation of promising US coastal researchers in cutting-edge ML techniques, and teach students how harnessing the data revolution.

The researchers’ proposed ASI will be located in Auckland, New Zealand, capitalizing on
New Zealand’s unique strength in open coastal data and ML expertise. The ASI will be taught jointly with eminent coastal researchers from the University of Auckland and the University of Waikato. The US-based team are early-career experts in applying ML skills to coastal problems, and have experience administering short courses on ML topics to coastal scientists. Finally, the short course will advance students’ professional network, expose students to unique cultural experiences in New Zealand, and strengthen the New Zealand-US bond in coastal research, specifically coastal ML work.

Dr. Diane Ryndak

Dr. Diane Ryndak (Specialized Education Services) received new funding from University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. for the project “Factors Contributing to Academic, Social, and Behavioral Outcomes for Elementary Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities.”

Ryndak will oversee all aspects of the UNCG portion of the project. During Year 2 of the project, Ryndak will supervise UNCG project personnel as they collect data on students’ academic, social, and behavioral outcomes in relation to student, classroom, school, and placement factors across participating sites. In Year 3 of the project, she will participate in additional data collection, data analysis, and reporting/dissemination of findings. In both years, Ryndak will oversee graduate students assigned to collaborate on the project.

Dr. Christopher Kepley
Dr. Christopher Kepley (Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering) received new funding from UNC Chapel Hill Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center for the project “Testing Human Mast Cells as a New Strategy for Cancer Immunotherapy.”

The role of human tissue mast cells (MC) in the pathology of cancer is controversial. Nonetheless, high densities of MC is associated with favorable prognosis in certain types of cancers suggesting an anti-tumor effect.

The researchers discovered that human adipose cells can be differentiated into autologous, fully functional MC capable of releasing mediators upon FceRI stimulation that induce breast cancer (BC) cell death. Researchers have also found, for the first time, that primary human MC and their adipose-derived stem cell precursors can be transduced with a lentiviral vector carrying green fluorescence (GFP) protein without affecting function.

This discovery indicates the ADMC could be transduced with other tumor killing molecules to create a “super killing” MC with potent and diverse anti-tumor activity specifically delivered to tumors and will allow researchers to clearly define the role of MC in cancers that may have further implications for therapeutic strategies.

The researchers’ overall hypothesis is anti-tumor IgE sensitized ADMC, with or without transduction with therapeutic enhancing anti-tumor mediators, elicit significant anti-tumor activity. To test this hypothesis, researchers will transduce ADMC and adipose stem cells (that differentiate into ADMC) with genetic modules that increase their therapeutic potency and compare their in vivo anti-tumor activity to non-transduced ADMC in immunocompromised xenograft models. These studies will help determine the role of MC in this disease and if they represent a new strategy to target and destroy any cancer for which tumor specific IgE Abs are available or can be developed.