



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am hoping all is well in your world and with your families. This has been an interesting time in all of our lives. The world and life as we know it has changed in the past months and may never return to the normal. Not all are bad changes; I do believe some positive changes will evolve. I am proud to say that Elder Study has and is taking steps to adjust to make sure our organization can continue to operate and meet the needs of our membership. I know many of you have learned a new communication skill - Zoom. This communication tool has enabled participation in committee meetings, sessions, book group, and Board of Directors meetings. And I thought the Virtual Celebration Luncheon was a success! Have you seen the June issue of the local publication "The Front Porch?" Elder Study is featured in an article written by our own member Donna Lewis! The photo is one of our Zoom sessions. Sometimes there is hesitation to try something new; are you ready to be on the Zoomie list? We have volunteers that are eager to share their Zoom knowledge, to let you try and see if it is in your future. One potential positive change could be opportunities for the Curriculum Committee to get presenters from out of the local area!

How are we going to proceed in the future? The University of Mary Washington has not at this time provided the operating guidelines. When we are provided the details, we will share with the Elder Study membership. In the meantime we are sending this July newsletter to share a little information, as meetings have been held and tentative plans made. The Board of Directors meeting minutes from June 10th are posted on the website. Congratulations to our newly elected board members Susan Hayden, Carolyn Sulima, and Chuck Watkins.

Stay healthy,

Michelle Esbenshade

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Some day, on the other side of this pandemic, we will have lots to share in person. For now, the Membership Committee is working with the Board to keep everyone connected remotely. We all treasure our lifelong learning opportunities but this is causing us to stretch. We encourage each of you to exercise your flexibility, adjust and improvise, along with us. To that end, in addition to virtual classes, we will continue to use email-only for distribution of our newsletter for the foreseeable future (with the exception of those without internet.)

We hope that you will take advantage of the free fall sessions and then re-register in December for the Spring semester at a reduced rate. We are here to help! If you need any assistance learning how to connect via our new website or our virtual tool (Zoom,) please contact me at 571-259-6097 or dvlewis22@gmail.com, and we will help to get you connected. Our ultimate goal is to return to the classroom when it is safe to do so. We hope you will stay the course with your organization, and we look forward to seeing you on Zoom in the fall!

Donna Lewis,
Membership Chairperson

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every one of us in a multitude of ways. And it has impacted the educational system throughout the United States, including ElderStudy and the University of Mary Washington.

A lesser known responsibility of the Administration Committee is to “update the history of the ElderStudy program” per the Bylaws in our Policies and Procedures. The coronavirus has certainly impacted our program’s history. I have been writing a narrative since March 11th, documenting the impact on ElderStudy and how the organization has responded during these unprecedented times. I update this narrative weekly as new events warrant, and will submit the completed draft to the Board of Directors for review and approval once our classroom reopens for lectures and ElderStudy returns to normal – or at least the ‘new normal’, however that looks.

I believe that it is important that we document this major historical event and its impact on ElderStudy, not only for current, but for future members who, years from now, may not remember what we went through. The current draft is now at four pages and growing. If the Board approves the final draft, I will recommend that we post the story on the ElderStudy webpage. Below are a few excerpts from the longer document:

“The email from ElderStudy President Michelle Esbenshade came on Wednesday, 11 March 2020, announcing that all classes and activities were cancelled until Friday, 3 April. University of Mary Washington President Paino had just cancelled UMW classes for two weeks in light of the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), and ElderStudy would follow suit.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases had doubled in Virginia in just a few days, prompting Governor Northam to declare a state of emergency. In addition to UMW, the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, Radford University and other schools had shifted to on-line classes and sent students home to lessen exposure.

The immediate impact on ElderStudy was the cancellation of 7 Lectures, 1 Book Group, the Spring Membership Meeting, Board Elections, a meeting of the Curriculum Committee, and a meeting of the Membership Committee between 11 March – 3 April.

On May 11th, Joe Alfred – Chairman of the Curriculum Committee – announced his desire to conduct the entire Fall 2020 ElderStudy semester using Zoom, pending availability of speakers, and their willingness to use the teleconferencing program.

By 10 June, Virginia’s COVID-19 death total surpassed 1,500 even as the total number of cases continued to decline and stay-at-home restrictions were eased in the Commonwealth.”

Keith Fennell
Administration Committee Chair

Stay healthy, stay busy, stay connected!

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT

Welcome to the ZOOM summer of 2020. Our planning for Fall 2020 is moving forward using ZOOM meetings only. We have 29 confirmed ZOOM programs, 6 programs in progress, 4 Book Groups, 11 administrative meetings and a Virtual Holiday Lunch. There is still room for additional programs, here in Virginia or by ZOOM almost anywhere. We are all working for ways to cope until we will at long last be able to join each other in our favorite classroom for face-to-face sessions of Mary Washington ElderStudy.

A group of us meet every Friday at 5 pm for a social hour with wine and cheese to chat, share recipes and jokes and bring each other up to date on the happenings in Fredericksburg. Send your name to MWEScurriculum@gmail.com if you want to join us.

Several other Lifelong Learning Institutes around Virginia have been impressed with how we are managing to continue in spite of a global pandemic and how we have mastered the learning curve so quickly. I tell them I am not surprised at all – the love of education, the excitement for life and the willingness to listen and try out new ideas has been the hallmark of Mary Washington ElderStudy since 1993.

All the best to you and yours this summer season - stay safe.
Respectfully submitted,

Joe Alfred
Chair, Curriculum Committee



BOOK GROUP



The ElderStudy Book Group has selected the book selections for the upcoming year:

- Sept. The Body: A Guide for Occupants by Bill Bryson
- Oct. Amity and Prosperity, One Family and the Fracturing of America by Eliza Griswold
- Nov. America's Bitter Pill - Money, Politics, Backroom Deals and the Night to Fix Our Broken Health Care System by Steven Brill
- Dec. A Black Woman's History of the US by Dana Ramey Berry and Kali Nicole Gross
- Jan. Fascism: A Warning by Madeleine Albright
- Feb. The Lemon Tree by Sandy Tolan
- Mar. One Day by Gene Weingarten
- Apr. There, There by Tommy Orange
- May This Tender Land by William Kent Krueger

AN OVERVIEW OF ELDERSTUDY'S NEW MEMBERSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

BACKGROUND At their June meeting, our Board of Directors approved a recommendation that we subscribe to ClubExpress, a commercial membership management system. This is in response to the Board-chartered Ad Hoc Long Range Planning Committee's 2019 finding that our "current underlying information management structure has been 'built as needed' over time and lacks interoperability between functions/volunteers." The Board subsequently chartered a Technology Working Group which evaluated several commercial software solutions. The conclusion was that Google Suite best met our needs for Curriculum management and ClubExpress best met our membership management, mass communication, and website hosting needs. ClubExpress was designed specifically to meet the needs of hundreds of nonprofit clubs and associations such as ours. A brochure providing an overview is at [THIS LINK](#).

FOR OUR MEMBERS THAT USE THE INTERNET

- We're consolidating all files from our current websites on the temporary site at mwes.clubexpress.com. When that's completed we'll redirect the familiar elderstudy.com and elderstudy.info domain names, and any of those addresses will work. We hope to give you seamless access to all our website information during transition.
- All of last year's registration and contact information has been uploaded and is already being securely maintained in the system. There will be no need to reenter your data each year, and you can check or make any updates to your password protected profile at any time.
- Only members that have logged in will have access to "members only" webpages, reports, and the contact information of other members.
- You'll have the option to pay registration fees with a VISA or MasterCard. All password and credit card transactions are encrypted and stored in a high-security, commercial-grade data center compliant with General Data Protection Regulation requirements and Payment Card Industry standards. Alternatively, you'll be able to print an invoice to accompany your mailed check.
- Members of the Board, committees and interest groups (e.g, Book Group, Zoomers) will have the ability to collaboratively share and store documents.
- We now have the ability to easily reach you via email with newsletters, surveys and even confidential election ballots using a single consolidated database. This can be done by any authorized coordinator rather than by going through a single point of contact.
 - BTW - Many thanks to Alan Zirkle who has provided such extraordinary support for so many years!
- Assuming you've included your cell phone number in your contact information, we'll have the ability to text you of last-minute cancellations or other lecture changes. [We promise to use this feature sparingly.]

FOR VISITORS AND NEW MEMBERS

- A public access portion of the website will host general information on who we are and the benefits of joining ElderStudy.
- New members will be able to register and pay online, or download and mail in a registration form with their check, just as we've all done in the past.

FOR OUR MEMBERS THAT DON'T USE THE INTERNET

- Our Membership Committee is committed to making sure you always know what's going on in ElderStudy. These volunteers will be able to use the system to send you documents from the ClubExpress mail fulfillment center rather than using their home printer ink, paper, postage and gas.

WHAT'S NEXT New member registration will be opened on August 1st. As previously described, the expiration of all 2019 -20 memberships has been extended through December 31st for Fall semester at no charge. On approximately August 1st your ClubExpress account will be activated. You will receive a temporary password and an email from info@elderstudy.com instructing you on how to update your contact information.

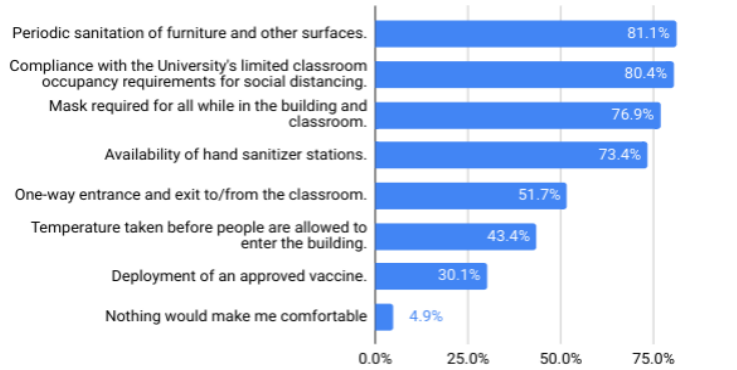
Many thanks to co-administrators Keith Fennel and Jack Allison, treasurer Bryn Pavek, and pilot test group credit card participants Joe Alfred, Michelle Esbenshade, Donna Lewis, Jack & Carolyn Sulima, Gail Oakes and Carol Wachter.

Point of contact is Chuck Watkins, 540-809-8351, watkic@gmail.com

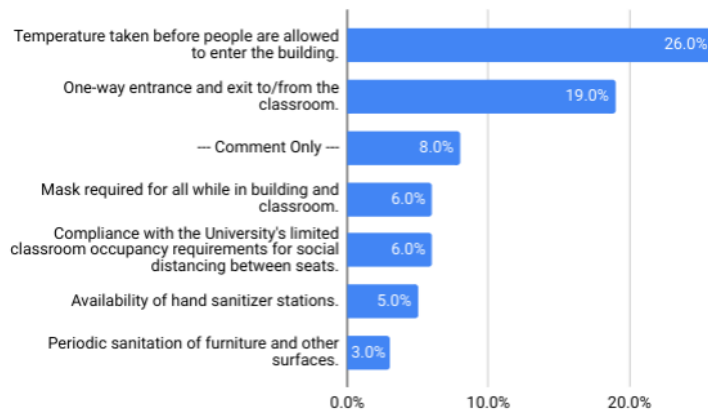
Results of the ElderStudy COVID-19 Quarantine Survey: Returning to the Classroom & Zoom Experience

We received 143 responses to the survey for an overall response rate of 44.8 percent. Thanks very much to all those who participated. Here's what you told us:

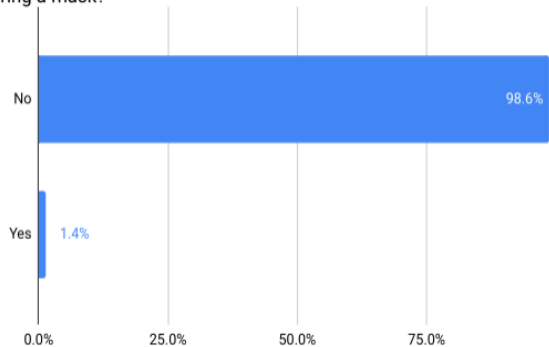
Question #1 - Assuming Virginia is in Phase 3 of the pandemic response, which of the following must be implemented to make you comfortable in returning to the classroom?



Question #2: Again assuming Virginia is in Phase 3, are there any of the precautions from the list below that you think should NOT be implemented?

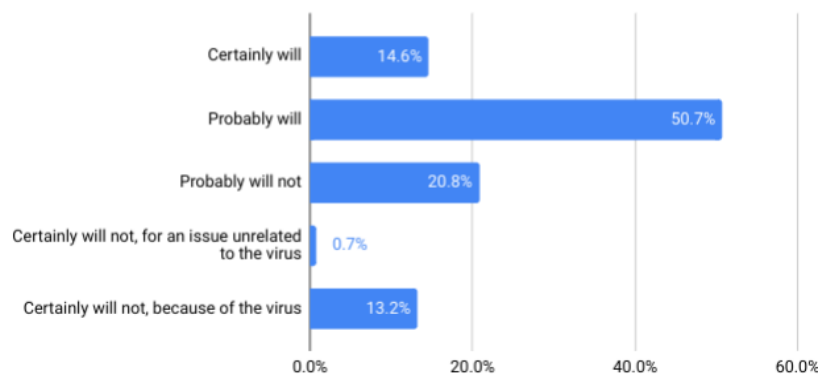


Question #3: Do you have a medical condition that precludes you from wearing a mask?

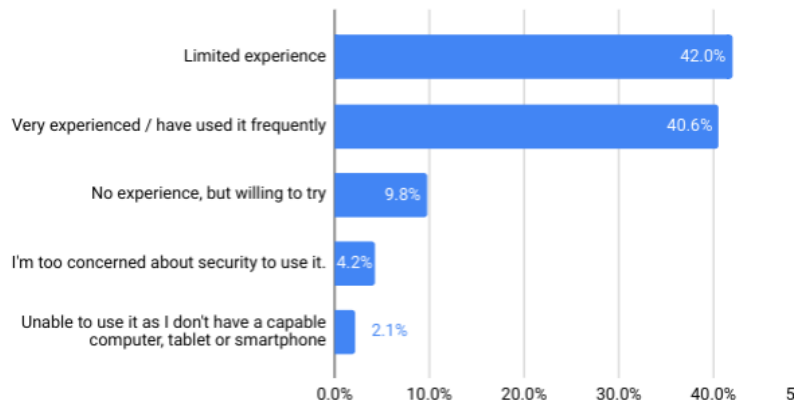


Survey Results Continued:

Question #4 - Assuming Virginia is in Phase 3 of the pandemic response, and also assuming we implement all of the precautions listed in the questions above, except that there is still not a COVID-19 vaccine, what is your estimated likelihood of returning to the classroom in the Fall?



Question #5 - Are you an experienced user of Zoom for video conferencing?



Question #6: Assuming that you're relatively inexperienced with Zoom, what can ElderStudy do that would increase your likelihood of participating in Fall ElderStudy Zoom sessions?



Your comments are very informative also. To see the entire report with comments, conclusions and recommendations, please see the full report at [THIS LINK](#).

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST



The fall newsletter distribution target date is August 5th.

The fall schedule will be a part of that newsletter and will also be available on the website.



Zoom tip:

When using Zoom on a device, try adding headphones or earbuds to enhance your ability to hear the conversation!

ElderStudy's first ever virtual cooking lesson!

Danilo Orafino showed us how to prepare shrimp salad with arugula, goat cheese, and strawberry vinaigrette. The meal was topped off by a refreshing strawberry Prosecco drink.



Thank You!!!!

A special thank you box for all who helped with the virtual Spring Celebration with special thanks to Joe, Carolyn, Dennis, Jack S., and Bill.

This Newsletter is prepared by Gail Oakes, with contributions from many members of ElderStudy. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for the newsletter, please feel free to let me know. You can email (gail.oakes2@gmail.com), text or call (540-846-9320).