

CAMPUS NEWS

COVID Continues to Impact University Finals

By Allyson Hinkle
Editor in Chief

Ever since the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor has seen a shift in the fall semester's scheduling. Instead of sticking to a "traditional schedule" in which students would go home for Thanksgiving then come back to campus for two to three weeks for finals, UMHB instead holds finals right before Thanksgiving and students will not return back to campus until the new year.

When asked about the switch, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs of the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor John Vassar shared that the university took its students into account.

"It was primarily a result of student feedback and conversations we had with many students. What we found was that students really liked wrapping things up by Thanksgiving and being [completely] done. I know of one other school in Texas that also kept this schedule, so it is distinctive and provides a different kind of experience for our students," Vassar explained.

As this revised schedule is only used moderately in higher education institutions around the nation, many students have raised similar issues at their own universities. An opinion piece done in 2021 by a student from North Carolina State University comments on the differ-

ences between flipping back to the traditional schedule after using the "COVID" schedule.

"By extending winter break and ending the semester before Thanksgiving, students were actually given time to relax and recuperate ... [despite] the lack of days off ... and the condensed semester [making] classes feel overwhelmingly impossible. NC State needs to consider adjusting all future academic calendars to do the same thing for the benefit of the students," staff writer Caitlyn Mahoney wrote.

Former UMHB student Lauren Foley, who graduated in spring of 2022 with a Bachelor's of Art in Graphic Design, also comments on the length of the re-

vised schedule:

"...the "COVID" schedule felt far more condensed and fast paced, but allowed for students to avoid the end-of-semester crash that was common with the traditional schedule. The semester had a very rigid schedule of when everything would be ... because of this, my anxiety was much lower. I felt more burnt out by the end of the traditional schedule," Foley explained.

In an illustration made by Michael Goodman and Michelle Berlinerblau, mental burnout was categorized into a pyramid with distinct causes leading to one another. At the bottom of the pyramid, and the most common factor of mental unease, is feeling overworked and over-

all tired. Next is seeming to be constantly surrounded by problems and then feeling dissatisfied with the work one is producing, with the final layer being feeling a sense of withdrawal from things one loves.

With the longer break provided with the "COVID" schedule, students are given more time to recuperate from the school environment in order to prevent this stage of exhaustion. This notion is explained further by current UMHB student Alyssa Montoya, who is a junior double major in business computer information systems and multimedia information technology:

"I feel as if the longer break helps my mental burnout rather than harms it ... the

six weeks definitely make it feel like a 'real' break rather than the two weeks others get. For me, this is a chance to see friends, work and relax without the weight of classes on my back," Montoya states.

Slight changes have been made to this schedule as this year the concept of a fall break was introduced during the beginning of October. However when asked if the university would ever consider switching back to the traditional schedule, Vassar expressed that there was no point since the "COVID" schedule had so far proven to be superior for the students.

Samaritans Purse Founder Makes UMHB Appearance

By Xhaxany Cuellar
Assistant Editor

This year's guest speaker at the 19th annual McLane lecture, Franklin Graham, spoke on behalf of his organization, Samaritan's Purse. Samaritan's Purse is a nondenominational evangelical Christian organization providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world.

The organization began when Bob Pierce traveled through Asia during WWII as a youth minister. There he met a group of women who were committed to sharing the word of Christ, which inspired him to dedicate himself to supporting other Christians who were caring for the poor and suffering in the distant corners of the world. The program is now under the vision of Franklin Graham, son of Billy Ray Graham. Franklin Graham has devoted his life to meeting the needs of people around the world and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Samaritan's Purse bases itself on various faith statements, such as Luke 24:46-47; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthi-

ans 5:10-11; Ephesians 1:7 and 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7, which emphasizes the belief that all men are lost and face the judgment of God.

Additionally, the



Luke 10:30-37
"Go and do likewise."

Samaritan's Purse is always on standby for natural disasters including floods, fires and famines.

The organization allocates its resources to communities affected by such disasters and offers medicine to those injured. Samaritan's Purse offers volunteer opportunities in various areas of the U.S including Maui, Hawaii (fire disaster), Taylor County, Fla. (Hurricane Idials) and Valdosta, Va. (Hurricane Idalie).

In addition to international response to crises, Samaritan's Purse offers a pro-

gram under the name "Operation Heal Our Patriots." Operation Heal Our Patriots offers a safe place for families to heal their broken relationships and marriages on the break of divorce. Participants undergo six days of chaplain-led, Biblically based marriage enrichment training.

Coursework and spiritual counseling are integral parts of their week, as are once-in-a-lifetime wilderness experiences in Lake Clark National Park and surrounding areas.

Couples also have the opportunity to connect with other couples who may be struggling with similar issues. The program started 10 years ago to help combat the epidemic of divorce among military families.

The program has in honor of Down Syndrome Awareness Samaritan Lodge Alaska and 904 Mary Hardin-Baylor hosted its fifth annual TOUCHDOWNS event on Oct. 14 in conjunction with its home game against the Crusader football team at Ross State University.

Members from the special needs commu-



Photo by Jackson Keenan/The Bells.

Touchdowns attendees Kaden Brous, Reid Croime and Easton Cline engaging in the King Street games before the game on Oct. 14.

Cru Wins Big at TOUCHDOWNS

By Bradley Melchor
Sports Editor

In honor of Down Syndrome Awareness Samaritan Lodge Alaska and 904 Mary Hardin-Baylor hosted its fifth annual TOUCHDOWNS event on Oct. 14 in conjunction with its home game against the Crusader football team at Ross State University.

Members from the special needs commu-

nity were invited out for a pregame tailgate party outside of Bawcom Student Union to meet and hangout with the UMHB football team, Cru Cheer, Cru Spirit Band, and Sader Belles. Many children from the special needs community were also welcomed onto the field at halftime, where they were given the opportunity to score a touchdown and celebrate in front

of a packed Crusader Stadium.

The UMHB football team capped off an amazing day and event by winning in dominant fashion against SRSU, winning by a score of 37-13 behind the arm of sophomore quarterback Isaac Phe and a dominant running game as the Cru amassed over 300 yards of total offense.

The University Blues: What to Know

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break, especially if his/her homelife is complicated and stressful.

Often, students feel the pressure to know exactly what they want to do as a career, and might not give themselves the grace to slow down and test some options out, or even change their mind," she says, "It is the first time in many students' lives when they are experiencing some

significant freedom to choose their lifestyle and future endeavors, and that can be overwhelming."

The reason stress is so apparent in freshman, DuBroc said, is that "students live in a culture of hyper-stimulation".

"There are many studies on the stress effects of staring at a screen for multiple hours a day, and gaming addictions are ris-

ing at unprecedented speeds," she says.

The counseling center exists for the goal of learning to cope with that stress and finding strategies to decrease the feeling of being overwhelmed.

Additionally, according to DuBroc, the main complaints they notice at the counseling center are anxiety and depression.

She ends with relaying some tips stu-

dents who are struggling with their mental health can use, as well as strategies for stress and feeling overwhelmed or burnt out.

"One of the best things any of us can do to manage our mental health better, is to find a good counselor.

We all have difficult experiences and things that have shaped the way we think, feel, and interact with others, and talking to someone

objective who is trained to ask important questions and also committed to confidentiality, is a way to process all we are struggling with," DuBroc states firstly.

"Of course, personally... in all the diagnosed anxiety and depression I have experienced, there is nothing more powerful and effective for managing my mental health than the relationship I have with God through

Jesus.

DuBroc offers as a second, and arguably most important, solution.

"Also, when we are examining this time of year, I think it is important to just take it one day at a time. Sometimes we just need someone to help us get organized and prioritize all the tasks. The CAE is a wonderful resource for that," she says.