

Making Sense of COVID

A CCSNH Virtual Symposium



Friday, Feb. 26, 9:00am-4:30pm

Welcome to this day of scholarly exploration as we delve into COVID-19 and its effects on our world. CCSNH student scholars will present results from their research on a wide variety of COVID-related topics. This is an opportunity for us to come together to learn about (and reflect on) an experience that is deeply affecting us all. In addition to being a showcase for community college student scholarship, we will highlight the ways in which different sets of scholarly tools (from natural sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities) can illuminate different aspects of the human experience. We hope you will enjoy the day!

[Not yet registered? Click here](#)

Program of Events

Opening Remarks

9:00-9:10 **Welcome** [Dr. Susan D. Huard](#), Chancellor, CCSNH

9:10-9:20 **Why Are We Here Today?** [Dr. Leslie Barber](#), Professor of Biology, GBCC;
Faculty Fellow, CCSNH

Session 1: The Science of COVID-19

9:20-9:30 **Introduction to Session 1** [Dr. Sadie Reed Stimmell](#), Professor of Biological Science,
Chair of Biological and Environmental Science, MCC

9:30-10:00 **Basic Biology of SARS-CoV-2 and the Immune Response**
Faculty mentor [Beth M. Wilkes](#), Professor of Biology, NHTI
NH-INBRE student scholars [Connor Pelland](#), General Studies, NHTI
[Shoshana Trudel](#), Biology, NHTI

The basic biology and structure of viruses, particularly SARS-CoV-2, are explained. This includes a description of how the virus infects cells, from its attachment to a host cell to its release from the cell; and how it spreads to other cells and ultimately other individuals. The effects of SARS-CoV-2 on the immune system are explored with an overview of our immune system, how it works, and what we know (and don't know) about how it reacts to the viral infection in mild and severe cases.

10:00-10:30 **Interaction of SARS-CoV-2 Spike Protein and ACE2 and TMPRSS2: Are There Genetic Factors for Susceptibility?**
Faculty mentor [Dr. Sadie Reed Stimmell](#), Professor of Biological Science,
Chair of Biological and Environmental Science, MCC
NH-INBRE student scholar [Qiayra M. Randolph](#), Biological Sciences, GBCC

We discuss SARS-CoV-2 mutations and how they may affect viral spread and infection and demonstrate an understanding of human genetic variability and potential candidate genes that may be associated with differences in susceptibility.

10:30-11:00

Epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2: Understanding Spread and Mitigation

Faculty mentor **Dr. Julie Robinson**, Professor and Chair of Biological Science, RVCC

NH-INBRE student scholars **Quinn MacVittie**, Biological Sciences, GBCC
Lucas Scovill, Biological Science, NCC

We discuss the factors that affect the spread and infection rates of SARS-CoV-2, including ethnic variabilities, pollution levels, and the veracity of children as transmission vectors. The effectiveness of public health measures to mitigate virus spread will be discussed.

11:00-11:30

SARS-CoV-2 Testing for Diagnosis and Screening

Faculty mentors **Dr. Debra Costa-Nino**, Professor of Biological Science, NCC
Linda Coe, Adjunct Professor of Biological Sciences, GBCC

NH-INBRE student scholars **Jaclyn Denner**, General Health Studies, NCC
Connor Fongeallaz, Biological Sciences, NCC
Ashley Zanetti, Biological Sciences, NHTI

Many emergency use tests for Coronavirus SAR-2 were rapidly developed and released to determine individual diagnoses and possible spread patterns and develop better containment methods. We explain the types of testing for technical science behind function, usage validity for purpose, and emerging trends and technology.

11:30-12:00

COVID-19: Vaccines and Therapeutics

Faculty mentors **Debra Audino**, Professor of Biotechnology and Biotechnology Program Coordinator, GBCC
Linda Coe, Adjunct Professor of Biological Sciences, GBCC

NH-INBRE student scholars **Ellen R. Blackwell**, Bioengineering, GBCC
Emily K. Pierce, General Health Studies, NCC
Morgan Zajac, Bioengineering, GBCC

We explore vaccines currently approved for COVID-19 and their production methods, plus several competing vaccines in or nearing late-stage clinical trials and the technology behind their production. We also discuss the current state of therapeutic interventions for COVID-19 and their modes of action.

12:00-12:30

Lunch Break

Session 2: What Social Sciences Can Tell Us About COVID-19

12:30-12:40

Introduction to Session 2 **Dr. Stephanie Roper**, Professor and Program Coordinator of History and Political Science, NCC

12:40-1:10

COVID, Politics, and Power: A Comparison of Governmental Reactions to the Pandemic

Faculty mentor **Dr. Stephanie Roper**, Professor and Program Coordinator of History and Political Science, NCC

NHHC student scholars **Siobhan Meacher**, History and Political Science, NCC
Bryan Boutin, History and Political Science, NCC

We compare how different governmental systems have managed, or mishandled, the COVID-19 pandemic. We determine through our research whether nations that have adopted limits to civil liberties have fared better than other governments in containing the virus. Our analysis explores how underrepresented groups have faced additional hardships under many governmental systems. Through applying pertinent theories to domestic policy patterns, we show how politics have affected the outcomes of COVID-19 cases around the world.

1:10-1:40

American Identity and Mask-Wearing in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Faculty mentor

[Dr. Jason S.R. Paling](#), Adjunct Professor of Anthropology, NCC

Student scholar

[Emma DeCoursey](#), History and Political Science, NCC

Many medical specialists recommend American civilians wear non-valved, multilayer cloth masks or nonmedical disposable masks to prevent the transmission and spread of COVID-19. But does wearing a mask impact civil liberties? We examine whether individuality has influenced American mask-wearing activities through poll data from American media and medical sources. This data is then compared with the reactions of other mask-wearing cultures, particularly South Korea, whose citizens had a much different reaction to COVID-19 mask-wearing policies.

Session 3: Why We Need the Humanities

1:40-1:45

Introduction to Session 3

[Dr. Paula DelBonis-Platt](#), Professor of English, Communications, and French, Chair of Liberal Arts, NHTI

1:45-2:15

How Pandemic Literature Foreshadowed Our Reactions to COVID-19

Faculty mentor

[Dr. Emily M. Hinnov](#), Professor of English, Program Coordinator, GBCC

NHHC student scholars

[Shayni Owens](#), English, GBCC
[Abigail Shoults](#), English, NCC
[Sam Hanson](#), English, WMCC

We explore the themes of fear, distrust, adaptation, and hope to see how past and present representations of pandemics in literature reflect and predict our responses to the current global pandemic. The lessons we glean from these works, and our ensuing expanded understanding of the human condition in times of crisis, can be used to foster tolerance and connection rather than division. Ultimately, pandemic literature encourages us to imagine new ways of ethically existing within our own communities.

2:15-2:55

The COVID Diaries

Faculty mentors

[Dr. Paula DelBonis-Platt](#), Professor of English, Communications, and French, Chair of Liberal Arts, NHTI
[Krista Zobel](#), Adjunct Professor of English, Humanities, MCC
[Sally Bashalany](#), Chair of Arts, Humanities, Communication and Design Department, Professor of Communications, English and Humanities, NCC
[Dr. Cara Chanoine](#), Associate Professor of English, English Program Director, RVCC

NHHC student interns

[Juniper Christgau](#), Healthcare Applications certificate, RVCC
[Meg Moody](#), Business Management and Accounting certificate, RVCC
[Mercedes Mannarino](#), Communications, NCC
[Elyse Morano](#), English, MCC

Melissa Sprague, Education, NHTI
Brian Melendy, Liberal Arts, NHTI
Rosie Johnson, Liberal Arts, RVCC
Austin Smith, Liberal Arts, MCC
Betsy Felker, Liberal Arts, GBCC
Heidi DiMaggio, Healthcare Applications certificate, RVCC
Monique Doukas, Liberal Arts, GBCC

Eleven students present oral histories of living through the pandemic. Trained in the art of storytelling by Dawn DeAngelis, vice-president and chief content officer for NH Public Television, the students arranged to interview individuals of various backgrounds and professions who were affected by the virus. Inspired by public radio's StoryCorps concept, the students explore the importance of creating an archive of the human experience in the COVID-19 pandemic as a historical record.

2:55-3:10 **Take a Break and Share Your Stories:** Email yours to CCSNHCovidStories@ccsnh.edu

Session 4: Why We Need the Arts

3:10-3:15 **Introduction to Session 4** Colleen Sasso, Professor and Chair of English, MCC

3:15-3:45 **Art as Glue: How We Hold It Together**

Faculty mentor Travis Shelby, Adjunct Instructor of Music, NHTI
NHHC student scholar Rebecca Nann, Liberal Arts, NHTI

This multimedia presentation compels the audience to view the arts as vital to our collective wellbeing. By examining how visual and performing arts are created and consumed to cope with the pandemic, we illustrate how the arts can be a unifying force during a time of isolation. Additionally, we share iconic artwork born of previous health crises and recently created pieces that tell the pandemic story in a spectrum of human emotion.

3:45-4:05 **Poetry of a Pandemic**

Faculty mentor Colleen Sasso, Professor and Chair of English, MCC
Contest judges Joanne DelSordo, Adjunct Faculty in English, Humanities, and Languages, MCC
Thomas Dunn, Adjunct Faculty in English, Humanities and Languages, MCC
Mark Knapp, Adjunct Faculty in Humanities, RVCC
Patrick Meighan, Adjunct Faculty in English, MCC, NCC and St. Anselm College

This showcase of student poetry in response to the global pandemic addresses the impact of COVID-19 on relationships, communities, spaces, bodies, minds, and our big, global, beating heart. Students submitted a range of poems from free verse to form, narrative, and prose; first-place winner Michael Phillips, Liberal Arts, MCC, and honorable mentions Sean Sanchez, Human Services, NCC, and Ellen Flanagan, English, MCC, present their work.

4:05-4:25 **Images of a Pandemic: Student Artists' Response to COVID**

Faculty mentor Dr. Annette Cohen, Professor of Fine Arts and Program Coordinator for Fine Arts and Digital Design, GBCC
Contest judges Rebecca Clerkin, Library Director, GBCC
Brian Chick, Instructional Technologist Video Producer, MCC
Karen Macedo, Professor of Art and Design, MCC

Throughout the ages, artists have expressed their reactions to personal and global events by creating visual images. Students were invited to express themselves in any medium, digital or traditional, and submit their work; first-place winner [Elizabeth Dunn](#), Visual Arts, NHTI, and honorable mentions [Casey Menter](#), Digital Media Communications, GBCC, and [Zoe Dawkins](#), Nursing, MCC, share their work. A physical exhibit featuring all student work is planned when our campuses are fully operational.

4:25-4:30

Closing Remarks

Thanks to Our Sponsors!

The Community College System of New Hampshire is a public system of higher education consisting of seven colleges located across NH: NHTI – Concord’s Community College, Manchester Community College, Nashua Community College, Lakes Region Community College, White Mountains Community College, River Valley Community College, and Great Bay Community College. Each is accredited by the New England Commission on Higher Education, the same entity that accredits 4-year colleges and universities in NH. The Chancellor’s Office, located in Concord, provides central support.

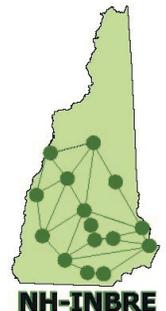


The Foundation for New Hampshire Community Colleges is a 501(c)3 entity established in 2000 to provide greater access to educational opportunities through financial assistance for student scholarships, program development and enhancements to facilities across CCSNH colleges and local academic centers, which serve students in every region of the state. Our programs prepare students for in-demand, skilled jobs and set the stage for success for those beginning a career or pursuing a new one. We actively seek contributions from public and private sources to make scholarships available statewide, advance key programmatic initiatives, and provide training and support for our community colleges. We also encourage and support partnerships to implement customized education and training programs for the workforce needs of the 21st century.



GIVE OPPORTUNITY

The NH IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (NH-INBRE) has developed a coordinated network of biomedical research and research training in NH. The program is part of the larger NIH IDeA program. NH-INBRE identifies and funds outstanding biomedical faculty researchers so they can lead programs that contribute to biomedical research and expose students to top-level biomedical research. NH-INBRE supports biomedical research and training in NH with technical training programs, facility renovation support, employment sponsorship in research labs for undergraduates, and support for bioinformatics utilization and training. NH-INBRE is supported through an Institutional Development Award, P20GM103506, from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences of the NIH.



The New Hampshire Humanities Collaborative (NHHC)’s goal is to “enable students to pursue richer academic experiences and more rewarding professional and civic lives, empowering them to be effective participants in addressing the grand challenges of today and tomorrow.” At the heart of this work is a close collaboration between NH’s higher education system of CCSNH and the College of Liberal Arts at UNH, the state’s flagship public and research-intensive university. Our goals are focused on pathways, partnerships, and public events, with an emphasis on student engagement and support, faculty development, and institutional transformation particularly around issues of racial and social justice. NHHC is funded through a generous grant from the Andrew J. Mellon Foundation.



We would like to thank journalist [Dawn DeAngelis](#) for working with our COVID Diaries interns to teach them the art of the interview. Thanks also to [Amber Gavruk](#) for her design work and [Will Platt](#) for his video production assistance. We are grateful to [Alisa Kadenic-Newman](#) and to [John Cookson](#) for technical support.