

SPECIAL EDITION

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The Lasso

CAREER OUTLOOK GUIDE

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The Lasso

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Career Outlooks

How COVID-19 IS
RESHAPING THE WORKFORCE

by Laura Pearson

COVID-19 has had a major impact on many people's careers, and this could be concerning for upcoming graduates who are about to enter the workforce.

A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center published in September found that 25% of adults have had trouble paying bills since the pandemic started. Thirty-three percent of adults have had to use savings to be able to pay their bills, 17% have received food from a food bank, and 16% have had trouble paying their rent or mortgage.

Industries that require in-person interactions are being heavily impacted by the pandemic, associate director of Career Connections Lucy Morgan said. People are unable to go to places such as museums or live performances, so it is difficult for these industries to grow.

"If you're looking at the hospitality or entertainment industry right now, things aren't growing very rapidly at all," Morgan said. "[The creative arts] have been heavily impacted by COVID, that's an area that's not really growing."

Although some industries have come close to a halt, others have been able to grow as a result of the pandemic. COVID has led to opportunities for more virtual services. Requests for telehealth services have increased 50% nationwide, Morgan said.

"Professional services are growing, telehealth and home healthcare is growing," Morgan said. "There are industries that are growing obviously, like tech and anything that has to do with work from home, remote and virtual."

Companies like Zoom have had a 78% increase in net income and have hundreds of positions open.

Since there is no growth, there is no loss, so the job market's projections remain flat for hiring. Everything remains about the same, Morgan said, although in recessions, there is typically a drop in recruiting and job opportunities.

"I work retail part time for a really good company," art major Lauren Muñoz said. "I'm fortunate enough to have been able to keep my job during COVID."

Predominantly, Black and Hispanic people have struggled the most financially, according to the survey. Forty-three percent of the 25% of adults that have had trouble paying bills are Black, and 37% of them are Hispanic.

"The pandemic has definitely more severely affected people of color," Morgan said. "In June, 48% of all adults lived in households where at least one person lost employment income since March, but for Black and Hispanic households, that went from 53% to 62%, so there is a slight increase on the economic impact for Black and Hispanic households."

Many students who are close to graduating are concerned for their future



Image: <https://www.wannapik.com/vectors/12503>



TWU enrollment rates by major for 2019-2020. Graphic by Anissa Clark

careers, and have been coming into Career Connections to express their worries, Morgan said.

"The climate right now does have people more anxious about what their job and career opportunities are," Morgan said. "But we've seen recessions before, and we've seen things bounce back."

Other students have been thinking about their future careers and expressing worry silently. Although there is worry amongst students, some just take it one step at a time.

"I mean, it's something I definitely think about, and it worries me, but lately I'm trying to take one day at a time, just to stay sane," Muñoz said. "We are in such unusual times and I think that is all we can do at the moment."

There are different strategies upcoming graduates can use to help them get the career they are looking for, Morgan said.

"The first thing is to have a targeted action plan," Morgan said. "They need to make sure that they are conveying their skills in their resume, cover letters, and interview."

Making connections with alumni, employers and the people within the community is also very important to build a professional network.

Although the future is not looking how people thought it would, there are still opportunities for upcoming graduates to find a career.

"There are tried and true methods to job searching and solidifying your career," Morgan said. "You just require some kind of flexibility and adaptability. You may not get your dream job right out of college."

"We all just need to hang on, be a little flexible, have some grit and resilience, and make it happen."

where will artists go from here?

COVID-19 has left the arts struggling, but there is hope of recovery *by Laura Pearson*

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused problems for almost everyone, whether that is mental health issues or financial hardships, but it has especially impacted those in the arts.

A Brookings study found the 20 largest creative occupations have lost more than 75% of jobs from April to July of this year. Photographers have suffered the most with 16.8% of employment losses across creative occupations, and musicians and singers following second with 10.9% of employment losses. The average monthly earnings lost for all creative occupations is 80.5%.

For Texas specifically, there has been a loss of 174,734 creative occupations, and it is ranked the third state for the amount of creative occupations lost. Dallas-Fort Worth has lost 55,797 of those occupations, coming in sixth for creative occupations lost for metropolitan cities with a population over one million.

“The arts bring so much to humanity and jobs and money and all of those things,” assistant theater professor Noah Lelek said. “I think it’s very difficult for a lot of people I know.”

With careers that require performing and coming in contact with others, it can be difficult for someone graduating college to find a job. There also is not a need for careers like performers and photographers currently, because most events are cancelled.

“I think there is concerns for people who are graduating and now going out into the field,” Lelek said. “A lot of theater companies are closed or not doing live productions.”

Some students feel it is harder to get the education they need to prepare for their future careers, saying it is hard to learn in an online environment with majors that require face-to-face interactions, such as dance, theatre and music.

“In person, I can get detailed instructions on how I can improve my movement or how I can deepen my learning,” dance education major Andrew Tovar said. “I feel like I am not getting as much knowledge as I used to, just because, in person, if we were doing a combination, my teacher would be able to identify what I was doing incorrectly, rather than if we were on Zoom she can only see so many people at a time.”

Other students do not feel confident in the success of their future career because of the pandemic. Not being able to have in-person events to perform or showcase artwork is a big concern for some.

“In my case, after things were deemed as essential or nonessential, art was at the bottom of anyone’s priority,” visual arts major Ruth Monjaras said. “Overall, I think the pandemic makes the future seem even more uncertain.”

Although students may not be as confident, their professors are confident that they will be able to be successful in the future.

“I think we’ve done a good job at creating well-rounded students, so that they’re not just actors trying to act, they can do a multitude of things,” Lelek said. “I think that gives them more career opportunities in the future.”

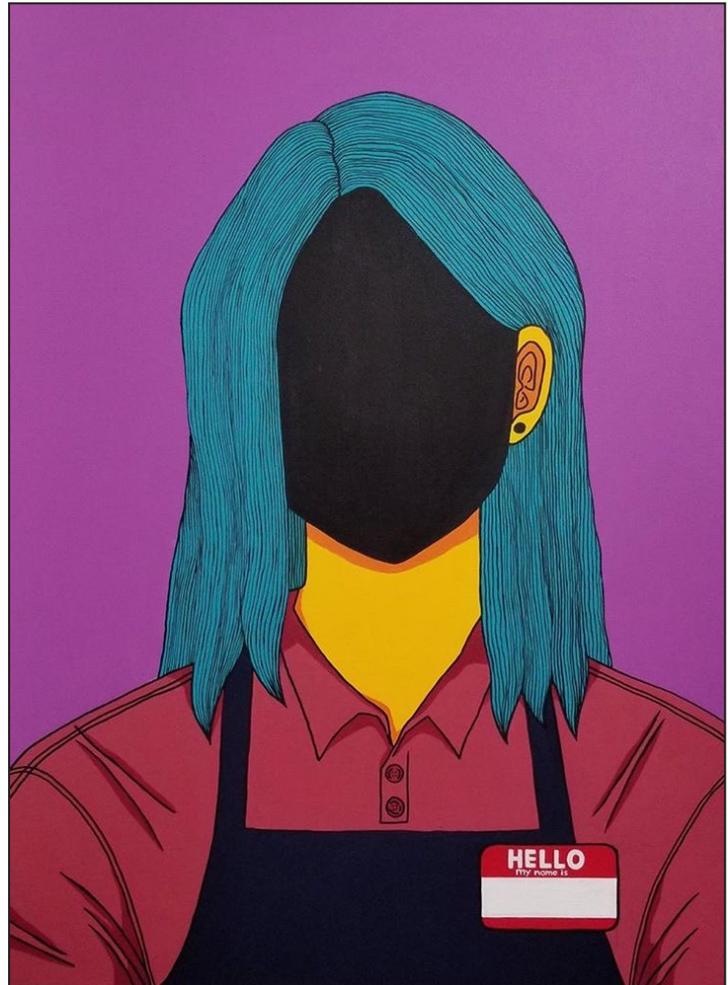


Illustration by Ruth Monjaras

The Brookings study previously referenced shows that the fine and performing arts have lost a total of 50% of jobs from April to July of this year. These occupations have lost 42.5 billion dollars in sales during this time period, and approximately 1.4 million jobs have been lost in the fine and performing arts alone.

This can be worrisome for students who are close to graduating, since the arts are not essential during this pandemic. Some places are not in demand for employees, which will make it harder for the upcoming graduates to find a job.

“I’ve been interested in working at my local art center in Irving,” Monjaras said. “Right now, because of COVID, those jobs aren’t in demand, so there are no job openings at the moment.”

Although times are difficult for people in the arts, students still have hope that they will be able to be successful in their future career.

“I am not very confident if I’m being honest,” Monjaras said. “But I’m holding on to a hope that there will be a way to be successful.”

MAJOR DOUBTS

Why your college major doesn't have to define your career *by Sabrina Gomez*

In a time where things seem uncertain, knowing that our major isn't always equivalent to our career can be comforting. It is essential to understand that our major does not limit us to the possibilities of other career paths.

While college prepares us to enter the workforce, our major does not necessarily follow us. In reality, it's actually about how we use our major to go into the career we want. What's important to know is how to use our acquired experience during college in a marketable way.

Statistically, most first-year students change their majors at least once during their college career, and sometimes more than once. Even more so, students that pursue a career based on their major may not enter into their career immediately because there may be some stepping stone to reach that.

Some people tend to deem liberal arts majors or the humanities as impractical majors, a question that is usually preceded with, "What are you going to do with that?"

Despite student concerns about their majors, the humanities are not as "impractical" as people tend to think. Once a music major, now an admissions counselor at Texas Woman's University, Erin Wimberly said she relates to how the arts are misinterpreted.

"I was one of those who changed their major," Wimberly said. "I moved to a business major. Then I went back to school and got a second bachelor's in music business. Even though I'm not using specifically my business degree, I'm still using those experiences I learned in those classes."

Wimberly said those who don't go into the field of their specific major can still use those skills gained through their major. It's a sense of assurance that helps those navigating life after college.

Career Connections consultant Chrissy Meeks said the topic of "major not career" is a common question they get.

"Feeling uncertain about your job or graduating with the degree you have is not uncommon," Meeks said. "That's 100% normal."

On the contrary, employers are looking beyond what a degree says. It's not necessarily about being an "English major," for instance,



File photo by Sarah Pham.

but rather, employers are focusing on what skills we possess, specifically soft skills. A 2019 study found that employers want skills such as critical thinking, listening, problem solving, oral and written communication and teamwork, amongst other things.

"I have my bachelor's in criminal justice with a minor in pre-law and paralegal studies," Trevor McCray, a Career Connections consultant at TWU's Dallas campus, said. "To be quite honest, currently I'm not doing anything dealing with criminal justice or the legal field".

McCray said that he actually lost the passion for the field during his time in undergrad. At the moment, McCray is working in higher education. Although choosing another route was scary, McCray said he felt compelled to follow his true calling.

"One thing I would say is 'stick with what you love to do,'" McCray said. "Your major does not define who you are and what you're going to be. I think that's one of the biggest myths. We think that once we go into this particular major and so we're going to be this person.

"Our major does not limit the potential of what we can do because in reality, we're much more than that."

Lasso staff in another life



“If I could be anything, I’d be a writer. I write in my spare time and have self-published a few things, but it would be amazing if I could just write all day and not have to worry about paying rent or insurance or anything like that. I’d love to be able to tell stories for a living.”

Anissa Clark, Page Editor

“You could 100% catch me off the grid on a self-sustaining farm if time and money were not factors. I have always been interested in getting certified in permaculture, but have never had the time, money or necessity. I would love to have chickens, keep bees and spend every day in nature (with a good cup of coffee, of course).”



Katelyn Garst, Managing Editor



“If money and time were not a factor in life, I would live in every country in the world. I have always traveled around since I was little, and I love exploring new places. Iceland is my number one stop as I have always wanted to live there! I like learning about different cultures and how people interact with each other in them.”

Deanna West, Engagement Editor

“If money wasn’t a factor, I’d travel and just create for a living. I’d indulge my love of freelance writing, photography, literature and art, and explore all the beautiful places and cultures the world has to offer. I’d also foster animals in my free time. My bank account is laughing as I type this but hey, a girl can dream, right?”



Amber Gaudet, Editor-in-Chief



“If time and money were not a factor, I most certainly would be traveling to all the corners of the world. I would have all the books I could dream of, write a lot and oh! have access to therapy because, in reality, mental health services are expensive! Lastly, I would have a home with land that is all my own to share with my family.”

Sabrina Gomez, Reporter

“Recently, I’ve seen a big rise in small/self-owned businesses and I’ve become so enamored by the idea of turning what you love into a business, producing your own personalized items for others to enjoy and — of course — being your own boss! It’s something I know takes a lot of patience because of how long it can take to gain momentum, but if I had it in me, it’s what I would love to do.”



Gakenia Njenga, Copy Editor



“If time and money weren’t a factor, I’d still be a music therapist, because I’m already going to do something I love for little money. I wish it paid more, but I wouldn’t want to do anything else.”

Laura Pearson, Reporter

“Even if time and money weren’t a factor, I think I would still be pursuing a career in speech-language pathology. I really enjoy all of my classes, and I see myself being in this field for a long time! It may seem boring that I choose this of all things in my wildest dreams, but I truly love what I am learning, and I am so excited to keep learning.”



Sarah Pham, Photographer

what we’d be if time & money were free

IT'S OK TO CHANGE YOUR MIND Why a late-stage college career switch isn't the end of the world *by Gakenia Njenga*

I know a lot of us have been there before—the young and ambitious secondary school student with that one special career path always in mind. A lot of us have hit a point where our dreams and aspirations fade and drift away from what they used to be. And that is OK.

It should be said that who we were as children is not always who we are going to be forever. As a kid, the entire world is ours and all dreams seem almost too possible. We don't think about the cost of education, the difficulty of our future career classes or what the journey to our career goals truly consists of.

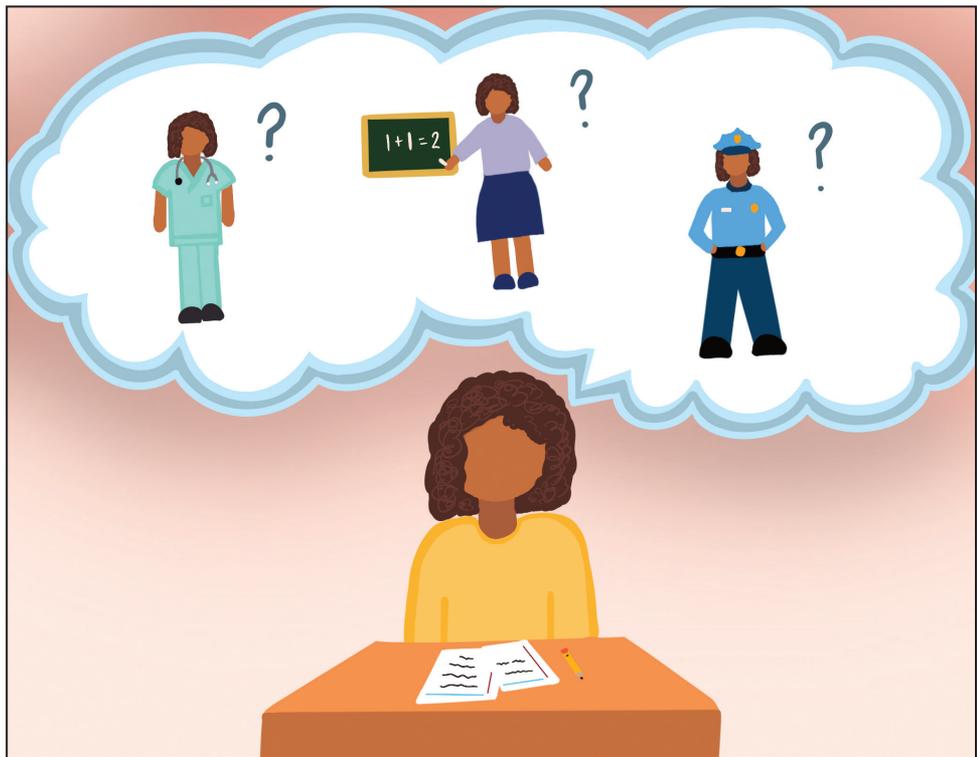
Some realize this before college and make the quick switch before starting their careers. However, there are many who might not realize this until they're semesters deep into their college education and are crying in a panic on the bathroom floor at 3 a.m., frantically wiping snot off their face and hoping their roommate doesn't inconveniently come back in the midst of their "Where is my life going?" breakdown. Let's just say, I'm a little familiar with the process.

It's OK to feel as though things might not be working out as well as you had hoped when it comes to your major. You may be feeling like maybe the path you chose just isn't the one for you, or that you've lost the fire within you that drove you in this direction. Considering a degree switch is scary and can be tough to figure out, but it shouldn't be anything to be ashamed of.

In fact, it's something that should be celebrated.

This is your chance to explore any other ambitions that have been on your mind. Maybe these past few months you've been really interested in the behaviors and functions of people, or maybe you recently discovered your love for kids and want to be there for them. A switch to psychology or elementary education are both excellent choices. Don't shy away from what you know could make you happy.

However, maybe you're not exactly sure which direction to go from here. A degree switch presents itself as the perfect opportunity to



Graphic by Drexiel Desquitado

search for that one thing that lights that fire within you. It may feel like all hope is lost, but there are hundreds of options out there for someone like you looking for the path that will make you feel content.

If you're having a bit of trouble figuring out what to do, aptitude tests are a great help when it comes to looking for a career. These tests give you a career option based on your skills, talents and personality traits, so whatever is recommended to you isn't just some random suggestion, but is a calculated answer just for you. Aptitude tests also offer multiple options, meaning that there are many to choose from and think about.

These are all great things to consider, but what if you're feeling like you can't make a choice and time is running out? This is 100% OK. Taking some time off school to step aside and find what lights that flame within is completely valid and acceptable, and shouldn't be something to feel bad about.

It's OK to change your mind. Sometimes our favorite color doesn't stay our favorite color forever. We all work at our own pace and what matters the most is that in the end, we're satisfied.

Graduating in a pandemic: Resources for the virtual post-grad job hunt

by Deanna West

After graduating, the transfer into the professional realm can be intimidating, but Texas Woman's University has resources to support students through the transition.

On the Career Connections website, the resources page has information to help students discover jobs, prepare for interviews, explore different career options and make appointments with career consultants.

One option is Career Shift, a new online tool TWU students can use to organize their job inquiry process and make connections for networking opportunities. Students will use their TWU login to access this system.

"The best part about Career Shift is it has contact information for millions of companies; it's not, you know, like just LinkedIn," Lucy Morgan, associate director for Career Connections, said. "So, if you're interested in working at PepsiCo, it's going to give you a list of contacts at PepsiCo that you can then begin to reach out to."

Students also have access to LinkedIn Learning through the Career Connections site. LinkedIn Learning, previously Lynda, is a professional skill development site where users can access tutorials to improve technical, interpersonal and other workplace proficiencies.

LinkedIn, the professional networking site, allows users to talk with career professionals and learn more about whatever career a student may be interested in. It's as simple as creating an account, finding professionals, and then reaching out, career consultant intern Bryana Ortiz said.

"When messaging a professional about having a conversation with them, be sure to mention you want a quick, ten-to-fifteen minute conversation," Ortiz said. "When you tell them that, they are more likely to say yes."

Finding a job is hard enough without a pandemic, but the best way to make connections

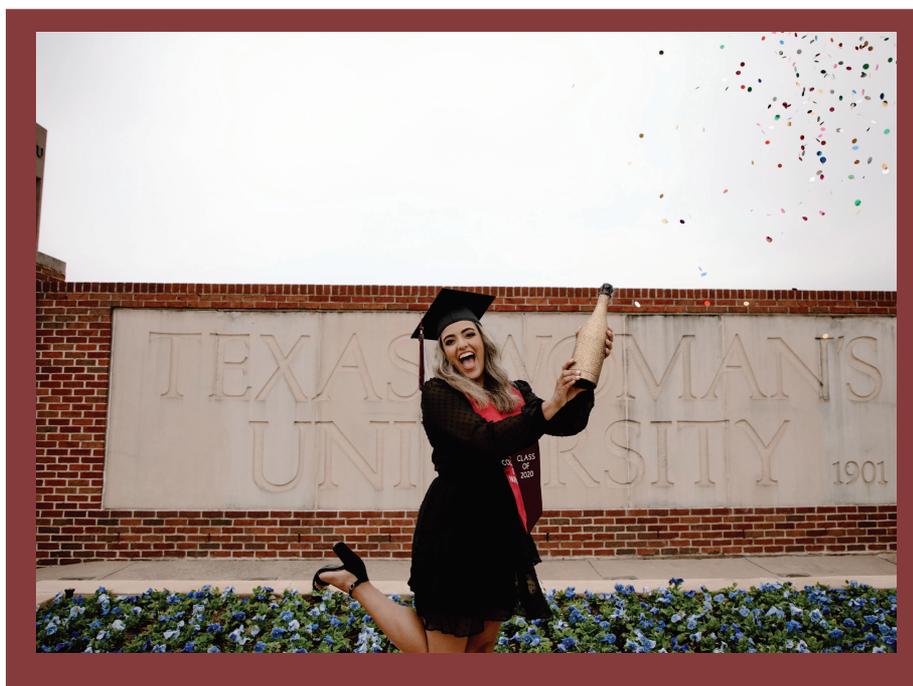
is by talking to professors, classmates, professionals and even family members because all of those are forms of networking, Morgan said.

Introducing yourself can be challenging, but a good way to feel more confident is by developing a thirty-second speech about yourself and practicing, Morgan said. Career Connections has a script to give students an idea for introducing themselves to professionals or others.

Big Interview gives students a chance to practice their interviewing skills by receiving help from an expert, setting up mock interviews, and getting an inside look at questions interviewers would ask.

It takes six to eight months after graduating to get a job, and sometimes learning new skills is required, Ortiz said.

"It's important to stay open minded and flexible when looking for a job coming straight out of school," Ortiz said, "You might not get the first choice of job you want, and that's OK."



Class of 2020 graduate Jackeline Saldivar

THE FUTURE OF NURSING

How COVID-19 is reshaping the medical field as we know it

by Gakenia Njenga

Spending more time with patients than physicians, nurses are on the front lines of medical care—now more than ever since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the number of cases continues to rise, the nursing field has become more demanding while already in the midst of a nursing shortage. Factors like these may fuel concerns about the well-being of healthcare workers and where the future of nursing may end up.

Nurses have taken on multiple roles within hospitals, providing not only health assistance but also emotional support, patient education and public protection while acting as a link between patients and the rest of the health care team. Nurses are also responsible for taking care of themselves in order to continue helping others.

Graduate nursing education student Annie Tolliver said each shift at the local hospital she studies and works at consists of strict safety measures to ensure good health.

“Many of us have adopted a new routine to adjust to COVID life,—it all feels so normal now,” Tolliver said. “For example, I leave my work shoes in the car, take my scrubs off after work right inside my door, and immediately head to my shower. There is no more after-work errand runs or meeting friends for dinner.”

But nurses can only do so much to stay healthy enough to help fight COVID. Cases of nurse burnout have been reported to be at their peak as many begin to feel exhausted caring for patients at such a fast pace. Those older and/or immunocompromised have not been able to work as bedside nurses, prompting their step down from in-person assistance and resulting in slight crew adjustments, TWU nursing alumna Raji Pathak said.

But being elderly and at-risk are not the only factors affecting

possible nursing shortages, as Lauren Kellum, fellow TWU nursing alumna, said.

“I don’t believe there is a shortage,” Kellum said. “Our country seems underprepared and unable to provide safer work environments that make nurses feel comfortable coming to work.”

Despite these drawbacks, Pathak said that she has not seen any significant shortage in her experience during the pandemic.

“Nursing has always been in high demand, even pre-pandemic,” Pathak said. “I’ve not noticed a higher demand at this particular time and there is not a dire shortage of medical assistance. There may be certain times of large COVID waves where more medical assistance is necessary, but I don’t believe that there will be a long-term shortage.”

Tolliver also said she has not seen a significant decrease in nurses while working during the pandemic but recognizes that she does not know what conditions other areas may be in.

“One might assume, with all the media reports about COVID patients overwhelming hospitals, that nursing staff would be in super high demand, but we really have not seen that to be the case,” Tolliver said. “I do not think the pandemic has yet caused nursing shortages in North Texas, but I can’t speak to the rest of the state or country. However, there will always be a need for nurses and that is not going to change.”

Certain Texas regions may be equipped with enough medical assistance, but researchers say the country as a whole remains unprepared for any incoming waves of the virus and are encouraging measures to increase the number of nurses, such as expanding leniency in oversight laws. These nation-wide concerns over nursing shortages have resulted in the field going up in demand, with the U.S. Bureau of Statistics estimating the country will need 1.1 million new nurses to avoid a drastic shortage. Nurses are being needed now more than ever, and opportunities are continuously opening themselves up to fill this gap.

Between changing nursing school policies to allow students on the front lines and recruiting nurses from different states and compensating them for their service, the field has become “recession-proof,” making it a secure and stable career. Predictions of the field opening up more to technological uses have also arisen, meaning more online opportunities for remote learners and more available telehealth lines for patients, as well as additional reassurance for those uncertain of online medical help.

“We are learning as we practice, which is scary,” Kellum said. “It’s almost like the blind leading the blind. We have to continue to support each other and reiterate that nursing is still the career path that we must pursue.”



Texas Woman's University's Dallas campus. File photo.

Beating imposter syndrome

How feeling less-than in academic spaces can disproportionately affect people of color and how to confront it. *by Sabrina Gomez*

Entering graduate school can be a scary experience, even more so when you feel that you don't belong. These thoughts of inadequacy can be known as "imposter syndrome." According to Psychology Today, imposter syndrome is a pattern of behavior where people doubt their accomplishments and have an internalized fear that they're a fraud.

Understanding how imposter syndrome affects graduate students is crucial because it is one of the multiple factors that can affect their mental health.

"Imposter syndrome was developed by two scholars," Vy Tran, a doctoral psychology intern at Texas Woman's University, said. "They found that we have an internalized voice in our head telling us we are not good enough despite our achievements."

Imposter syndrome is always working to prove ourselves or others wrong, causing anxiety which can be linked to perfectionism. Though it is not necessarily low self-esteem, imposter syndrome causes us to create unhealthy patterns to convince ourselves or others that we are deserving.

Now imagine being a Black, Indigenous and/or person of color and battling imposter syndrome at the same time while navigating graduate school. Studies have shown that many Black, Indigenous and people of color are impacted more than their white peers.

"It certainly has a psychological impact on their well-being," Tran said. "It causes BIPOC individuals to feel like they have to do more. There are a lot of self-doubts."

Dr. Greg Shirely, associate director for employer relations, technology, and operations at Career Connections, says that imposter syndrome certainly takes a toll on someone who identifies as BIPOC.

"Black, Indigenous, and people of color, we navigate the spaces differently than our white colleagues," Shirely said. "Oftentimes we are more at a disadvantage—add on first-generation, add on women as well [and] it's magnified even more."

Certainly, everyone in some way or form experiences imposter syndrome. However, it is crucial to be aware of the ways in which privilege exists because not everyone experiences imposter syndrome the same. Things such as race, class, gender, and/or socio-economic status are factors to consider.



Graphic by Drexiel Desquitado

Shirely recalls his experience with imposter syndrome when he attended graduate school at Texas Tech University, a predominantly white institution.

"I remember seeing all these white and more mature faces," Shirely said. "I can just remember sitting in the class and hearing them talk thinking to myself, 'I don't belong here — I don't know anything these people know.' They sounded intelligent and articulate."

For Shirely, fighting those thoughts was about reminding himself that he, in fact, did belong. He hopes that it can also help others who may also feel the same.

"You wouldn't be here if they didn't think you could do the work," Shirely said.

On the same note, Tran said one way to combat imposter syndrome is to seek support and be unafraid of voicing your struggle.

"Part of sharing our struggles and our truth can help students who are feeling that they're an imposter cope," Tran said. "Write down your accomplishments and celebrate them."

Imposter syndrome shows up when we enter spaces we believe are not meant for us—and there is some truth to that. Historically, these institutions were not made for BIPOC so navigating spaces we have never been in is sure to bring up unsettling feelings. In the end, it is important to know that we are worthy of taking up space and just as deserving as anyone in the room, whichever room that may be.



*"Sometimes you find out
what you are supposed to be
doing by doing the things you
are not supposed to do."*

— Oprah Winfrey

