

Winter/Spring 2021

Landscape

For Alumni and Friends of Landmark College



Striving for New Heights Despite Uphill Challenges

LC community bands together during global pandemic *Page 2*

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**We're
Number 1...again**



The College for
Students Who Learn Differently

Photo by Kari Post

Josh Ascani, assistant director of recreation and outdoor programs, leads a group of students on a winter expedition through a picturesque trail on campus.

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From the President's Desk



Photo by Todd Miller

President Eden greets members of the Vermont National Guard in April 2020. Dignitaries came to LC to observe the operation of a drive-through site that was established by the state of Vermont on campus to administer COVID-19 tests for local residents.

The Landmark College era you experienced and know best, whether the '80s, '90s, '00s, '10s, or today, was and remains fundamentally inventive. That inventive model and spirit began in the late 1970s when the idea of a college for students with dyslexia was turned into reality with the College's founding in 1984. Now, a little more than 35 years later, the College remains inventive ... and precisely because of that we remain fundamentally resilient.

LC is now a firmly established institution, yet one that has faced many challenges. From being the first to provide a dedicated program for neurodivergent college students, to our remote geographic location (this can be an advantage and a challenge), to the bold and at times controversial programmatic changes that brought LC from a two-year model to the comprehensive college it is right now—and much more. However, the past year has presented challenges heretofore unimagined and that have threatened the very existence of many small colleges nationwide.

Many of our operations have been altered because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but few have ended. Behavior and expectations were modified; classroom instruction and curriculum delivery were re-imagined and then implemented; social activities, student life, business operations, and most every other aspect of the LC experience was affected or modified.

In some ways, LC is a campus built to weather a pandemic. Remember that challenge related to our remote location? Well, our rural location has helped with lower levels of community transmission, compared to larger, urban campuses. Of course, our emphasis on small class sizes, as well as the high level of resources and focus on student wellness, affords advantages larger colleges and universities do not possess.

All of these things helped us deliver a positive college experience to students this year and will help in the same way moving forward.

Words like “innovative,” “entrepreneurial,” and “inventive” are often overused, if not misused. But with Landmark College, we may take these things for granted as they have been part of our approach to learning since day one. Being better built to withstand a pandemic is one thing; having the shared commitment, collective confidence in our adaptability, and as much as anything else, resilience, has kept the College going.

In these pages, you'll read about how our campus community responded to the swift emergence of the pandemic in early 2020 and how we continue to adapt and evolve today. You'll enjoy interviews with faculty, alumni, students, and those in the midst of delivering our unique education and living-learning model that defines Landmark College. And you will hear how our online initiatives, started in earnest around 2013, have given us a head start into an area that was very important pre-pandemic but is now recognized as crucial to our future.

We are established, yet still inventive, resilient, and courageous. We have faced difficult times in the past. The present is certainly difficult on every level, and the future will have significant challenges too. But our mission—borne of the ideas of our forebears—provides fuel to the engines that are driving Landmark College into the future. Thank you for being one of those engines that keeps Landmark College strong.

With regards,

Dr. Peter Eden
President, Landmark College



Top: Students observe masking and distancing protocols during an outdoor physical education class. Pictured are Luke Dammer, Michael Roper, Zack Steinbaum, Will Weinlaeder, Tim Turley, and Nate Votta. (Photo by Todd Miller)



Striving for New Heights Despite Uphill Challenges

LC community bands together during global pandemic

by Mark DiPietro

As 2020 dawned and news of a novel coronavirus spread around the globe, the world braced for what turned out to be a long and daunting pandemic.

With its onset, a “new normal” emerged and, just one year later, many of our daily routines seem as if they’ve always been with us.

As our jobs, classes, and social lives shifted from in-person to online, we’ve all become accustomed to staring at co-workers, teachers, and friends stacked Brady Bunch-style on a monitor (while trying to avoid fixating on our own faces staring back at us from a corner box).


The general population has achieved near-expert level in a variety of technologies (BlueJeans, Teams, Zoom, et al.) as a means to keeping us connected.

And many have mastered the technical arts in pursuit of perfect lighting, sound, and accessorized masks that match our clothes as part of the daily routine.

Like other institutions of higher education, Landmark College was in the midst of its spring academic semester when the pandemic hit in full force. The College faced decisions that would affect its entire community. Some, like prohibitions on large gatherings and a shift to online learning, have at times been more difficult to adapt to than others.

Even a year later, with the reality of vaccination emerging, we continue protecting each other with regular testing, distancing, and masking as we move toward the light at the end of the tunnel. This has carried over to all aspects of our lives, inside the College and beyond.

In the following section, you’ll read and see how Landmark College responded to the pandemic in those early days, and how we continue to do so, in photos and voices from across the campus and beyond.



Left: Resident Dean and alumnus Caden Dole '14 and Dean of Students Kelly O’Ryan make face shields in the Café Court in spring 2020. (Photo by Valerie Cox)

Middle: Student Alumni Association members Micah Sherman-Raz, Victor Tomelden, Heather Dunham '20, and Associate Director of Alumni Relations Tricia Stanley on LC’s iconic staircase. (Photo by Micah Sherman-Raz)

Right: Students Destany Hankard and Alexander Bair on the LC quad last fall. (Photo by Todd Miller)

Fabio Arnaldo Ayala, assistant director of student conduct and community standards, and resident dean of Alumni Hall

Residential Life and Student Affairs had to transfer in-person programming to online quickly last spring. We did it, and we had engagement from students! Not just superficial engagement but actual connections being made virtually. I started facilitating Community Connection Circles, which are storytelling circles that brought students together who might not normally engage, even in person. The Centers for Diversity and Inclusion's Bro Talks also had a lot of success with students. A silver lining for the Res Life staff was that our teams grew so much closer. The sense of community was a little bit stronger, without being able to travel to each other's residence halls.



Photo by Mark DiPietro
Resident Deans Nicole Pacenka and Fabio Arnaldo Ayala lead a campus tour as student Gabrian Raphael makes a video for an online open house.

Emily North, director of student activities

Last spring, we moved all our activities and events online, with popular online activities like trivia and movie nights and bingo games. In the fall, we returned to face-to-face programming, but one of the biggest challenges was following protocol regarding reduced room capacities—for instance, the Student Center game room. Every student club's use of space had to be evaluated based on the expected number of attendees, which meant most had to find new meeting spaces. One club that became adept at maneuvering within these guidelines was the Arcade Club, which began meeting in the Administration Building auditorium. Outdoor spaces also

became popular, and bonfires were some of the most popular events of the fall semester.



Photo by Kari Post
Students Isabella Cristian-Fernandez and Kady Erwin during a "blue and white" soccer match last fall.

Nicole Pacenka, assistant director for housing operations, and resident dean of Aiken Hall

We've truly tested our students' resiliency, and they have risen to the occasion. There are a lot of challenges, especially with new state guidelines and information coming out regularly that we all need to be aware of. The pandemic has given us a platform to talk about wellness in a much more deliberate way, not just physical health but mental and financial health, too. It's gotten a little easier because now we've learned more and can be clear that this isn't going to last forever. We have more confidence in the importance of masking, distancing, and hand washing; and people's anxiety around this is a little less, knowing what we know.

Dr. Gail Gibson Sheffield, vice president for academic affairs

The Spring 2020 semester was an exercise in “just in time” decision-making. We had to pivot to put in place strategies and support tools that would assist our students in completing the semester successfully. This included extending spring break by one week to provide time for our faculty to prepare courses for online delivery, the addition of two new online courses in April, introducing a pass/fail option for students to help preserve their GPA, and then extending the semester by two weeks to compensate for time lost. The most essential part of the LC learning support model is advising, and so the role of “online advisor” was expanded.

As a result of the pandemic, the College has been able to fast track its development of online courses and ability to deliver whole programs or parts of its programs online. The real credit goes to our dedicated faculty and staff who have done, and continue to do, everything they can to provide the best possible education and support to our students through a very difficult transition.



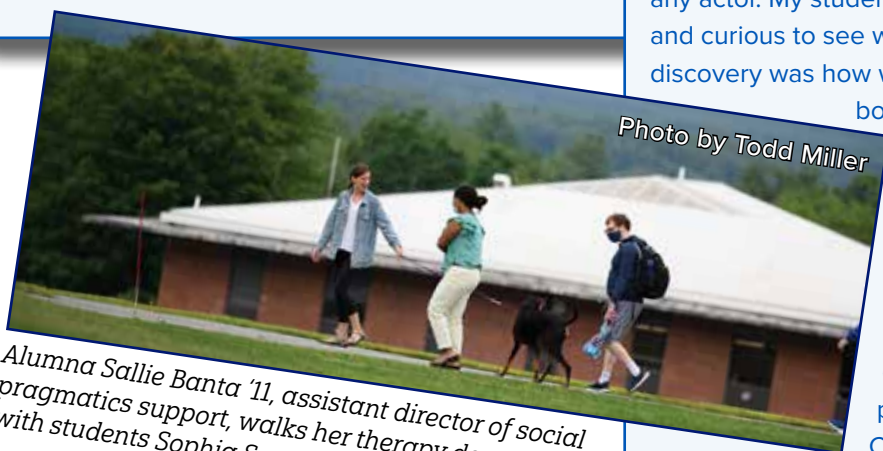
A new student reacts enthusiastically to Dr. Gail Gibson Sheffield's welcome during fall convocation on the quad.

Joshua Moyse, assistant professor of theater arts

As I began preparing for fall semester, I had a moment of anxiety knowing that in-person classes would require us to be masked. Then I remembered that wearing masks was the norm for actors on the ancient Greek stage. If it was good enough for Thespis, then it's good enough for any actor. My students and I dove into our classes masked and curious to see where the semester would lead. One discovery was how we are normally blind to the whole of body language because we focus on

the face. Wearing masks gave us this deeper understanding. I also taught a three-week online class, and with the help of Jennifer Lann in the LC library, gained access for my students to watch the National Theater of London's collection of recorded performances, including Benedict Cumberbatch in *Frankenstein* and Gillian Anderson in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

The unexpected bonus of students being at home was that their entire families watched and discussed with them.



Alumna Sallie Banta '11, assistant director of social pragmatics support, walks her therapy dog, Poppy, with students Sophia Spraggins and Josh Hammer.

Solvegi Shmulsky, professor of psychology and director of the Center for Neurodiversity

Students were expressly grateful for in-person classes this fall in a way I have not seen before. There were challenges, too, including the ambient stress of living with an unseen airborne pathogen and worry that our mitigation tactics, while robust, were untested. By semester's end, students relaxed, and I relaxed, too. It gradually became clear that our efforts paid off. More than once a week, I taught outdoors under a tent, the benefits being fresh air and the opportunity to unmask. More frequently than usual, I checked in with students on a human level. Even though faculty are supposed to know things, I told my students, “We don't really know how to do this. Nobody does. So your input is incredibly valuable.”

Kyle Skrocki, director of facilities

Last spring, facilities and residential life collaborated to get student belongings out of their rooms and into storage. Then for summer and fall, the Residential Program Planning Committee (RPPC) had to plan how we were going to get students back on campus. Among the facilities department's responsibilities were purchasing cleaning supplies and coming up with a cleaning schedule for classrooms and other places on campus; placing hand sanitizer stations all over campus; building all the screens that are in place in the library, DCAS, and elsewhere; evaluating the capacity of rooms through the RPPC, which included representatives from across campus; and purchasing tents for outdoor gathering spaces. It boosted my confidence to know that everyone could switch gears on a dime and come together as a community.



Photo by Todd Miller

Jennifer Lann, director of library services, communicates with Megan Harris, an enrollment services staff member, through a shield installed in the Library.

Jan Coplan, director of the Office of Career Connections

It was exciting to see students gain the skill of being able to perform jobs virtually. Today, that's a career readiness skill that everyone needs to cultivate. Career Connections began offering online opportunities, including a career readiness course taught by Professor Lucy Stamp; our Employment Readiness Experience offered hybrid internships in the summer with a classroom portion taught by Professor Jeanette Landin. Most of our corporate partners, like Prudential Financial, have made online internships available to our students. And we've been able to move a lot of our programming, like résumé writing and interviewing, to Microsoft Teams meetings, which means we now have a whole library of recorded

workshops our students can access. Due to the pandemic, a cohort of students tackled the monster of not wanting to do things virtually and became much stronger job candidates because they did.

Terence White, director of campus safety

I started as campus safety director on August 26, 2020. Before I got here I started preparing myself mentally for connecting with the whole campus during this pandemic—the students, faculty, and staff. It was a little challenging remembering faces and names with everyone wearing face coverings. Seeing someone's face is how you personalize relationships and build trust, and I'm a pretty good judge of character and facial expressions. No matter who you meet or talk to, everyone is going through something and dealing with it in a different way. You can't forget that human side of what we do and what our true mission is: To help our students through this college experience. That has a human side, every single day. I never forget that and it's what motivates me.

Nicholas Payne, an intern in LCIRT's Neurocognitive Lab.

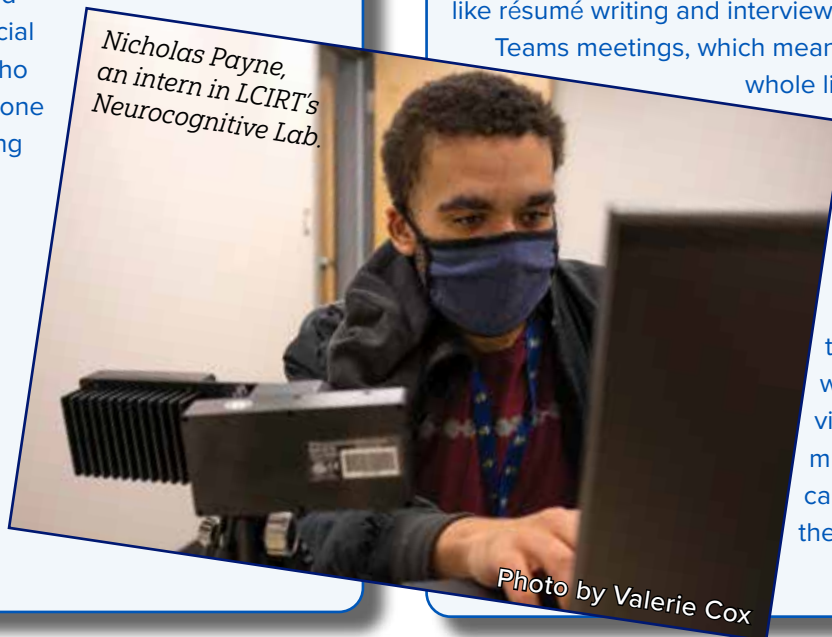


Photo by Valerie Cox

Jeff Huyett, director of health services

One of the biggest challenges was setting up COVID-19 testing for students when they returned to campus. Luckily, we started with the second summer session (which includes enrolled LC students and visiting college students), and that meant a smaller number of students and a practice run for fall semester. But in summer, it was the more difficult test (nicknamed a “brain swab” for its unpleasantness). We were able to pair up with the Broad Institute, which began providing the easier tests—a simple nasal swab—for New England schools. Without Broad, colleges would have really struggled to provide that volume of testing across campus. We went into fall semester really not knowing what things would look like, but we know what we’re doing now. Last spring, we also had the challenge of trying to manage students’ medications and prescriptions across state lines.



Alumna Erica Loveland '20, an LC admissions counselor, and Cindy Brown, health and counseling office coordinator, under a COVID-19 testing tent on campus.

Jackie Mills, director of health, counseling services and wellness

Counseling supports about 60 percent of our students every academic year. When it became clear that students were not going to return to campus last spring, we had to figure out how we were going to provide services. In order to serve students all over the country, we had determine if each state governor’s orders were allowing out-of-state health care providers to deliver service in each state. We also needed to ensure we could provide confidential services online using networks that would meet privacy criteria. We had tons of support from IT and Cindy Brown as our office support. Meanwhile, data shows there are mental health implications from the ongoing pandemic. We’re trying to help everyone understand the role we all play in student wellness, and also giving the whole LC community the resources they need to take care of students and themselves.

Chris Lenois, director of marketing & communications

Our office is titled “marketing & communications,” but the second part of that description has certainly received greater emphasis over the past 12 months. In addition to the external communications with students’ families and our southern Vermont neighbors about implementing safety protocols and processes, we have striven to keep the campus community engaged on online platforms. Events like graduation, convocation, and guest speakers all moved into these “virtual” realms; the same happened with fundraising campaigns and student recruitment events like open houses. The positive takeaways from all this: we have a new suite of tools at our disposal and people’s comfort level with interacting in these environments was accelerated.

From left: graduates Annemarie Scolforo, Daniel Meadows, Destany Hankard, and Indigo Pagan were among those who submitted photographs for May and December’s online commencement ceremonies.



Katherine Addison, current student

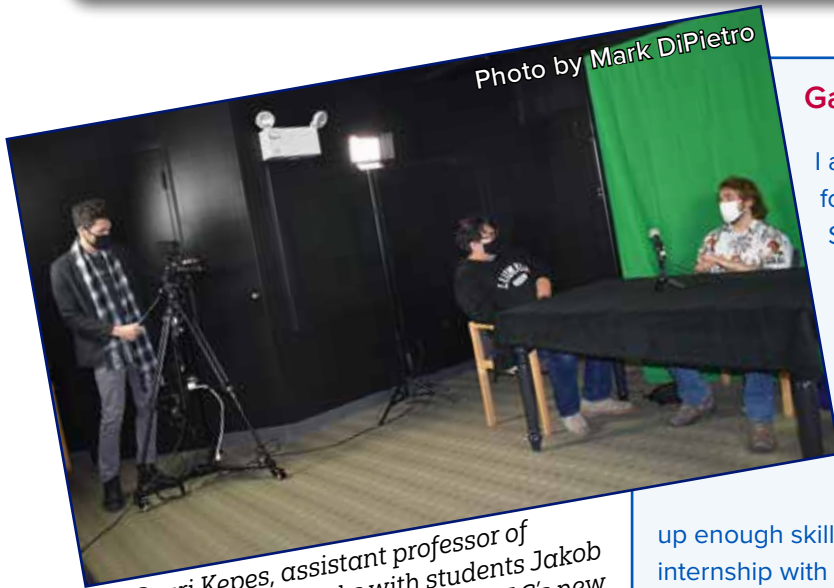
I spent 2019–20 getting ready to come to Landmark for the first time. When the lockdown started, I worried about how I would get to Vermont from Indiana, but we ended up driving to campus for the start of fall semester. We had done orientation and lots of recreational activities online, which honestly worked out well because I met several people online and became good friends with some, and was able to get to know staff during orientation. Once I got to campus, it was hard to meet and hang out with people because of restrictions, so those online connections I had already made were a big help. The Centers for Diversity and Inclusion were something I knew I would be involved with, and they've been able to do a combination of online and in-person activities.

Student Katherine Addison creates Black Lives Matter artwork at an outdoor mural on LC's campus.



Photo by Neo Sagov

Photo by Mark DiPietro



Dr. Gyuri Kepes, assistant professor of communication, works with students Jakob Morrissey and Gabriel Raphael in LC's new TV studio.

Gabrian Raphael, current student

I applied for an exemption to stay on campus for all of spring semester and summer as well. Spring was odd at first because those of us on campus stayed pretty isolated except for online activities. But I did a lot of hiking and spent time outdoors to avoid cabin fever. The transition to online-only courses was a struggle for me because I rely so much on the accountability of in-person classes. As much as I wouldn't want to do all-online classes, I picked up enough skills that I feel much more equipped now. My internship with the Office of Marketing & Communications was a big help because I was doing video projects and interviews, which were a highlight of my spring and summer.

Kari Post, director of athletics and recreation

Putney has many opportunities for outdoor recreation, so the pandemic has given us a chance to focus on what sorts of activities students can do here on campus and in the surrounding community. We've run a lot of bike trips and utilized the trails on campus much more than in previous semesters. In the winter, we have the Page Family Skating Rink open on the quad and keep a loop groomed for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Team sports have shifted to focus primarily on skill development and drills during practices, and intra-squad scrimmages when possible. We're closely following guidelines from the state of Vermont. We've also been able to offer virtual programs like fitness classes and activities-based discussion groups.

Denise Jaffe, director of online learning

When the pandemic hit and everyone had to start teaching online, we were forced to do “emergency teaching,” and that’s very different from something you’ve had years to refine and perfect. For the first time, LC was trying to marry the Online Dual Enrollment model with the in-person teaching happening on campus. This was very difficult because LC faculty are very hands-on. The deans started putting together cohorts of faculty who were comfortable with online teaching and were happy to share that knowledge and experience. Within a culture of collaboration—faculty teaching faculty—the transfer of knowledge spread quickly. The transfer was stressful for students and faculty alike, and it took a lot of patience, kindness, communication, and empathy. That’s the baseline for Landmark College faculty, and I’m honored to work with them.

Daniel Lougen '20 works on a project last fall.

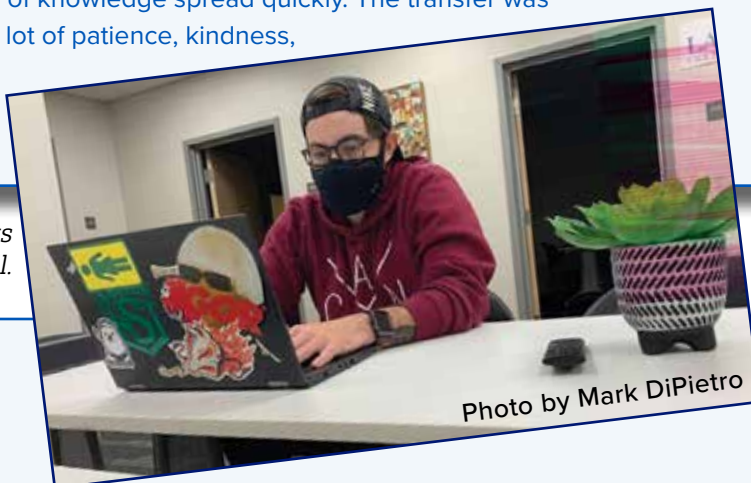


Photo by Mark DiPietro

Geoff Burgess, dean of the School of Professional Studies and Sciences

For me, this has been 20 years in coming. I did my grad work back in 2001–02 on creating web materials for students with learning differences. When we came to the crisis last spring, the range of faculty engagement was quite wide and varied. During the extended spring break in March 2020, Dr. Gail Gibson Sheffield, vice president for academic affairs, had begun a Canvas site about online readiness and then I took over. It modeled best practices for online teaching and I had help from others, like Director of Online Learning Denise Jaffe and Educational Technologist/Academic Specialist Glenn Powers—that’s their expertise so I was pleased when they told me it was right! The thing is, everyone recognized we were in a crisis and this is what we had to do. Because of LC’s mission and unique population of students, we can’t just get by. We have to be the best at teaching students online.

Drs. Alicia Beth, Tim Beck, and Jeanette Landin (pictured top to bottom) were among the LC faculty identified as “power users” in online instruction. They shared their knowledge and advice with their peers as the College shifted to online learning in 2020.

Dr. Alicia Beth, assistant professor of education

Ultimately, online teaching is about teaching, and faculty at Landmark are consummate teachers. You have to take what you know about pedagogy and working with neurodiverse students and then trust yourself to implement those best practices. It’s just best practices plus confidence! There’s no secret sauce.

Dr. Tim Beck, assistant professor of psychology

The transition to online happened in only my second semester at LC. I didn’t yet feel grounded in the community, but that helped me connect with students. We had the feeling that we were all in this together, just trying to survive and get through.

Dr. Jeanette Landin, associate professor of business

Even with a lot of online teaching experience, material has to be adapted to the Landmark College way of teaching. It’s a fine balance; you’ve got to keep it engaging enough for students who move quickly but also predictable enough for students who need the structure.



Kevin Mayne, vice president for enrollment management

If there's anything the pandemic has taught us, it's to be flexible, nimble, and creative. We've always prided ourselves on a high-touch approach to recruitment, connecting with students, families, and influencers in person. Without on-campus events and limited opportunities for families to visit, we began using online platforms for video interviews with prospective students; virtual tours; open houses and webinars; "Shark Week," a week-long event in April for accepted students; high school visits, college fairs, and virtual conference participation. Admissions has incorporated every type of technology available—email, texts, phone calls, online chats, virtual interviews. Even when things return to "normal," we'll still be using all of these methods.

Kevin Mayne, vice president for enrollment management, is fully equipped for any online presentation or meeting.

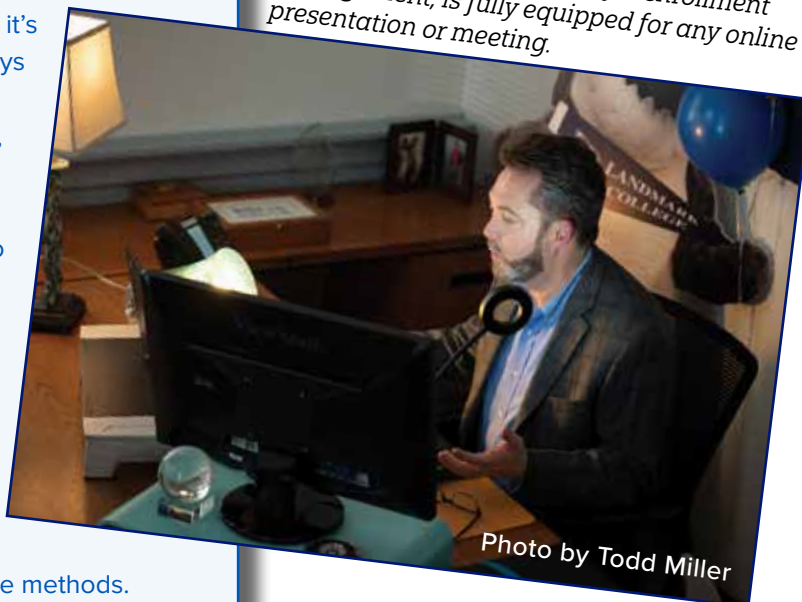


Photo by Todd Miller

Dr. Manju Banerjee, vice president for educational research and innovation

2020 was a year like no other! The Landmark College Institute for Research and Training (LCIRT) has responded to the pandemic in robust and varied ways. Our annual Summer Institute, held on campus each June for more than 25 years, became a series of online offerings in 2020. LCIRT Director Dr. Adam Lalor and I conducted one of the earliest research studies on the effects of the pandemic on postsecondary disability services. Our online certificate course, "Online, Blended, and Classroom Technologies for Diverse Learners," saw a jump in enrollment and required us to hire additional adjunct instructors. We also continued hosting various webinars and professional development offerings. The College has continued developing and offering a combination of hybrid and online courses and supports for students—an edge we had because we had been offering online options long before the pandemic.

Tina LaFlam, director of information technology services

The first thing that hit us in March 2020 was getting every student and faculty member set up for remote classes. We had to come up with training sessions and manuals to get everyone up to speed. Educational technology services went from supporting faculty on campus to helping create new templates for online course blocks and summer sessions that were held online. We also had to think about LC employees working remotely, getting everyone laptops, and working through issues like poor internet connections at home. I can't say enough about how much everyone has done. I love that the College has learned how to adapt and provide the same services as when everyone is physically here.



Photo by Mark DiPietro

Amanda Tefft, LC bookstore associate, reminds campus that these challenging times will pass.

CIRT, Unmasked

Prior to March 2020, LC's Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) was little-known on campus. That's a good thing.

CIRT is a small, focused team that's called on to manage threats that require efforts beyond the College's daily operations (and part of the College's larger emergency operations plan). For years, CIRT members have met regularly to conduct reviews that simulate scenarios that cover a range of potential emergencies.

These monthly "dress rehearsals" for potential emergencies proved worthwhile as CIRT snapped to action in the early days of the pandemic, meeting twice a week to keep up with rapidly evolving information about the spread of COVID-19, and making deliberate, expeditious decisions that would affect and protect the entire College.

"We had a pandemic response plan in place based on the H1N1 pandemic in 2009, but COVID-19 escalated so quickly that our decisions needed to evolve just as quickly," says Vice President for Student Affairs Michael Luciani, who oversees campus safety and the organization of CIRT.

A major early decision was to extend spring break by a week and move the remainder of spring semester online. "We knew students wanted to be on campus, both because they were apprehensive about online learning and because LC is a second home for them," Luciani says. "Students and families appreciated that CIRT was being transparent and that our decisions were driven by putting everyone's health and safety first while also delivering a full college experience to our students."

In addition to Luciani, CIRT members are President Peter Eden; Vice President for Academic Affairs Gail Gibson Sheffield; Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Jon MacClaren; Vice President for Marketing and Communications Mark DiPietro; and Director of Campus Safety Terence White.

Depending on the nature of a given crisis, CIRT calls on other LC community members as advisors; in the case of the pandemic, Director of Health Services Jeff Huyett and Director of Counseling Jackie Mills have joined CIRT since last spring.



Huyett



Mills

Huyett became a familiar, comforting figure during the College's online chat sessions for students, families, and the LC community. Appreciative LC employees dubbed Huyett "LC's Dr. Anthony Fauci." With a background in public health, Huyett had been monitoring COVID-19 developments since early 2020.

"We're so fortunate to be working with the Vermont Department of Health," Huyett says. "They connected to communities very quickly and we had a network with other higher education institutions in Vermont. Politics didn't happen here the way it happened in other places."

CIRT continues to meet weekly, and it holds monthly online Q&A sessions with current students, families, and the LC community. Its efficacy has shown, according to President Eden, that the College can put a risk mitigation system into play rapidly and effectively when needed. "This illustrates our agility and our ability to commit to the safety and health of our entire community in an emergency," Eden says. "We now know we can prepare, identify focus areas, and repurpose our action plan no matter the emergency."

Luciani adds, "The fact that the team had practiced, reviewed, and prepared, developed a synergy, and knew their respective roles had a big impact on the outcome and positive response to the College's decision-making." 🐼



Eden



Luciani



Gibson Sheffield



MacClaren



DiPietro



White

Pandemic-related relief funds help ease financial challenges

Throughout the COVID-19 public health crisis, LC's Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President Jon MacClaren has managed financial challenges imposed by the pandemic.

Among the COVID-related grants and loans managed by MacClaren's office:

- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which provided LC with a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan of \$2.8 million last spring. This allowed the College to keep individuals employed. Although PPP is a loan, MacClaren says LC will apply for loan forgiveness and anticipates it will be granted.
- The proceeds of a \$500,000 CARES Act proprietary grant were partially used to provide funds to those students directly affected by the pandemic; the remaining funds are being used to pay the costs associated with maintaining health and safety on campus, including hiring additional custodial and Health Services staff, and the purchase of tents, laptop computers, cleaning supplies, and more.
- The state of Vermont provided relief funds for the 11 private colleges in Vermont, \$1.2 million of which was disbursed to LC. These funds helped reimburse costs of refunding spring semester 2020 room and board charges when students did not return from spring break. An additional \$180,000 in state funds has defrayed some of the cost of COVID-19 testing incurred by the College.
- A December 2020 federal stimulus package granted another \$378,549 to LC, which requires further direct payments to students affected by the crisis and will pay for additional personal protective equipment and supplies.

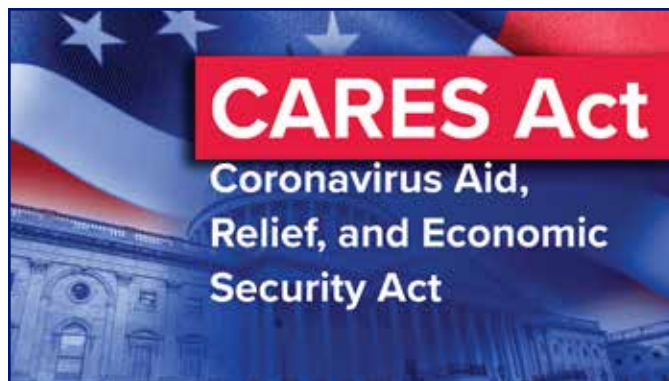


Photo by Mark DiPietro

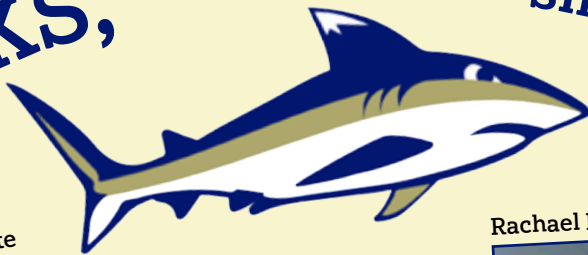
The Click Center has been the site of COVID-19 testing for students and employees. Bridget Shea-Gander, a nurse practitioner in LC's health services office, oversees Academic Advisor Denise Higgins' test.

MacClaren notes that these funds are restricted, meaning they are allocated to costs associated with maintaining health and safety at LC during the pandemic. "This aid helped the College greatly in a time of unforeseen expenses and enrollment challenges related to the pandemic," MacClaren said. 🐘

These icons, created by LC Graphic Designer Valerie Cox, are helping to remind the LC community about the importance of COVID-19 prevention by promoting health and wellness.



SHARKS,



show us your masks!

Tricia Stanley, associate
director of alumni relations



Elizabeth Hubbard '17



Rachael Koslouski '17



Josh Eisen '18



Liz Raucher '18



Johnny Hayes '14



Cullen Elwell '20



Sara Fradkin '17



Daniel Shin '20



Rose Rothenford '11



Ghiaz Badruddin '17



These six faculty members who retired from Landmark College in 2020 served a collective 155 years. The College could not hold a ceremony in honor of these faculty, but aims to do so in 2021.

A Legend at Landmark College: Baucom is the College's Newest Emeritus Professor

by Mark DiPietro

The word “unprecedented” topped many year-end lists of the most overused words of 2020. When describing Professor Jim Baucom’s time at Landmark College, it’s a word nearly impossible to avoid.

The opening and closing chapters of Baucom’s LC career were just that—unprecedented. Recruited in 1984 by his Landmark School colleague Jim Olivier (LC’s first president), Baucom was appointed academic dean and tasked with building a curriculum and recruiting faculty.

“There were zero students signed up for Landmark College at that point,” Baucom recalled in an interview last summer. “We worked from a little office at the Landmark School in Beverly, Massachusetts, and we had one old Radio Shack TRS-80 that we shared. I finished my career 35 years later, hunched over a laptop in my son’s old bedroom, teaching online classes. In some ways, my career spanned the whole tech progression.”

When the early days of the pandemic forced LC to halt in-person, residential instruction in spring 2020, Baucom and other faculty had to quickly adapt their classes to an online format. It was a self-described “tough way to go out” for the founding faculty member.

“The last six weeks were tough for everyone, but for those of us who were retiring, it was also our last experience teaching. I really missed being in the classroom, and I missed seeing the colleagues I had worked with for so many years.”



Professor Jim Baucom in class circa 2018.

As a founding faculty member of a College priding itself on face-to-face interaction and personal attention to students, Baucom was also aware of how difficult the experience was for students.

“Students enjoy the interaction with each other as much as they enjoy interacting with professors. Some of that can be replicated online, but not being face to face made it hard for students to have an easy exchange and support for each other.”

Baucom recognizes the parallel between last spring and the early days of LC.

“When we opened in 1985, it was a day-to-day thing where we could have been one or two decisions away from folding,” he recalls. “It was exciting because it was a history-making experiment, but at the same time it was terrifying because there was no guarantee that people would buy into it or that there was a need for it. Chad (LC’s founder, Dr. Charles Drake) had the vision that there would be a need for Landmark College, but no one had implemented the idea previously. And we were taking over a campus that had closed a decade before, so that was scary in itself.”

"I sort of ended at the same point, where the College had to adapt and be nimble and figure out how to make new things work. The biggest triumph was the way faculty, staff, and students rallied to make the best of the situation," Baucom said. "I commend the administration, deans, department heads, technology staff—everyone ramped up and provided as much support as was needed."

Despite his retirement, Baucom's relationship with LC has not ended. He became the College's third Professor Emeritus, a distinction he shares with retired faculty members Linda Hecker and Ken Gobbo.

"It is not hyperbole to state that we may not even be here right now if not for Jim Baucom," President Eden stated in a campus-wide memo announcing Baucom's appointment as Professor Emeritus last year. "The significant contributions Jim has made within the field of educational psychology and the life-changing effects it

had upon students taking his courses are difficult to fully measure and completely appreciate."



Eden said the College hopes to have an in-person ceremony to honor Baucom this spring, depending on ongoing public health concerns and restrictions. Whenever the celebration is held, Baucom's former students are sure to share their appreciation for him.

"Ask students who Jim Baucom is and, without pause, the response will be, 'He's my favorite teacher of all time,'" says **Sydney Ruff '06**, one of Baucom's former students who is now LC's director

of admissions. "While he would never agree with this statement, Jim Baucom is a legend—not only for his time in the field but because of his approach to students. He makes his students feel like they are the only ones in the room, gives them the capacity to believe in themselves, and dream big—often for the first time." 🐼

Tools of the Trade: Carmichael Approached Writing in Similar Fashion as His Other Vocation—Carpentry

by Chris Lenois

Reached on the phone this past summer to discuss his 25 years as a member of the Landmark College faculty, Professor Steve Carmichael confessed he was still processing the transition to retirement.

"When you're a teacher, you have that same feeling a student does as the summer starts winding down," said Carmichael. "It's not going to hit me until September approaches and I don't have that familiar mix of disappointment that summer is over, blended with some excitement for a new semester and a new group of students."

Given the easy laugh that punctuated most of his remarks, it's safe to say that he will adapt pretty quickly. He is looking forward to devoting more time to music projects—he has been a singer, guitarist, and songwriter for several area bands over the past 30 years—as well as his other vocation: carpentry and cabinet-making.

Carmichael's abilities as a craftsman helped pay the bills while he searched for a teaching job after college. He would continue taking on carpentry projects during



Professor Steve Carmichael shares his infectious sense of humor with a student during LC's summer program in Berkeley, California, in 2018.

summers even after coming to Landmark, calling it a “great change of pace from teaching.” He was hired as a tutor, on the recommendation of art professor Christie Herbert, whom he befriended after moving from Boston to southern Vermont.

When his duties at LC expanded to include advising, **Dave Schwinghamer '96** was one of the first students he worked with. “Steve was very encouraging. We worked through issues and learning styles like advisors do, but he also really encouraged me to follow my dreams and helped me get on track to go to veterinary school,” remembered Dave, who is now the owner of Anoka Equine Veterinary Services, an eight doctor, 30-employee practice in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

As Carmichael moved from one-on-one work into a classroom setting, he found that teaching students with learning differences resonated with his woodworking experiences. “Carpentry is all about problem-solving, developing a plan, and following a logical process, all of which have relevance in the classroom. You encounter a student who has a certain need and you figure out how best to address it based on their learning style.”

Erica Loveland '20 appreciated his approach, saying “As a dyslexic first-year student, I could not have been any luckier to have Steve Carmichael as my writing professor. His teaching approach made writing assignments engaging. I was invested in working on correcting my comma splices and elaborating on my ideas. He helped me develop the writing skills I needed to take on higher level writing courses.”

While Carmichael derived a great deal of gratification in helping his students navigate their way through the ins and outs of writing, he discovered that many of his students needed support on a more deep-rooted level than the nuts and bolts of syntax and sentence structure.

“Kids would say they didn’t know what to write about, and I would say your story is valid. You have things to

say,” he recalled. “The cliché is to tell students to ‘write what you know,’ and in my experience with developing writers, that works. Once students are able to express their ideas informally, without being judged, in casual discussions or journals, many of them start to overcome their resistance to writing, and find the motivation to work on sharing their experiences and ideas in more formal modes of writing.”

Photo by James Tensuan



Professor Steve Carmichael (center) taught LC’s summer program in Berkeley, California. At the time, alumna Chloe O’Hare ’16 (standing) was an LC admissions counselor who assisted in the program.

That encouragement is what **Nick Moody '06** remembers most about Steve’s class. “I kept looking forward to the class whenever it happened. I always remember a really good atmosphere. There was a real inclusivity, everyone talking and sharing stories. That validation is so key when you’re that age,” said Nick, who has made his own career in the carpentry trade back in his native state of Washington.

Carmichael was disappointed to be deprived of more in-class time with his students during his final semester, but as the College looks to incorporate more online courses, He says he’s upbeat about the faculty’s ability to adapt.

“I’m confident that my colleagues, given their creativity, are going to come up with effective and innovative approaches,” he said. “I don’t envy them having to do that at this point. But I think people will rally. My colleagues are a dedicated, devoted, and warm-hearted group of people. It’s really been wonderful to work with everybody.” 🐦

Tolman Guided Them with Science

by Mark DiPietro

The best illustration of Professor Cindy Tolman's effectiveness as a teacher might be the evolution of **Avital Davda '12** from "science-phobe" to science major.

"Cindy's method of teaching, her passion, and attitude showed me not to be overwhelmed by this thing called science," says Avital, who arrived at LC without ever having taken a college-level science course despite spending two years at another college previously. "If I hadn't taken Cindy's Introduction to Chemistry class and made a dive into the sciences, I never would have taken that hard look at myself and known I wanted to study wildlife."

Tolman, who retired in May 2020, arrived at LC in 1996 to teach the College's first chemistry class. She had no background in teaching students with LD, but she quickly found that her teaching style would be a good match for LC students.

"At traditional colleges, the sciences are taught in big lecture halls and then broken down into smaller groups for labs," Tolman said in an interview last summer. "I didn't want to stand in front of a class and lecture, so I designed activities beyond the labs—figuring out how to teach concepts using models and hands-on activities."

Tolman's final semester at LC presented its own opportunities to adapt her teaching methods. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, all classes went online after spring break in March 2020.

"Labs had to be rethought. I was teaching two lab classes and had to use three different lab simulations in each class. They were as interactive as possible, but clicking on something to move it isn't the same as picking up a graduated cylinder, pouring something into a flask, swirling it around, and seeing what happens."

Despite the challenges, Tolman found many students were able to adapt to her online classes, which included requirements for science majors and electives for non-science majors.



Professor Cindy Tolman (seated center) was a contributing author of LC's "Biology Success!" project funded by the National Science Foundation from 2001-04. Pictured with Tolman are members of a visiting NSF team, along with Prof. Rich Grumbine (far right) and now-retired LC science Prof. Abigail Littlefield (second from right).

"Some students did very well with the online format; some really struggled; and most were somewhere in between," Tolman says. "Those who struggled the most were the ones who always had the most trouble getting work done outside class—and now, essentially everything was being done outside class. Students who needed the structure of the classroom had a hard time structuring their days outside the classroom. There were some who had a slow start, but they had me to talk to and they were able to get on track and get the work done."



That personal touch is what transformed Avital's attitude toward science. "Cindy really encouraged me to go into a field I had never considered," says Avital, who was leaning toward a political science major before Tolman inspired her. Avital ended up majoring in chemistry at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) and is working toward a master's degree in environmental studies from Pace University while working full-time as a laboratory technician for the New York Department of Agriculture and Markets.

"Cindy cares about her students, whether current or alumni," Avital says. "Plenty of times, I reached out to her when I was an undergraduate [at MCLA] and needed help with academics, and she always helped me through."

Tolman admits she'll miss her students and LC colleagues most of all. "Grading papers? That I won't miss." 🐼

Jahn and Arieta Began and Ended LC Careers as 'BFFs'

Lena Jahn and Chris Arieta met on their first day of work at Landmark College in August 1992. Both were hired as tutors and they became—and remain—good friends. The two women retired from LC in May 2020 and agreed to answer some questions by email.

Q: How did your role at LC change over the years?

Lena Jahn: After my first year as a full-time tutor, my role changed a number of times and included teaching writing; teaching reading and study skills; ESL services coordinator; tutorial supervisor; assistant director of college placement; international student advisor; assistant director of study abroad; assistant director of advising; director of advising; and from 2007 to 2020, full-time classroom teaching. I taught first-year seminar courses to students who entered the College at the partial-credit level (Foundations in Learning) and the full-credit level (Perspectives in Learning). The nonteaching roles were part time in combination with teaching, with the exception of the years when I worked full time in advising administration.

Chris Arieta: In the early 1990s, the College was still developing as an institution of higher education. Because I was a trained teacher, I was eager to teach and felt most interested in joining the Reading and Study Skills Department. I liked the idea of exposing students to the “hidden curriculum” and explicitly instructing them in the art of college study skills and critical reading and thinking. Over the next 14 years I taught Introduction to Reading and Study Skills, followed by Critical Reading and Thinking, Critical Perspectives and then eventually Perspectives in Learning. In 1997, I became the department chair for the Reading and Study Skills Department (now designated as Education). During this time, I also developed some of the first online courses for educators, which helped instructors from all over learn how to teach using the LC methods. In 2006, the First-Year Studies Department emerged, and I became assistant dean. A few years later, my role

shifted to working closely with enrollment management to do academic placement for incoming students. From 2012 to 2020, I continued my role as director of academic placement and took over the role as chair of the Academic Intervention Team.

Q: Did you have any background in working with students with LD, or was that all new to you?

Jahn: When I started at LC, my main training and work experience was in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). As part of my previous teaching position at a private high school, a part of my workload had been as a tutor for students with a diagnosed LD. When I started at LC, my cohort received extensive training and supervision over the first few years. As

our student population expanded from students with language-based LDs to include those whose main challenges were attention, executive functioning, and autism, the College provided professional development opportunities to learn best practices. There was also extensive informal sharing of knowledge and ideas between colleagues.

Arieta: I had worked in a special education

department for elementary students when I was in graduate school, so I had some background in the needs of students with LDs. But honestly, Landmark was the expert. We all spent the first three years being mentored by a supervisor. We participated in “in-house” trainings during this time and started to learn about our new student population—students who learned differently because of challenges with focus, attention, organization, and self-regulation. LC brought experts to our campus, and we were encouraged to attend conferences to continue learning how to adjust our



Lena used a lot of visuals about how the brain works. She helped me discover that having a learning disability doesn't mean that I'm incapable of doing well academically or forming lifelong friendships, given my history of struggling in those two areas growing up. Her teachings gave me the confidence and tools to move on to higher level psychology classes.

from Ghiaz Badruddin '17

teaching approach to serve a broader community of learners. This was a time of great learning for all of us and an exciting time of continued development as a college.

Q: What were some memorable experiences you had with students?

Jahn: In my first year, I tutored a student who was a brilliant mathematician and whose visual and tactile abilities were exceptional, but who was very dyslexic. Linda Hecker (now emeritus professor) helped me develop materials that drew on my student's strengths—for example, color-coded index cards with syllable types. He made fast progress, and his confidence as a reader soared. It was powerful to see first-hand the impact of using a strengths-based approach to address LD.

For the past 13 years, I taught first-year seminar courses to students who entered the College at the partial-credit level and the full-credit level. It was not uncommon for a student to arrive with low self-esteem because of lots of experience with failure. I remember one student who could not list a single personal or academic strength. I had the privilege of observing her as she began to let her guard down, make connections with classmates and with me, experiment with new strategies, and develop confidence in her ability to learn. A few years later, I got to see her walk confidently across the stage at her graduation.

Arieta: I had some amazing students over the years. My approach was always to develop the classroom as a community. I modeled strategies and encouraged students to share their own techniques to one another. I also loved experiential teaching. For a long time, I taught a critical perspectives course based on the book *Common Ground* by J. Anthony Lukas. It is the true story of the integration of the Boston school system told from the perspectives of several families. One of my favorite memories was taking students on a field trip to visit all the famous Boston landmarks that were mentioned in

the book. Driving the van in Boston and following former colleague Paul Petritis while he was making U-turns on four-way streets was also quite memorable. What I always loved when working with students was making sure they always knew that I understood and cared about them. I am still in contact with former students who are now in their 40s and have children, families, and careers of their own.

Q: What challenges about this past semester stand out for you? Victories or triumphs?

Jahn: When the switch to remote learning happened, I felt fortunate that I had already spent half a semester working with my students on campus. We had built relationships and routines as a group. That said, the switch was challenging and reminded me that what I love the most about teaching is the opportunity to work with my students in person. Interacting with a group on the screen felt limiting. But overall, my students did a good job adjusting, and a few of them gave me useful pointers when my skills in using Microsoft Teams fell short. The new format also pushed me to tweak my use of Canvas, for example by improving my use of online discussion boards and offering my students weekly opportunities for self-reflection in a consistent format.

Arieta: We had to learn the online technology very quickly and that was the biggest challenge. Fortunately, I had taught online courses in the past, so I was not intimidated by this new challenge. It was time-consuming, though, and it was difficult to know whether students were “with you.” They did not always want to be on video so you could not see their faces. This was challenging. By the second week I remember thinking, “I just have to keep doing what I know how to do. I need to connect with students and help them to feel my support and care.” I also needed to let them know they would need to work with me, and we would be partners during this challenging time. 🐼

Chris was always pleasant and happy; I never saw her upset. Her teaching helped me want to become a teacher. She was like a mom to me because I was so far away from home in Florida. Ms. Arieta was part of the “Fab Four,” which included faculty members Lena Jahn, Jan Thompson, and Judy Palmer (also retired). If it weren't for them and Landmark, I would never be a teacher.

from Tamara Goldstein Glasser '97

McCloskey Helped Usher in a New Era at LC

by Mark DiPietro

Ann McCloskey didn't log as many years at LC as other faculty members who retired in 2020, but in her 14 years at the College, she helped coordinate its momentous shift to a baccalaureate-granting institution. As coordinator of the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Liberal Studies, McCloskey helped launch Landmark College into a historic new era in 2012.

"I had been teaching at LC for eight years when I was asked to be coordinator of the new B.A. in Liberal Studies, working closely with Adrienne Major and Jill Hinckley," says McCloskey. (Professor Major, now a faculty member teaching English, was academic dean at the time; Hinckley, now dean of the School of Education, was associate academic dean.) "We were just getting the first B.A. off the ground, without any students declared yet."

That successful evolution led LC to its current total of seven bachelor's degrees, including the B.A. in Psychology, which McCloskey also helped develop as a faculty member.

Those significant accomplishments are not her only historic contributions to the College. She led the first three study abroad trips to The Netherlands at the urging of the program's founders, Professors Liza Burns and Peg Alden, because McCloskey knew the language and culture from living there as a teenager. McCloskey and Burns were slated to lead another trip last spring until the pandemic forced its cancellation.

It's fitting that McCloskey would throw so much energy into making LC stronger. When she arrived as an instructor in 2006 after 18 years on faculty at Antioch New England Graduate School, she knew immediately she'd found a new home.

"It was a great fit right away. I had a background in counseling and had worked a lot with teens. At Landmark, I was teaching teenagers with ADHD and I loved it! It was fun for me and not that hard to do." McCloskey's experience in

counseling was well-received by her students because "they appreciated that I could understand their personal challenges through my background in mental health."

Current student **Emily King** took several classes with McCloskey and calls her "one of the funniest and most compassionate professors I ever had. She cared more about her students as people than as just another paper to read or quiz to grade. She was always there if we wanted to check in with her about how we were doing or what was going on in our personal lives."

Like others who retired last year, McCloskey wishes there could have been more personal interaction and fanfare, although she made the best of an imperfect situation. After retiring in the spring, "I spent a lot of time at my sewing machine, making masks for friends and colleagues at the College. I also made sure I got outside and was active." She's already made more time for exercise, yoga, and outdoor activities like cross-country skiing.

And during fall semester, when LC was in a pinch and needed an instructor for a three-week online Child Development course in December, McCloskey stepped up. "Maybe that was my swan song, but who knows. Maybe I'll do something else. Maybe I'm not done." 🦋



Photo by Todd Miller

Professor Ann McCloskey will remain active during retirement. This 2017 bike trek to Apple Hill in Putney included LC colleagues Jan Coplan, director of Career Connections; Kari Post, director of athletics and recreation; McCloskey; and Rick Bryck, dean of the School of Educational Research & Innovation.

Farewell, Liz Cooper

Liz Cooper retired from Landmark College in May 2020 after 20 years in the Office of Health Services. Because of restrictions on gatherings, a drive-by retirement celebration was held to honor Cooper, a licensed practical nurse.

Photos by Chris Lenois



At top, Liz Cooper greets passersby from outside the MacFarlane Science, Technology & Innovation Center; at left, Nicole Pacenka, assistant director of housing operations and resident dean, shows her appreciation for Cooper's service to the community.

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In Memoriam

Archive Photo



Professor **Ann Wheeler**, who joined the faculty of Landmark College in summer 1986, died October 31, 2020. Wheeler held the position of advisor and assistant professor at the time of her retirement last May. Alumni and LC colleagues shared their fond memories of Professor Wheeler.

Ann was my advisor at a pivotal time in my life. I was discouraged, unmotivated, and insecure with my lack of academic accomplishments. With her guidance and encouragement, I landed a 4.0 and found myself on the dean's list. I later transferred to a university and today I run a commercial cleaning company. She embodied the College's mission—to support and guide those who needed that extra push to fully meet their potential. I believe to this day she was a "landmark" in many students' academic careers.

Connor Eubanks '12

Professor Steve Glover has a habit of playing various kinds of music in his office when he is working on his classes. One time he was playing a recording of "Secret Agent Man," the theme from the '60s TV show, and Ann came out of her office and began to sing along with it and be-bop up and down the hallway. After that, sometimes on Fridays, Steve would play it and Ann always responded. Sometimes some of the rest of us would too. It is my favorite memory of Ann. I still can't believe she is gone.

Professor Joyce Rodgers, Liberal Studies

I appreciate a good laugh, and I could rely on Ann to deliver a good zinger on almost any subject. In our work, she would often hone in on a problem in a no-nonsense way that was both irreverent and astute. She could be counted on to be truthful and committed to her work. At the same time, she had a soft, lighthearted side that would appear during the lulls.

Nevada Bromley, Academic Advising Coordinator

Centers for Diversity and Inclusion



Centers for Diversity and Inclusion Programs Continue to Grow

'Reach One, Teach One' and Latinx Center are the newest additions

by Mark DiPietro

Through the Centers for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), Landmark College last fall launched a mentorship program for first-year African-American students called Reach One, Teach One (ROTO). Co-created by alumnus **Marc Thurman '17**, coordinator of the CDI, **Fabio Arnaldo Ayala**, assistant director of student conduct and community standards and resident dean of Alumni Hall, and Kelly O'Ryan, director of student conduct and community engagement, ROTO aims to boost academic success and leadership opportunities for African-American students during their first two semesters at LC.

"When you look at the data and see what's happening in the classroom, we're not seeing enough success for African-American students," says Thurman. "Fabio Arnaldo and I felt the mentoring piece was missing."

Thurman, Ayala, and student Shoshana Conley mentor about a dozen students under ROTO, which organizes gatherings and activities like homework nights and study hall opportunities to support the students. Mentors stay connected to students' academic advisors so they're aware of areas where the students need additional help. The mentoring team also identifies allies among LC faculty and staff with whom students of color can network and identify potential resources and leadership opportunities.

Thurman's own experience as an LC student—first earning his associate degree and then his bachelor's degree in 2017—informed his desire to help African-American students find leaders on campus who "look like them to mentor and guide them through their first and second semesters." Thurman remembers visiting LC with his mother in 2013. "When she saw a student



Photo (from left to right): Students Katlyn Brooks and Angelina Ferucci, CDI Coordinator Marc Thurman '17, students Ryan Bergin, Declan O'Flaherty, Leon Premru, Tyra Cole, Victor Grandet, Naiyana Martin, Shoshana Conley, Kenney Cooper, Devin Holland, Soke Mwantuali, and Angel Cintron.

who looked like me giving me a tour of campus, she was open to every possibility that was coming my way,” he says. As he settled in as a student, Thurman found a mentor and confidante in a person of color who was on the residential life staff. “She’s the one who said to me, ‘Have you ever thought about being an RA?’ That’s what sparked me to take on that role, and then other leadership roles.”

While he was still a student, Thurman helped establish the Rise-Up Center, which would become one of several centers under the CDI. The others are the Stonewall Center, the Center for Women and Gender, and the Latinx Center, which is getting off the ground this semester. Thurman is excited about the prospects ROTO has to grow under the CDI umbrella.

“Seeing students of color walk that stage and graduate is a great statement for others, allowing them to

understand that success is for them as well, no matter if the world paints a different picture,” he says. “We’re telling them, ‘You have a chance, too.’ That’s the point of this great program.”

Chris Lenois, LC’s director of marketing and communications, noted the CDI’s influence during a recent video project to gather student testimonials about their time at LC.

“Every student we interviewed name-checked the CDI as a high point of their Landmark College experience,” Lenois said. “This included some of the CDI’s student leaders like **Leon Premru** and **Angel Cintron**, but also students who just appreciate the programming. That’s a real credit to what Marc and others are growing here in terms of diversity and inclusion.” 🐾

Academics Update

The first recipients of the Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and the Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Entrepreneurial Leadership (COMEL) were honored in 2020. Both the May and December graduation ceremonies took place online because of restrictions on gatherings, so graduates submitted photos and videos.

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First B.A. COMEL Graduates



Wyman Jackson
May '20



Amber LaFlamme
December '20



Jiana Eisenberg
May '20



Emily Bartlett
May '20



Daniel Lougen
December '20

First B.A. Psychology Graduates

LC Adds Bachelor of Science in Life Science Degree

LC added its seventh baccalaureate degree in fall 2020, the Bachelor of Science in Life Science. The addition is in response to the national call for increased opportunities in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

“Landmark College has successfully delivered science education to students who learn differently since the College first opened in 1985,” said Dr. Gail Gibson Sheffield, vice president for academic affairs. The BS-LS is an extension of the College’s current A.S. in Life Science degree, both of which offer two tracks of study: Life Science and Environmental Biology. The

major includes knowledge areas related to ecology, organismal and sub-organismal biology, natural resource management, data-driven decision making, and a strong foundation for the public health sector.

“Every student in Life Science becomes a member of our community of scholars, working closely together with faculty and peers to advance the field of biology and develop a life-long interest in life science,” said Professor Brian Young, chair of the STEM department. “The curriculum emphasizes learning by doing. Unlike the traditional approach of separating lecture and lab sections of courses, LC lab courses integrate those experiences in a modular approach that provides opportunities for students to construct knowledge for themselves.”

Students also have the opportunity to develop laboratory techniques prior to engaging in internship experiences, either with an industry partner or as part of a faculty member’s research. The B.S. in Life Science program culminates in a capstone experience that allows students to work in partnership with faculty in their research.

Photo by FJ Gaylor



Professor Brian Young, chair of the STEM department, works with a student in this 2015 photo.

Planned Success: LC Expands in San Francisco Bay Area

As part of its broader expansion of learning options under an emerging Umbrella brand called LC Online, Landmark College has announced plans to open a “Success Center” in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2021.

This West Coast expansion will help meet increasing demand for learning support for students.

“Over the course of the past several years, there has been escalating interest in the Bay Area for additional resources that help students who learn differently,” said President Peter Eden. “LC’s full-time, residential program in Vermont draws students from across the United States and the world, and our rapidly growing online initiative, LC Online, serves students literally anywhere—but this targeted expansion will allow for even more direct support for online students and parents in the Bay Area.”

For many years, Landmark College has offered Online Dual Enrollment for high school or gap/transition year students with learning and attention challenges as an opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school. In addition, LC also offers online course options for college-level students, which are currently being expanded in order to bring effective educational methods to students who learn differently but will not be studying on LC’s Vermont campus.

Landmark College has had some presence in California for many years. It previously offered a one-week transition-to-college program each summer on the campus of University of California, Berkeley. That has now been adapted into a five-day Online Boot Camp.

LC’s West Coast expansion includes the hiring of Sandra Fishler as its new regional director for Landmark College’s online programs in the Bay Area. Fishler is based at the campus of LC’s close partner, Compass High School in San Mateo, which is the site of LC’s planned Success Center. Landmark College has also provided domain expertise as a participant in Compass’s recent online webinar series. (Compass’s head of school is **Doug Killin ’87**, one of LC’s earliest alumni.)

“Having Sandra on site demonstrates our commitment to students and families in the Bay Area, and reaffirms our promise to bring Landmark College practices and



Sandra Fishler, regional director for LC’s online programs, at the site of LC’s planned Success Center in San Mateo, California.

instructional supports to students who have not had such opportunities until now,” said Dr. Manju Banerjee, vice president for educational research and innovation at Landmark College.

Fishler comes to LC from HotChalk, Inc., where, as director of academic affairs, she collaborated with many university partners. Her role is the first step in what LC projects to be a growing support system and capability for online students on the West Coast.

Once established, the Landmark College Success Center will have a learning specialist on site who will offer academic support to students with LD. Some social skills support will also be offered. Services will likely be available to students regardless of whether they are enrolled in LC Online programming.

Fishler’s role is to network with schools, educators, and education professionals on the West Coast to build connections with the College’s online programs. LC has also expanded its recruitment efforts in the region: Bay Area resident Sharon Farrell, the new assistant director of West Coast Admissions, will work alongside Fishler. Landmark College alumna **Erica Loveland ’20** will oversee recruitment in the West Coast market area that includes California, Oregon, and Washington. ➡

Photo by Bryan R. Smith/AFP



Meredith Davis '13, a paramedic and emergency medical technician, wheels a COVID-19 patient into Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York, in April 2020.

Serving in the Epicenter of the Pandemic

She became a certified New York City paramedic in February, just as the first cases of COVID-19 emerged in the United States.

Within weeks, **Meredith Davis '13** was working long hours caring for patients in the nation's coronavirus hot zone.

As New York hospitals filled with COVID-19 patients, Meredith worked 12-hour shifts providing advanced life support, emergency care, and transport for the sick and injured. A certified paramedic and emergency medical technician (EMT), she juggled four different jobs, including a volunteer role with the Port Washington Fire Department on Long Island.

"I love my work. It's different every day," says Meredith. "That's why I decided to become a paramedic."

Through her training and certification, Meredith is able to make quick decisions, administer medication,

and provide lifesaving care—including intubation and resuscitation with a heart defibrillator.

But nothing could prepare Meredith for the pandemic. "It was horrible," she says. "We were surrounded by death."

Adapting to Life During a Pandemic

Wearing masks—on and off the job—and social distancing became the norm. So did handwashing and tossing her clothes straight into the wash on her return home.

During the height of the outbreak, Meredith only hung out with other first responders. She went months without seeing family members and rarely slept more than three to four hours at a time. To relieve stress, she

followed a therapist's recommendation to watch only Disney movies.

Lockdown wasn't an option. "When you work in health care, you still have to show up. Someone has to get in the ambulance and respond to calls," she says.

Meredith credits LC with helping her adapt. "At Landmark, I learned what to focus on first," she says. "I became more adaptable and organized, which definitely helped during this craziness."

Back to Basics

Meredith came to LC in 2011 at the suggestion of her dean after struggling through three semesters at Smith College. Diagnosed in grade school with ADHD and executive function disorder, she had "skated" by until she entered college.

"I was smart enough to get by in high school, but not smart enough to get by at Smith," she says.

Her plan: attend LC for one semester, then return to Smith. "A couple weeks in, I called my mom to tell her I was staying two years," says Meredith. "I realized

I didn't know how to do school. Landmark was my best shot."

Her First-Year Seminar was especially impactful—teaching her how to read a textbook and recognize what's important. She also learned to ask questions. The more she learned, the more confidence she gained.



Photo courtesy of Meredith Davis '13
Meredith Davis '13 (center) with coworkers outside Wyckoff Heights Medical Center.

"I grew to believe I was smart and that I could succeed in college. I was just missing a few key tools," says Meredith.

After graduating from LC with an associate degree in general studies, Meredith returned to Smith, where she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 2015. She worked two years as a case manager at a mental health clinic before starting her EMT training. She may return to school to become a physician assistant or doctor.

But for now, Meredith stands ready to serve on the frontlines—even in another city facing a coronavirus outbreak. "I have the skills. It's what I signed up to do," she says. 🦋

Recent Alumni Join Admissions and Student Affairs Teams

Erica Loveland '20 and Christina Parish '16 were hired as admissions counselors in 2020. Erica earned her bachelor's degree from LC; Christina earned her associate degree and went on to earn a bachelor's from Manhattanville College.

Robert Lutz '17 became resident dean and coordinator of the Transition at College (TaC) program, and Jenny Beller '20 joined the staff of TaC as a mentor. Rob earned his associate degree at LC and a bachelor's degree at Paul Smith's College; Jenny earned her bachelor's degree at LC.



Erica Loveland '20



Christina Parish '16



Robert Lutz '17



Jenny Beller '20

Friends for Life, Partners in a Pandemic

Alumni **Andrew Fielding '07** and **Austin Huettl '08** came together during a global emergency to make a difference.

Drawing on diverse skills—and an enduring friendship—they created Coast to Cove, a new venture aimed at meeting demand for protective face masks.

Austin was traveling throughout Asia on business early last winter when he noticed people wearing masks and heard talk about a new coronavirus. “I didn’t think too much about it at first. But I started to realize I was the only one not wearing a mask,” he says.

As cases multiplied and he realized the virus was likely headed to the United States, he began picking up masks everywhere he went. By the time Austin returned to Southern California where he runs an awning manufacturing company, he had collected more than 100 masks from Europe, Africa, and Asia.

“I had this idea to produce masks. I wanted to make a product with quality—not quantity—as my focus,” says Austin, owner of Laguna Canvas Products, LLC.

He pitched the concept to his college buddy and close friend Andrew, a Los Angeles-based startup founder and self-described “serial entrepreneur” and venture capitalist.

A Timely Idea

When Austin approached him with his business idea, Andrew was intrigued. He had recently founded Orana, a medical data collection and prediction software company, and previously founded Shrewd Travel and SMSAGE, an early company in the push notifications space.

“I’m someone who starts businesses, grows them, then looks for the next opportunity. I’m never really satisfied doing the same thing,” says Andrew.

Austin’s concept was timely, too, because the pandemic-induced lockdown had brought the venture capital industry to a grinding halt, he adds.

“It’s an industry based on trust. Without meeting face-to-face, how can you trust someone with millions of dollars?” says Andrew. “I could see that working with Austin and focusing on COVID-19-related response opportunities was a good opportunity.”

Still, as an entrepreneur and investor, Andrew initially said no—several times. “There were a lot of regulations to consider. And finding material was a real problem initially. It almost stopped us,” he says.

Ultimately, he said yes. “I’m always looking for problems because I like solving them. We saw a problem—a shortage of high-quality masks—and we wanted to solve it,” says Andrew.

A Common Bond

Problem solving is a skill the two friends honed as students at Landmark College. They met in 2006 during

their first week on campus, bonding over their California roots, their above-average height (although at 6’10” Austin towers over 6’2” Andrew), video games, and pranks played on fellow students. They also traveled to France together through LC’s Summer Abroad program.

“We got along, and we’ve been close ever since,” says Andrew.

Each one points to their time at LC as a pivotal moment in their lives. Both took business courses that provided a sound base for their future careers. But

they also describe learning skills that helped them to succeed in college and later as businessmen.

Andrew, who was diagnosed with ADHD and a nonverbal learning disorder, left LC after a bridge year and graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in entrepreneurship from Loyola Marymount



Photo by Austin Huettl '08

Prepandemic: Friends and business partners Austin Huettl '08 and Andrew Fielding '07 in Austin, Texas.

University (LMU). He credits Professor Eric Matte's Communication 101 course for having the biggest impact.

"His class forced me to speak in front of the class. I was scared of speaking before that, and now it's what I do," says Andrew, currently an entrepreneur-in-residence at LMU.

He also credits Professor Ann Wheeler (who passed away in October; see story on page 21) for insisting he work on his study habits, and Professor Roxie Hamilton (who retired in 2019) for requiring students to dress up for her Business 101 class.

"Landmark helped me grow as a person," says Andrew. "I learned to think about things and plan ahead. I learned to believe in myself. I found myself."

Austin, who was diagnosed in grade school with ADD, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and dyslexia, graduated from LC with an associate degree in general studies. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Arizona State University.

"Landmark laid the foundation of what I needed and gave me the skills to move forward. I learned how to adapt. I learned I needed extra time on tests and quiet," says Austin.

But Austin says LC's biggest impact was giving him a place where he finally fit in. "It's probably where I've felt most at home. I wasn't the odd guy out anymore," he says.

A Quality Product

Founded as a partnership between Andrew and Austin, Coast to Cove is a division of Laguna Canvas Products based in Orange County, California. Each brought a unique set of skills and experience to the partnership. An experienced business owner and manufacturer, Austin also had valuable connections with wholesale customers and suppliers. As an experienced venture capitalist, Andrew knew how to launch a business and brought an understanding of marketing, retail operations and distribution, and government regulations.

Photo by Austin Huettl '08



Austin and Andrew model the masks they manufacture through their business partnership.

The partners studied scores of masks before coming up with the right design. "Anyone can make a mask. We wanted to make an effective, quality product," says Austin.

When elastic proved difficult to find, they found a soft stretchy material for the face mask that could be made into ear loops. The end result: a reusable, comfortable, high-quality mask that can be repeatedly washed and dried per guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention. It comes in two sizes to ensure a secure and comfortable fit and features a special slot where a filter can be inserted for extra protection.

"We sold 1,000 masks our first day. Since then, we've shipped masks throughout the United States and abroad," says Andrew. "It's all word of mouth. Everyone who gets it, loves it."

Among their early clients was Landmark College. "Both President Eden and I were so impressed when we heard about this initiative," says Michael Luciani, LC's vice president for student affairs and dean of student life. "Austin and Andrew saw a problem and quickly responded with creativity and quality. It's so impressive to see two young men I knew as students react to this crisis with innovation and friendship." In addition to a purchase by LC, Luciani and other College staff have personally purchased Coast to Cove masks.

Friends First

Although they've known each other for 14 years, Austin and Andrew had never been in business together. Before launching Coast to Cove, they made a crucial business decision.

"We made a pact: if either of us gets frustrated, or it starts to impact our friendship, we will end the business. Remaining friends is what's most important," says Austin.

"We were determined not to let anything get in the way," agrees Andrew. "Landmark changed my life. It started me on this path, giving me confidence and a feeling of acceptance for the first time in my life. Best of all, it's where I met my best friend. We're not letting anything mess that up." 🐦

Lockdown's Silver Lining: More Family Time for Alumnus Helfgott

By Sascha Helfgott '97

ORLANDO, Florida—The COVID-19 health crisis affected my work when the Governor of Florida enforced a mandatory shutdown.

Walt Disney World shut its doors on March 16, 2020, at the end of the day and did not open again until July 11, when the Magic Kingdom and Disney's Animal Kingdom reopened to guests. Shortly thereafter, Epcot and Disney's Hollywood Studios opened to the public on July 15. Walt Disney World continued to pay its employees during the shutdown until April 19, when 75,000 of Disney's Orlando employees were furloughed. I fought for unemployment compensation and, after nine weeks, was approved for unemployment through the state of Florida.

I was called back to work starting June 28, and while many things have changed, Disney has gone to great lengths to keep its employees and guests safe; all employees are required to wear masks at work and guests are as well. The parks are now all open. Because of Disney's commitment to safety precautions, capacity has increased by 25 to 35 percent. We hosted the NBA restart to the 2019–20 season, an event I worked on in my role as entertainment technician.

This June, the Festival of the Lion King at Disney's Animal Kingdom will reopen. I have been very fortunate to have been called back to work last summer. Disney

has done everything in its power to keep employees paid and healthy.

COVID-19 affected me personally in some good ways. During the time of my furlough, I helped my two older sons finish school virtually and played with my youngest son. I spent more time with my wife and children during quarantine than I had in a long time. I was able to get projects around the house done that I would not have



Sascha Helfgott '97

had time to do. I taught my two older sons to ride a bike, and I ran and took long walks with my wife. Running became my outlet because it was a great way to clear my mind and get some much-needed exercise.

The skills that Landmark College taught me helped me the best when I was helping my 10- and 8-year-old sons with homework during school. My oldest

son and I were working on early Florida history and learning about the American Revolution and its impact on Florida. I started taking notes because I knew we had to write a passage about what we were reading. I showed him the two-column system of taking notes and how to use it later. ➔

Alumni Advisory Board



Theodora van Roijen '00, Chair
(pictured far left)

Jason Guyan '97, Vice Chair
(pictured second from left)

Genevieve Friend-Land '96,
Secretary

Sarah Alley '04

Andrew Garcia '11

Sarah Holmes '11

Christopher Mathey '04

Patricia Perry '92

Brian Press '95

Stephen H. Sack, Jr. '92

Andrea Tolliver '00

Detmar von Hardenberg '96

Tracy Wilkinson '02

Alumni Association Corner



Right now, our Landmark College alumni community is stronger than ever.

In the best of times, we at Landmark College wish you and your loved ones the utmost health and happiness. During an extraordinary time such as

this, the sentiment takes on new meaning. Whether this message finds you in Vermont, New York, California, or Japan, we know that your life has changed.

Life at Landmark College has changed, too, but it has not stopped. As you most likely know, Landmark remains open and has taken several actions in the interest of the health and safety of its students, faculty, and staff.

It has been inspiring to witness the LC community come together on behalf of one another and in service for the greater good, especially from our alumni association. We will continue to work together to help address this crisis. We speak often of #LCSharks' drive, embodied in the slogan "always moving forward." Rarely has this drive been more critical.

I want to thank our alumni for all their support this year, especially when we had so many elements online. When called upon, you showed innovation and persistence to make sure the LC learning model did not stop. You also provided much needed mentorship. We are grateful to you: our alumni, our Landmark College family, for rising to the challenge in these unprecedented times. For all this and more, we say thank you.

As we grapple with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are inspired by the wealth of support, information, and resources provided by our alumni community. Whether you are looking to stay informed, lend a hand, connect with others, or find virtual programming and events, we invite you to explore all that the Landmark Alumni Association has to offer and the ways you can give back.

To Connect: Visit LinkedIn and Facebook

To Lend a Hand:

- Present your expertise
- Share jobs and internship opportunities that you know to be neurodiverse-friendly
- Provide career advice and knowledge
- Share your journey/story with prospective families

We are so incredibly grateful to our #LCSharks for their willingness to support our students, to share from their experiences, and to reinforce the power of the LC community.

The alumni office continues to tap into alumni for their expertise. If you are an alumnus and want to support in any way, please contact me.

Tricia Stanley

Associate Director of Alumni Relations

802-387-6464

alumni@landmark.edu



At left, Lida Winfield '00 presented "In Search of Air: Growing Up Dyslexic" during LC's online Homecoming in September 2020



**Assistive Tech
for Work
and Life**

Wednesday, June 24th
8:30 p.m. ET

With Neal Sorensen '09



**Free
Online
Yoga
Sessions**

Sign up at
alumni@landmark.edu

Neal Sorensen '09 (above) and Meg Warren '17 (right) were among alumni who have offered virtual events and workshops.

Board of Trustees

Dear Friends of Landmark College,

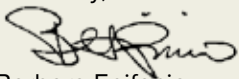
As I become the successor to our esteemed retiring Board Chair Bob Lewis, I would like to thank Bob for his leadership on the Board of Trustees for the past 15 years. As a community, we owe Bob a huge debt of gratitude for his tireless and enduring service to the College. Under his stewardship, we have seen tremendous programmatic growth and development here at Landmark College.

Our growing list of baccalaureate degree offerings is one example of our commitment to LC's continued evolution as an institution of higher learning. Another example is the expansion of our online programming, which has been and will continue to be critically important to the College's mission as well. As the parent of a recent LC baccalaureate graduate, I know full well the importance and impact the maturation of the College has brought not only to its students but to their families as well. The Landmark College experience has been and continues to be nothing short of transformational for many.

I would like to make special note of how the College has persevered during this especially difficult time of COVID-19. While the past year has been extremely difficult for all colleges and universities, it has been especially challenging for the smaller ones. During this extraordinary timeframe, Landmark has shown its resilience to not only survive but thrive. This outcome is due to the remarkable dedication shown by our students, faculty, staff, administration, and you, our families. Our entire community has much to be proud of and will persevere moving forward no matter what challenges are put before us. Because we are small, creative, and nimble, I am confident Landmark College will emerge even stronger.

Finally, I wish to thank each and every one of you for your ongoing support of the College, which you demonstrate in so many ways. We couldn't move our mission forward without your endorsement, so I thank you for the confidence you have placed in us. I am most honored and humbled to serve on the Board of Trustees for this remarkable College. Please wish me luck as I attempt to ably follow in the footsteps of my wonderful predecessor.

Sincerely,



Barbara Epifanio
Chair, Board of Trustees



Barbara Epifanio,
Chair



Bennett Fradkin

Trustee Spotlight: Bennett Fradkin

Bennett Fradkin is a founding partner of the architectural firm Fradkin & McAlpin Architects, based in New York City. In that role, he provided support for the design of the Nicole Goodner MacFarlane Science, Technology & Innovation Center, which opened at Landmark College in 2015. Prior to joining the Board of Trustees in November 2019, Fradkin co-chaired the Landmark Advisory Resource Committee (LARC), which comprises parents of LC students and alumni who support the College's recruitment and marketing efforts. Fradkin earned his Bachelor of Architecture from Carnegie Mellon University and has four decades of experience as an architect, working with such clients as Tiffany & Company, the Russell Sage Foundation, Brooklyn Brewery, and New York Distilling Company. His daughter Sara graduated from Landmark College in 2016.

Dear Friends,

It has been my honor and pleasure to have served on Landmark College's Board of Trustees for the last 15 years. During that time so much progress and change for good has been accomplished, and I am truly grateful to have been a part of it.

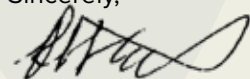
We Sharks are always moving forward, and we have seen expansion of our academic programs, with full accreditation of new associate degrees, bachelor of arts and science degrees, and graduate certificate programs. Our Landmark College Institute for Research and Training has distinguished itself worldwide in its research into pedagogies for those who learn differently. Our excellent faculty and staff have provided students on campus with an environment proven to be the leading formula for effective education of neurodiverse learners. Increasingly, our online programming both on campus and off has proven its efficacy. Online programming is truly an area of growth for the College going forward, and it is an exciting opportunity to expand our competencies way beyond our campus in Putney.

All this progress could not have been possible without your guidance and support. During my time here at the College, we have continually increased our annual fund donations, have accomplished two successful capital campaigns, and have maintained and modernized our campus infrastructure. Most importantly, we have been able to provide more access for students to a Landmark education while maintaining a sound financial condition.

We have met many challenges over the years and will certainly face others going forward; however, I have every confidence that this institution will continue to succeed in fulfilling its mission.

Finally, I would like to thank our students and their families for entrusting their educational journeys to us. You provide us the motivation and excitement to continue to excel in our endeavors. And, particularly during this COVID-19 pandemic, you have shown dedication, resolve, and maturity in your reliance on science, your conscientious adoption of safety measures, and your mutual respect for your fellow community members, all of which has enabled Landmark College to continue its residential programs.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Lewis
Former Chair, Board of Trustees



Robert Lewis,
departing Board Chair



Bob Lewis and his wife
Anette with John Elder
Robison, visiting lecturer
and advisor to LC's Center
for Neurodiversity.



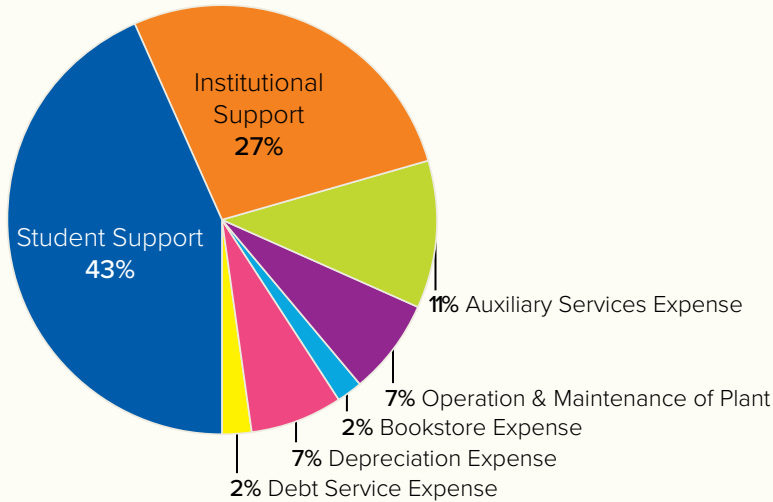
Mark Ellman

New Trustee Mark Ellman

Mark Ellman, who was voted onto the Board of Trustees in February 2021, founded Celestial Capital Group in 1994. Ellman has served on numerous corporate, nonprofit, and trade organization boards, and he is a frequent speaker on real estate acquisitions and finance. He was previously a founding partner and senior vice president at Value Properties Inc. and a senior vice president and partner at Oppenheimer Properties Inc. Ellman earned a B.A. in economics from the University of Pennsylvania; a J.D. (cum laude) from Fordham University; and an LL.M. in taxation from New York University School of Law. His son Eric is a current Landmark College student.

2019–2020 Financial Summary

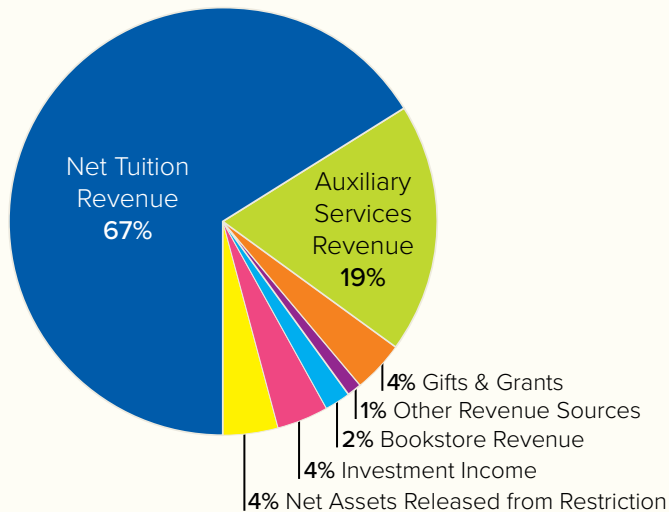
Statement of Unrestricted Activities for the Year Ending June 30, 2020



Unrestricted Expenses

Student Support	\$ 11,522,402
Institutional Support	7,260,406
Auxiliary Services Expense	2,979,998
Operation & Maintenance of Plant	1,910,438
Bookstore Expense	410,338
Depreciation Expense	1,965,338
Debt Service Expense	470,655

Total Unrestricted Expenses **\$ 26,519,575**



Unrestricted Revenues

Net Tuition Revenue	\$ 17,301,581
Auxiliary Services Revenue	4,771,599
Gifts & Grants*	1,006,600
Other Revenue Sources	263,622
Bookstore Revenue	418,062
Investment Income	939,098
Net Assets Released from Restriction	1,059,783

Total Unrestricted Revenues **\$ 25,760,345**

**Includes Temporarily Restricted Gifts*

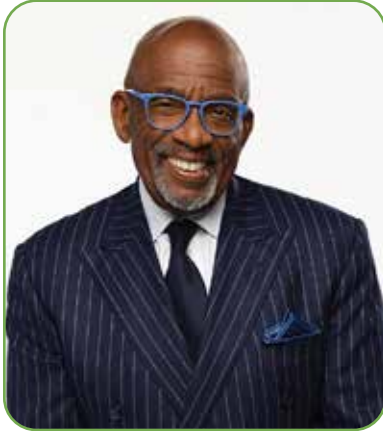
2019–20 Annual Fund Quick Facts

Annual Fund
raised **over
\$1 MILLION**
... again!

Phonathon raised
over \$60,000 —
another record high!

Giving Day raised
over \$17,000 from
115 friends of LC!

Rising to the Challenge Event



Rising to the Challenge,” Landmark College’s spring fundraiser, will take place online on Thursday, April 29, beginning at 8:15 p.m.

Al Roker, Emmy-winning weather and feature anchor of NBC News’ “TODAY Show,” as well as the co-host of the third hour of “TODAY,” will provide

remarks during the online event. Roker is the recipient of the Landmark College LD Luminary Award.

“‘Rising to the Challenge’ had been the College’s planned 2020 New York City gala, but it was canceled last spring as the COVID-19 pandemic was spreading and public gatherings were being restricted,” says Carol Nardino, senior director of institutional advancement at LC. “We decided to hold an online event this spring to recognize and support all those who rise to the challenge every day: LC students who overcome obstacles daily; their parents and families who support them; donors, friends, corporate partners, and alumni who provide support in many ways.”

Funds raised by the event will help increase student access to scholarships and financial aid, and provide financial support for the College to continue to grow stronger even as it navigates the COVID-19 pandemic and demographic challenges in the northeast.

LC has held three successful fundraising galas in New York City since 2014, raising a combined total of over \$2 million for various LC initiatives, including the MacFarlane Science, Technology & Innovation Center and scholarship support for students.

Roker, this year’s LD Luminary Award recipient, has written and spoken about his family’s journey with a child who has learning differences. He has noted that stigmatizing labels are frustrating because they do not convey who the whole person is.

The LD Luminary Award is given to an individual in the public eye who is committed to raising awareness of the prevalence and seriousness of learning differences (LD); has helped to demystify LD by demonstrating that it is not a weakness but more often a strength; has inspired people outside the Landmark College campus to better understand the struggles faced by individuals with LD; and is in a position to stimulate discussion, motivate action, and educate society about the need to affirm the benefits of neurodivergent individuals in education, the workplace, and society.

Previous recipients of the Landmark College LD Luminary Award are Academy Award winner Whoopi Goldberg, who discussed her lifelong struggle with dyslexia; actress, activist, and philanthropist Holly Robinson Peete, whose HollyRod Foundation supports families with autistic children; and *New York Times* best-selling author John Elder Robison—an advisor to LC’s Center for Neurodiversity—whose books detail his own neurodiversity.

For information about the “Rising to the Challenge” event on April 29, or to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.landmark.edu/risingtothechallenge>. ➡

A Jedi Knight and an Oscar nominee: surprise ‘guests’ at 2020 commencements

LC’s May and December graduations were held online, but graduates got to experience the thrill of a couple of surprise video appearances. Golden Globe award-winning actor Ewan McGregor, known for playing young Obi-Wan Kenobi in several *Star Wars* films, sent his congratulations in May; and actor Paul Giamatti, an Oscar nominee for his supporting role in *Cinderella Man*, contributed a video message in December.



Ewan McGregor



Paul Giamatti

The Jenny Story

Rick and Carol Parton honor their daughter's life and spirit through their support of LC

By Chris Lenois

Rick Parton remembers being back on the Landmark College campus in 2016 for the opening of the Nicole Goodner MacFarlane Science, Technology & Innovation Center.

Specifically, he remembers John Wood—the long-time resident dean and coach of many LC athletic teams—bounding up to greet him and his wife, Carol.

“He hugged me so hard he broke the sunglasses hanging around my neck,” laughs Rick. “Then he told us that even today, he tells his teams ‘the Jenny story,’ which is about her tenacity to want to learn.”

Jenny Parton's tenacity was built over a lifetime of knowing she learned differently. Her parents were fortunate that their eastern Pennsylvania home was close to a private K-8 school that catered to children with learning and attention difficulties, and enrolled Jenny early on. Their public high school had a good special education program, and Carol says Jenny became very adept at advocating for the help she needed.

Just before her senior year of high school, they found Landmark College and sent Jenny there for a summer

program in 1997. Working with her advisor, John Bagge, and others, Jenny improved her reading from a fourth-grade to seventh-grade level in just two months. Her parents were floored by the dramatic improvement. “Every step of the way, teachers said Jenny had a lock on her and they didn’t have the key. Landmark had the key,” Carol said.

Instead of returning for her senior year, Jenny applied and was accepted into the undergraduate program for the fall semester, which also allowed her to come into her own socially according to Rick. “All of a sudden everyone else was just like her,” he says.

Tragically, Jenny was killed in an automobile accident over Thanksgiving break in 1997. She went with a



Jenny Parton's high school photo.

Rick and Carol Parton visited LC and Jenny's Bench in fall 2020.



Photo by Todd Miller

What is 'The Jenny Story'? John Wood explains:

“Jenny was an example of the ideal Landmark College student in that she never stopped asking questions. She asked a LOT of questions, but you knew it came from a place of realizing she could improve and wanting to improve. She put a lot of effort into her learning, and there was a lot of effort from everyone around her to help. She showed tremendous development as a result.

“I’ve thought of Jenny many times when I’ve talked to teams or one-on-one with students, as well as in conversations with new faculty members about what it’s like to work at LC. She was the kind of student who really challenges you when she’s here, but then you miss her like crazy when she’s gone.”

fellow Landmark College student to his hometown of Huntsville, Alabama, and an elderly driver entered the highway going in the wrong direction and hit them head on. The Partons were able to fly down there in time to spend the final hours of Jenny’s life with her.

“We say that she was soaring like an eagle,” says Carol. “When she died, she was at the highest point in her life. She was just flying away, having a great time and really happy.”

When the Partons came to campus to collect their daughter’s belongings, the College had organized a memorial event that included awarding an honorary degree to Jenny. “They didn’t have to do what they did; to walk into that auditorium and see all those students and teachers meant a lot to us,” Rick says of the gesture.

Since that time, the Partons have been active supporters of Landmark College during Annual Fund campaigns. They are also members of the Charles Drake Legacy Society, through which they established a scholarship in Jenny’s name. Their dream is to have their estate gift endowed with enough money to give a full scholarship to deserving students.

To Make Your Gift

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“When we went up to Putney for the first time, we were so scared Jenny wasn’t going to get in. Now, I’d hate to know that the only reason a student couldn’t go to Landmark College was because they couldn’t afford it,” says Carol.

But the Partons’ most visible gift to the campus is Jenny’s Bench, located on the upper campus between Stone and Davis halls. Over the years, they have transformed that space from a wooden bench and tree to a lush flower garden with a majestic view of the southwestern mountain range.

“We wanted something that in our mind was about the future,” Rick says of the site. “And even though 99 percent of the kids that probably sit on that bench don’t know who Jenny was, all they have to do is talk to John Wood.” 🐦



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Charles Drake Legacy Society Members

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Dr. Beth Ardolino
Robert E. Banta
William and Debra Cotter
Nurjehan and Moaiz Daya Family
Peter & Joanne Eden
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Genevieve Friend-Land '96
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Diane Tarbell
Theodora A. van Roijen '00

*Deceased



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