Dear Friends,

We write to update you on the Global Research Institute’s continuing operations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since we shared our February newsletter, things have changed dramatically in ways that we could not have imagined. GRI faculty have “flipped” their classrooms, delivering content online to students spread around the globe. Our professional staff have continued their work remotely and have implemented dozens of solutions to support faculty research and student programming in this new environment.

Our community is at the heart of what we do. Until we can get together again in person, we’re actively working on examples of how our community is adapting to uncertain times. We've launched a digital happy hour series, “Home Brew,” to connect our researchers and spark conversation about our students and alums, please email Ana Suarez (aisuarez@wm.edu) to volunteer as a “Coffee Chat” speaker.

We feel extraordinarily fortunate to lead this creative, committed group of scholars and students, and we want to share with you some stories of resilience and creativity that our colleagues have impressed, inspired, and humbled us. Many of our colleagues have done this great work while taking on new “side gigs” that include teaching 3rd grade math, taking care of an aging mother-in-law, and managing Zoom calls while toddlers and pets run around the house.

To be honest, we really didn’t know what to expect during such an unprecedented crisis, but the resilience and creativity of our staff and faculty exceeded our expectations. We’re proud of the work our colleagues have done and are deeply grateful for all they have accomplished, and our 10-Year Anniversary Campaign will give us even more capacity to fulfill our mission. We will continue sharing the ways in which our community of scholars and students is pressing ahead in these uncertain times, and we look forward to being in touch soon.

Dear Friends,

With best wishes for your continued good health,

Mike Tierney and Sue Peterson
Co-Directors, Global Research Institute

GRI Community:

GRI's Blockchain Lab

Professors Ariel Ben Yishay (AidData) and Phil Roessler (Center for African Development) are exploring a partnership with a blockchain research lab in Costa Rica to build a global platform for the tracking of cranes and the sharing of data. This platform can improve transparency and reduce illegal deforestation, where forests are being destroyed at a rate of 10 million hectares per year. Additional information can be found here.

University of Virginia

This past March, University of Virginia researchers launched a study to model the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. using a technique called “contact tracing.” Contact tracing is often used to track the spread of sexually transmitted infections, but this study is the first in the world to use it to track the spread of a pandemic. The study is ongoing.

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