



*COVID-19's and the Impact on
Higher Education:
Virginia Tech's story*

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Recap: how it began

- Began in February as a study abroad issue: our students and faculty were teaching and learning in Asia and Europe. Initial focus was returning students home safely.
- By early March, it quickly became a domestic issue. Spring break extended by one week to facilitate transition to online learning and a campus operating under “essential operations” mandate

March - April - May 2020

- Instruction, events moved online
- Shift to telework: 80 percent of the workforce worked from home.
- Massive communications efforts to employees, students, families, alumni.
- In all we did, guided by preserving public health; balance safety with maintaining operations

June - July 2020

- Massive planning effort to prepare for fall classes; initial plan announced June 8 (but many pivots and revisions happened after that based on new or emerging information)
- But non of this work was done without collaboration and consultation with partners

New River Valley COVID Task Force

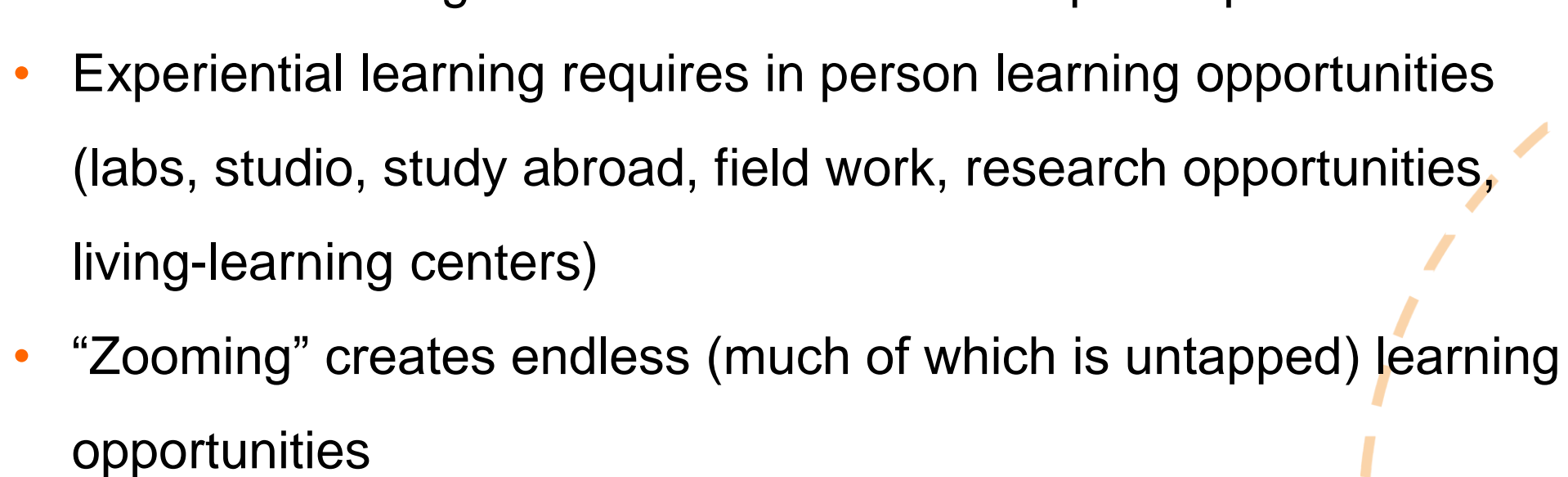
- Regional group led by Blacksburg Chief of Police and Health Director of the New River Valley Health District.
- Provided a coordinated community response to the pandemic
- Members included K-12, higher education, first responders, mental health and health care providers, government officials, business organizations
- Be Committed. Be Well. campaign.

August - Sept. - Oct. - Nov. 2020

- Mix of in person (6%) hybrid (30%) and online course (64%)
- 45 percent of the work force returned to campus
- On campus housing at about 80 percent capacity
- Public health guidelines became employee and student policy
- Testing become an integral part of campus life / employment



Lessons learning / looking ahead

- Students still eager to have residential campus experience.
 - Experiential learning requires in person learning opportunities (labs, studio, study abroad, field work, research opportunities, living-learning centers)
 - “Zooming” creates endless (much of which is untapped) learning opportunities
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Lessons learning / looking ahead

- Agility is essential for future institutional success
 - Telework has arrived in higher education
 - Strong community, regional, state relationships key to success
 - Currently building our path to what will be our new normal.
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