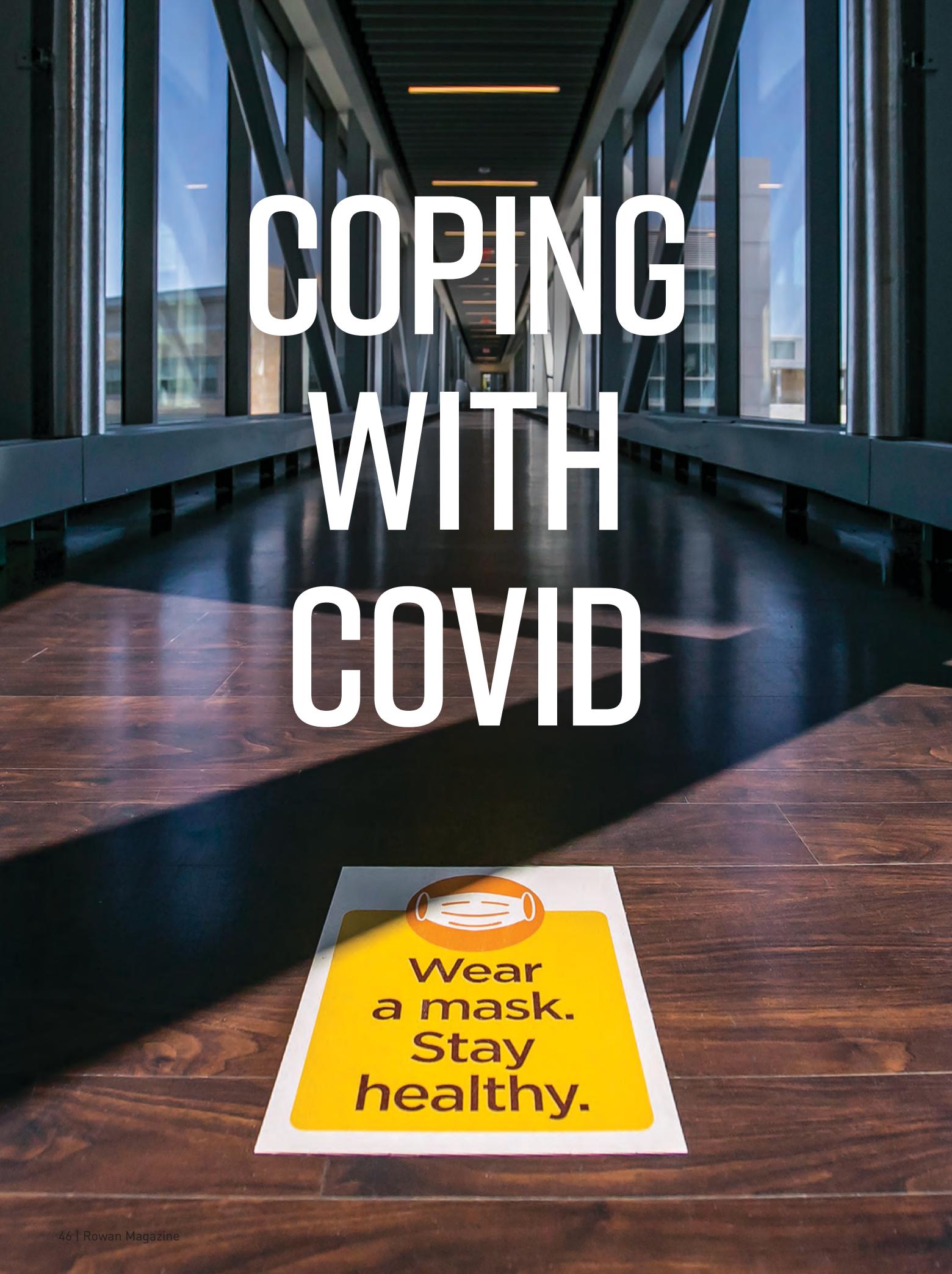


# COPING WITH COVID

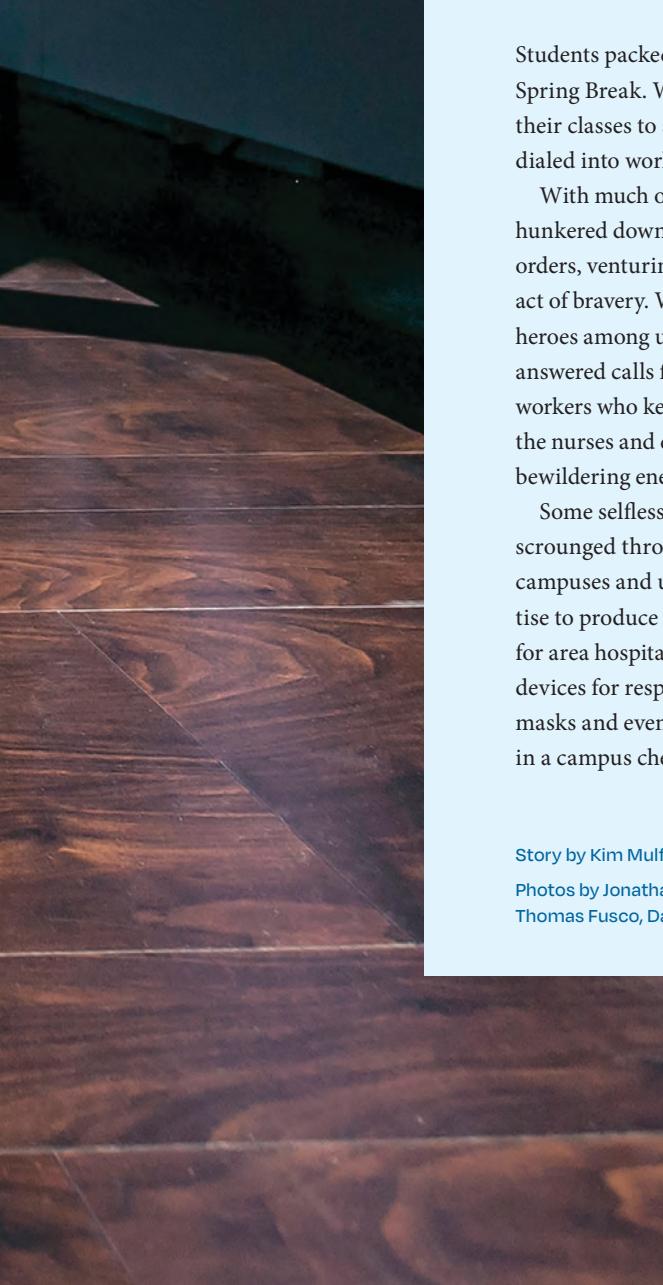


Wear  
a mask.  
Stay  
healthy.



## March 2020 seems like a lifetime ago.

We had no idea then what a global pandemic might mean for us. We thought it would blow through in a matter of weeks, maybe in a few months. Even as the cases mounted, we fixed our attention on the future, maintaining our expectations, goals and dreams. We kept on keeping on.



Students packed up and headed home for Spring Break. Within days, faculty pivoted their classes to a virtual format and staff dialed into work each day from home.

With much of New Jersey's population hunkered down under stay-at-home orders, venturing out in public became an act of bravery. We recognized everyday heroes among us: the first responders who answered calls for help, the grocery store workers who kept the shelves stocked, the nurses and doctors facing down a bewildering enemy.

Some selfless faculty and students scrounged through supplies around our campuses and used their time and expertise to produce desperately needed supplies for area hospitals: intubation shields, devices for respirators, 3D-printed face masks and even hand sanitizer concocted in a campus chemistry lab.

With so many restaurants and businesses shuttered, our friends and neighbors needed help, too. We shared food and delivered meals. We offered artistic performances online and helped teachers around the world make the switch to remote instruction—all in this together.

By December, when the first COVID-19 vaccines became available to health care workers, medical students and first responders, we opened a regional vaccination center at our School of Osteopathic Medicine, marking the beginning of what we hoped would spell the end of the pandemic.

Nearly a year later, we're still in it. We're still looking toward the future with every expectation that this, too, shall pass.

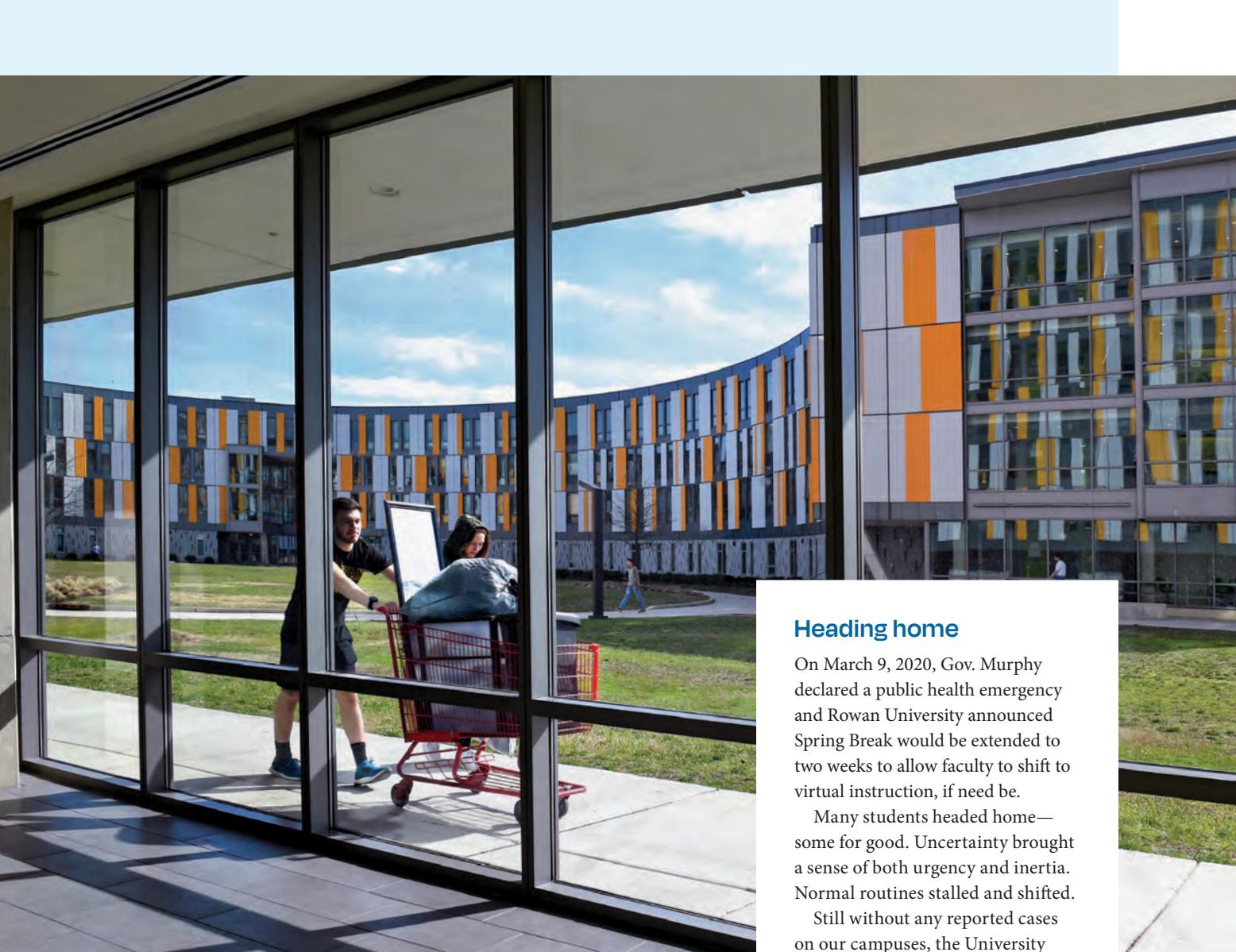
And it will.

**Story by Kim Mulford '94 and Barbara Baals**

**Photos by Jonathan Kolbe, Kevin Monko, Avi Steinhardt, Craig Terry, Robert Thorpe, Thomas Fusco, David Cimetta and readers, including Julia Marshall and the Shainline family.**



LEFT: Simple signs throughout Rowan University's campuses remind visitors to follow public health guidelines. Such widespread messaging helped (and continue to help) faculty, students and staff adjust to ever-changing instructions on how to keep one another safe.



## Heading home

On March 9, 2020, Gov. Murphy declared a public health emergency and Rowan University announced Spring Break would be extended to two weeks to allow faculty to shift to virtual instruction, if need be.

Many students headed home—some for good. Uncertainty brought a sense of both urgency and inertia. Normal routines stalled and shifted.

Still without any reported cases on our campuses, the University weighed the next steps as we began to navigate and respond to the first pandemic in our history.

There would be much to do.





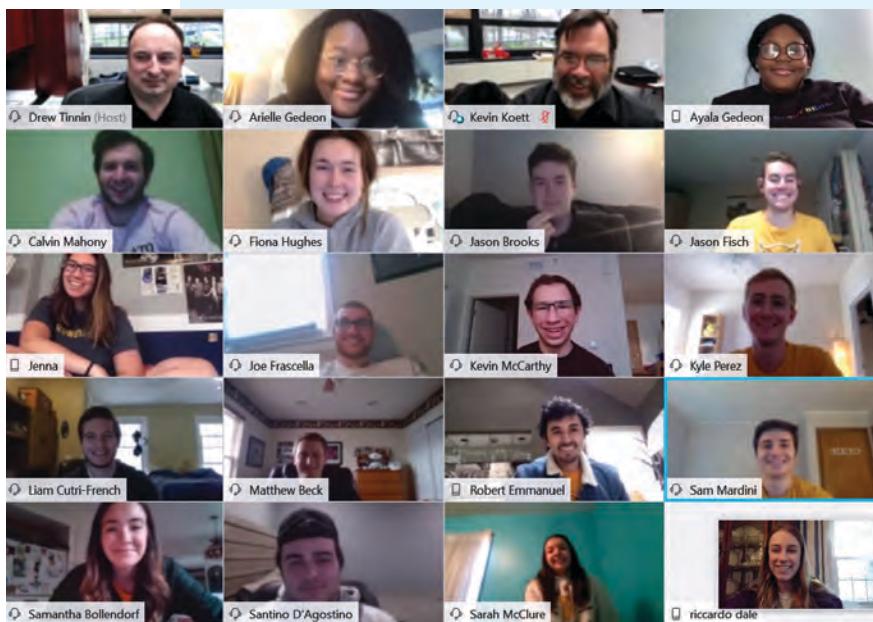


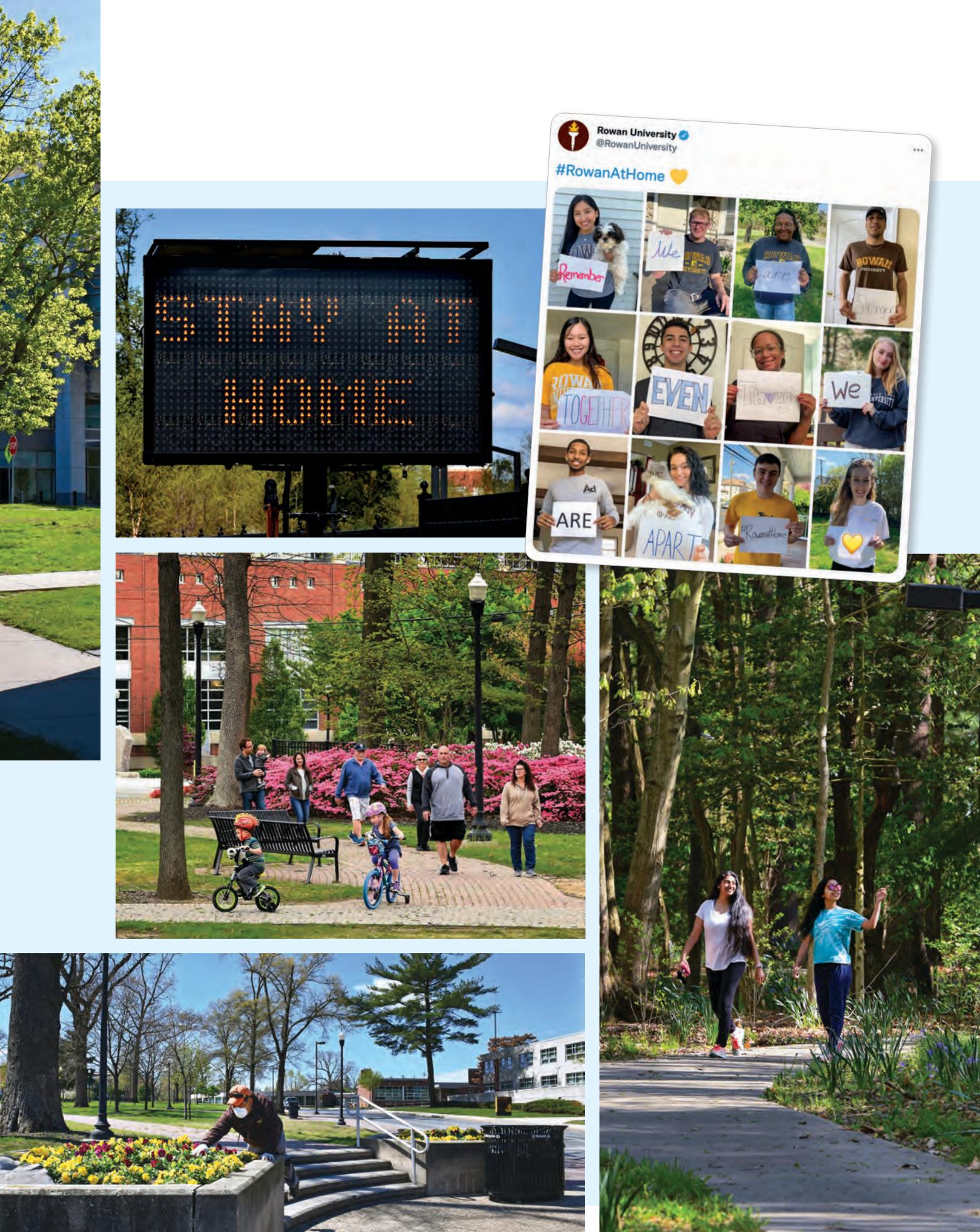
## A quiet campus

With our first two cases of infection announced during Spring Break, Rowan closed buildings to in-person learning and switched to remote operations in an effort to smother the outbreak.

Thanks to video calls, social media and the miracles of modern technology, a scattered Rowan community found new ways to stay together and keep progressing.

Under advice to stay at home if they could, the handful of students and employees left on campus joined visitors who sought solace and respite outdoors. Many found the main campus a vital and vast public park. Bright blooms signaled the world waking from winter...but in an eerie quiet.







 Rowan Athletics  
@RowanAthletics

Today, we give a big shoutout to Justin List '08! A @RowanMSoccer player, Justin, is part of the Kangaroo Crew at Texas Children's in Houston, working as an emergency air & ground transport respiratory therapist!

There isn't enough thanks for people like you! #RowanPROUD





## Answering the call

Amid stay-at-home orders, Rowan's community of doctors, nurses, engineers, chemists and researchers stepped up. They shared newly refined designs for a reusable, 3D-printed face mask (top right). Researchers began investigating the virus and its effects on the blood-brain barrier (top left), the psyche and on society as a whole.

Administrators worked with industry partners like ExxonMobil to address supply shortages for simple things like hand sanitizer. First responders and newly essential employees took on new risks and responsibilities to keep the world running.

And when a critical care doctor requested intubation shields to protect her staff, engineering faculty and students produced the first within 24 hours.

"It's just a box, but sometimes, it's the right thing at the right time," said Francis "Mac" Haas, assistant professor in the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering.





## COMMENCEMENT 2020 Honoring our graduates

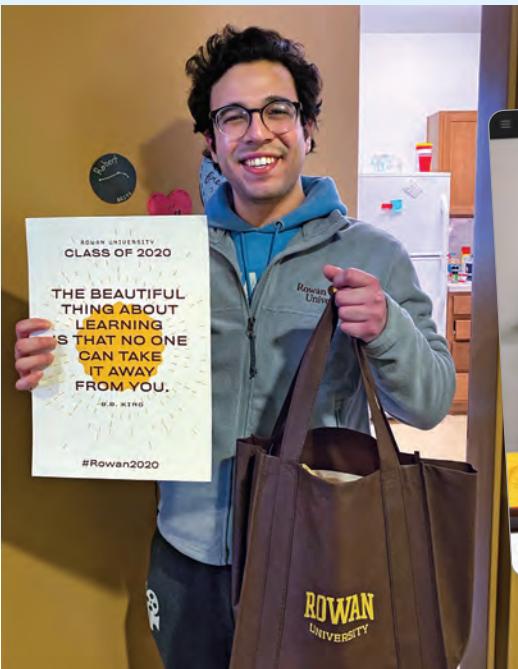
COVID-19 delayed—but did not deter—us from celebrating the Class of 2020. In a silent, empty stadium, President Houshmand recorded remarks to encourage everyone and promise a proper celebration when it could be done safely.

While many institutions cancelled Commencement ceremonies, the Rowan community rose up—and masked up—to honor our graduating Pros. After a University-wide virtual program in May, in-person ceremonies took place in July on the University Green with strictly limited and carefully spaced seating.

During three days, 1,800 graduates accepted their diploma covers at 13 carefully choreographed programs.

After each ceremony, dedicated volunteers and employees reset and wiped down hundreds of chairs.

Even through their masks, grads and guests shared smiles, tears and cheers for the spirited and resilient Class of 2020.









## Caring for one another

The pandemic exposed rifts among us—as well as our ability to come together. Summer 2020 saw a national outcry over systemic racism and violence, and many in our community marched in the streets and called for change.

Already a university community committed to serving our neighbors, we found even more ways to “be the change.” At President Ali Houshmand’s urging, Rowan partnered with Gourmet Dining and the Borough of Glassboro to respond to food insecurity that fall.

With students’ help and donors’ support, the Rowan-Glassboro Neighbors Table delivered meals to local families in need.

“No one in our community should ever go hungry,” Houshmand said. “One of the most important things we can do as University neighbors and proud citizens is assisting others through our talents and our service. I’m excited to see this program serve our neighbors and friends and I know our students will benefit tremendously through their involvement.”





**SONGS TO  
WASH YOUR  
HANDS TO**

DON'T STAND SO CLOSE TO ME THE POLICE

Don't stand,  
don't stand so  
Don't stand so  
close to me  
Don't stand,  
don't stand so  
Don't stand so  
close to me

SCAN FOR THE SPOTIFY PLAYLIST

A graphic for a Spotify playlist. It features a yellow background with a white speech bubble-like shape. Inside the shape, there is a circular icon of hands being washed. Below the icon, the text "DON'T STAND SO CLOSE TO ME THE POLICE" is written. Underneath that, the lyrics "Don't stand, don't stand so" are repeated three times. At the bottom, there is a Spotify logo with the text "SCAN FOR THE SPOTIFY PLAYLIST".

# #RowanPROUD & #ProfStrong. Live it. Own it. #MaskUpProfs

## Earning accolades

Rowan's approach to managing campus life during the pandemic involved thoughtful planning; strong community and statewide partnerships; decision-making focused on health, wellness and student success; innovation and creativity; and comprehensive communication.

To that end, signs and messages throughout Rowan campuses reminded our community to stay united, diligent and strong.

As part of her 15,000-mile national tour to assess how colleges and universities addressed the pandemic, Dr. Deborah Birx, then the response coordinator for the White House Coronavirus Task Force, praised Rowan.

"It's really evident that you care about your students, as well as your community and faculty," said Birx, whose tour earned full-page coverage in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (right). Rowan, Birx said, had "the best signage that we have seen at any campus."



## Pandemic praise

### Deborah Birx's Good-News Tour

**BY JEFFREY MCGEE** | PHOTOS BY PHILIPPE BOURGEOIS FOR THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

During an appearance at Plymouth State University this month, Deborah L. Birx, Biden's point person on students, "We're winning," Birx told the university's student newspaper because of the students', "a sense of resilience and a socially distanced crowd."

The students have altered their behavior, and that gives Birx hope for the future.

These students can sit in the same room,

she said, because they have been very cautious.

That's the kind of backslapping message

for the White House Coronavirus Task

Force, has been delivered

all over the country since late June. As of mid-October, she had visited 27 colleges

and universities across the country, including

Yale, Princeton, Harvard, and Brown, driving

shuttle bus to shuttle bus, meeting with deans

and professors, and talking with students

and administrators.

She has also visited

numerous businesses, fielded questions

from anxious professors, quizzed admissions

officers, and even students,

and received the same advice about the importance

of masks, distancing, and regular testing.

She has also visited

countless state and local governments

to brief them on what they can do to

keep their communities safe.

In each town, Birx has asked

students for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with

local business leaders,

and she has

asked them for advice, including those

who are most concerned

about the virus.

She has also

met with



## 'Every shot saves a life'

Rowan's health and wellness professionals, Rowan Medicine clinical practices, public health and infectious disease experts, nursing students and others had been part of the 24/7 mission to fight the pandemic from the start.

As soon as the first COVID-19 vaccines became available, students at Rowan's two medical schools volunteered by the hundreds to deliver vaccines to the front lines: in hospital conference rooms, mass vaccination sites, pop-up clinics and special population drives.

At press time, the School of Osteopathic Medicine had vaccinated more than 50,000 people and Cooper Medical School of Rowan University had delivered tens of thousands of vaccinations with clinical partners and volunteers. Vaccines changed the odds in favor of everyone willing to roll up a sleeve.

Both medical schools made concerted efforts to get vaccines to underserved populations, noted Anjani Patel, a third-year SOM student.

"We know we have to focus on marginalized communities," Patel said during the push to vaccinate South Jersey residents. "Every shot saves a life."

A screenshot of a social media post, likely from Instagram. The main image shows a woman in a pink shirt holding up a white card that says "I got vaccinated... For everyone". The background is a yellow wall with "Rowan Medicine" repeated. Below the image are several comments from users:

- drijencaudle** Rowan Medicine: Proud, grateful, relieved, happy, hopeful, excited... the emotions I have from receiving Covid vaccine #2 are too many to count. 😊 Click link in bio to see how it went down!
- ocsworker**: 35w Reply
- doctorrennie**: Good job!
- davidemsmith8808**: 686 likes JANUARY 21





## Still learning and serving

Rowan began easing faculty and students back onto its campuses during summer 2020. While Rowan clinical practices never shut down, the medical schools welcomed new classes at their white coat ceremonies.

Social distancing guidelines, mask-wearing and intensified cleaning protocols enabled some main campus students to return last fall to hands-on learning, particularly those in the arts, sciences and engineering. For many more, hybrid courses with a mix of in-person and remote instruction offered greater flexibility for faculty and their students.

By fall 2021, vaccinations and mask requirements brought a sense of near-normalcy to classrooms and labs.

Technology made a tremendous difference in Rowan's ability to continue teaching and research during the pandemic. So did brave educators, dedicated facilities and support staff and the thousands of people persisting alongside and encouraging each member of the Rowan community.









## Making (distant) connections

With widespread mask-wearing and social distancing in place, in-person activities returned in autumn 2020 and Rowan was able to maintain momentum through the new year. Early fall 2021 still requires masks and distancing, minor inconveniences in making life together possible.

At outdoor yoga, intramural sports, club meetings, studying or hanging out with friends, students have adapted to COVID-19 protocols designed to keep community members safe.

The University installed tents throughout its campuses in 2020 to increase areas for outdoor dining and seating, as well as open-air classrooms, meeting spots and, of course, virus testing and other services. Students and employees continue to make the most of the shelters to collaborate, socialize and, most importantly, stay healthy.

They wear masks. They bump elbows. They look out for each other. And they keep finding ways to connect and thrive. As Profs do.

