

opinion

How to stay social during a pandemic

CASS TOLLIVER
Reporter

It's no secret that COVID-19 has made life, and in turn, college completely different from normal. In order to have a safe and healthy school year on campus, it is crucial to follow the Health Department's guidelines.

<https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/guides/social-distancing-on-campus>

Students lacked in person contact for several months while the stay-at-home order was mandated in Ohio and many other states. Now that campus has reopened to students, social distancing and mask requirements have been set in place to ensure that Ashland University is following the state regulations.

According to the CDC, "The more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread."

However, there are still plenty of ways to socialize while maintaining social distancing.

Different groups and organizations on campus are still hosting events for students to attend.

Campus Activities Board (CAB) will continue to host free bowling night at Luray Lanes, as well as other events like outdoor movies. These types of events align with the social distancing guidelines as they are be-

ing held in open spaces and requiring masks for all attendees.

Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) hosted a block party for freshmen to be able to meet one another and to get involved with other students on campus, even if they are not interested in joining greek life.

Along with that, sororities and fraternities are still planning recruitment for this fall. While most of recruitment will be online over zoom, it is a great opportunity for new students to get involved not only on campus, but with an organization bigger than themselves.

For more information on fraternity and sorority recruitment, visit the following links: <https://bit.ly/2YLsJxV> and <https://bit.ly/3hUNE9n>.

Another way to interact with others while remaining socially distant is to start a pen pal chain.

Some groups on campus have mentioned getting a group of students together to be assigned a pen pal. Once they are assigned, two students can write back and forth during the school year.

Although pen pals may seem like something of the past, it is a great way to communicate and stay connected with people without frequently seeing them in person. The less people hang out in person, the less COVID-19 will spread throughout campus.

Ashland University has placed picnic



RETRIEVED FROM: [HTTPS://WWW.UTK.EDU/CORONAVIRUS/GUIDES/SOCIAL-DISTANCING-ON-CAMPUS](https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/guides/social-distancing-on-campus)

tables outdoors across campus as a way for students to be outside to enjoy the weather, eat a meal, or study and do homework.

Being outside, yet not in close proximity with others, is a way for students to get out of their dorm rooms and get fresh air.

Other activities that can be enjoyed outdoors include exercising, bike riding, throwing frisbee, and longboarding. Games like corn hole, KanJam, volleyball and kickball and others can potentially all be played while remaining distanced from other players.

Being socially distanced does not mean that students can't be social. There are plenty of ways to get outside and get involved.

Groups and organizations on campus want new members just as badly as new students want to be involved and a part of something to keep them busy during the school year.

The calendar of campus events can be found at https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=ashland.edu_crfkqeprglfdhspt37v0dklie4%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/New_York.

Academics vs. sports: a constant fight

CHRISTINE JENKINSON
AU-Live Breaking News

The war between academics and sports starts in high school. Every year at my high school when the time rolled around for varsity letters to be handed out, there would be a fight between music groups such as marching band and various sports teams. People would say "You don't deserve a letter," "sports and music are not the same and music does not need a letter," or my personal favorite, "playing an instrument does not get you a letter because no sweat or hard work went into it."

In college it is almost no different. Student-athletes have set themselves higher than the rest of the student body because we go to a school that heavily relies on money made from sports: grants, tickets, sponsors, etc. Schools need revenue and that is understandable, however, using money to further fan the flame of the separation between students and student-athletes makes it difficult for regular students to believe in a school that promotes "Accent on You."

The issue is not with the decision-makers at AU, it is with the grant-writers. On July 22, a press release went public about a large donation for an athletic complex. AU is a Division 2 school that uses the women's basketball team as the face of sports. What about teams like the tennis team? They do not receive nearly as much recognition as any of the "popular teams," and nowhere in the press release were they mentioned.

Let's dive deeper into the actual press release.

Dan and Brenda Niss, Jack and Deb Miller (widely known throughout the Ashland University community) and Jerry Ruyan

drove the concept and funds for the Niss Athletic Center to the AU Board of Trustees in May of 2020, who accepted (all while students were home for taking classes online for two months during the COVID-19 pandemic). The building is set to be completed in late spring, 2021.

"Donor and alum Jack Miller said AU

My question for the donors is this: if you are dead-set on giving your money to a school who prides itself on sports, why not focus on academics? Why not focus on buildings that actually need the renovation, paying teachers and adjuncts so they want to come back, renovating dorms and making sure students are cared for in regards to

athletes? Ashland University, like other private universities, is expensive. Through conversations with student-athletes, scholarship money is how they can afford to attend AU.

They can go crazy and extend this new-found money to regular college students if they really wanted to make a difference.

As I said above, "Accent on You" is slowly losing its meaning. "Accent on student-athletes" or "Accent on anyone other than students who spend hours doing their homework and activities for their major" (though that would not fit nicely on the billboards and flags around campus) is what the university could change it to.

I have questions for AU:

How will restrictions on the occupancy of the building be enforced? Even in 2021, people will probably still be wary of being close to other people.

With the new track, are we planning on hosting track meets? Is the facility the track and field team uses to train not good enough, or do they need more space? Why not renovate that?

It seems like the university has a good relationship with these donors: could a negotiation not be reached to help all students and not just the student-athletes? (Yes, I realize that the aim is for everyone to use it, but students are focused on studying and doing well in school). Was there even an attempt to make such a remark?

Finally, at what point will the decision-makers at AU look at the university as a whole and realize that there is so much more to AU than sports? (Well, not so much since programs are being sunset, but you get the idea).



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The Niss Athletic Center is a 125,000-square-foot indoor athletic and activity center adjacent to the Dwight Schar Athletic Complex. It is scheduled for completion in late Spring 2021.

head football Coach Lee Owens told him nothing could elevate the AU program more than an indoor facility. I toured a dozen indoor facilities and learned no building is as seductive as an indoor practice facility," he said. "For the influence it exerts, the power it gives, and the hope of gain it offers to all 23 sports, students, and community. It defies weather and geography!... Miller predicted national championships in the future as a result." This is directly from the press release.

Are we going to rely on an indoor facility to better our football team?

their education?

Programs are being sunset because AU cannot financially support them. The purpose of college is not so students can play and learn on the side. Students go to college to further their education and play sports on the side. Yes, we have had some great athletes graduate, but is that really the focus now? Are we going to push student-athletes (and prospect student-athletes) to focus on their sport and not working hard on their education so they graduate with a job?

Another question I have for donors is: what about scholarship money for student-

the Collegian

EDITOR'S NOTE

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