

Counting From Zero

Building a liberal arts CS program in the age of ubiquity

A socially-distanced visit to campus

Today I ventured onto campus to accomplish three errands: to mail pins and certificates to our eight new graduates who participated in the Pledge of the Computing Professional; to pick up my own mail; and to check the height adjustments on my standing desk before I buy one to use at home. Here's a quick sketch of my visit.

This was my third visit to campus with a work-related purpose since Governor Inslee's "Stay at Home, Stay Healthy" order. The first was to get some books from my office, and the second was to get my regalia for Commencement. I've walked through campus many times in the evening, just for exercise, and I also brought my daughter to campus to play outdoors a few times.

My first stop was Boyer House to drop off outgoing mail. Before leaving my house, I had to search my email for instructions for outgoing mail, which had appeared in a *Whitman Today* message a few weeks ago. On my way there, I saw President Kathy Murray walking with someone in front of Memorial Hall. I also saw someone carrying a sign to Boyer House ahead of me. I followed the instructions to knock at the side door by the parking lot, and handed off my parcels to one of the staff there.

My next stop was just a block away, to pick up my mail from Reid Campus Center. I waved hello to Eddie, who runs the campus Post Office, as ~~he~~ they met the UPS truck making its daily delivery. I walked around the building to the Park Street side to ask for my mail. While I was waiting, I took this picture.

When the student worker returned, ~~he~~ they told me there was no mail waiting for me, but my building assistant Debi had been picking up mail for the whole building a three days each week. (I later got emails from both Eddie and Debi saying there was a FedEx package waiting for me – which actually ~~wasn't~~ was not urgent. It was just a coincidence ~~if I had been to campus today.~~ today.)

So I went to Olin to check my mail there and visit my office. I didn't see anyone on the way.

The signs on either side of the door have been there since just before the "Stay at Home" order. The one at left says that hand sanitizer is available inside; the one at right says that campus is closed to the public. I didn't see anyone, but I still put on my mask before entering because I had accidentally come too close to a colleague on my last visit. I picked up my mail from the dark office and took it to my office, then went to wash my hands in the restroom, carefully using a paper towel to open doors on my way back. I saw no one.



Once I had checked the settings on my standing desk, I left the building. As soon as I was outdoors, I took off my mask – a huge relief

since it was so warm and sweaty. (I think teaching in a mask would be very uncomfortable.)

On my way out, I witnessed a socially-distanced conversation between two colleagues and two students on Ankeny Field (photo taken with permission).

On the other side of Ankeny Field, in front of Maxey Hall, I avoided an older woman walking her dog and a couple of men, who I think might work on our grounds crew, walking together. After that, I saw no one until I arrived home.





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