



BIS students create website to help senior citizens schedule COVID vaccines

As the COVID-19 vaccination effort earlier this year moved beyond healthcare workers and nursing home residents, senior citizens and others lacking computer experience

struggled to register online for vaccination appointments. In response to this challenge, the Northeast District of the Connecticut Department of Public Health reached out to Eastern's Business Information Systems (BIS) program.

Led by Professor Alex Citrus, five students created a website to make the vaccination scheduling process clear, concise and logical for people not comfortable with the Internet. Their website utilizes visual cues and offers Spanish language translation to schedule people via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS).

Gary Kozlowski '21, the primary developer on the project, said, "I enjoyed working in a small team because this is how most of the developers work now. We operated in a very agile environment using communication platforms such as Zoom, email, text messaging and phone calls. It was interesting to work in an environment where we would plan, design, develop and test the product, release it and then get feedback from users to make it even better."

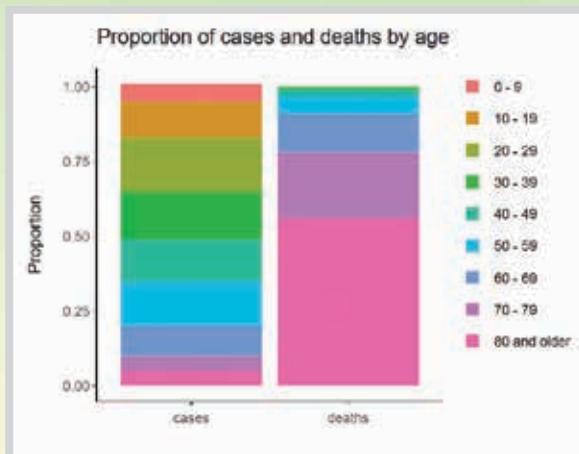
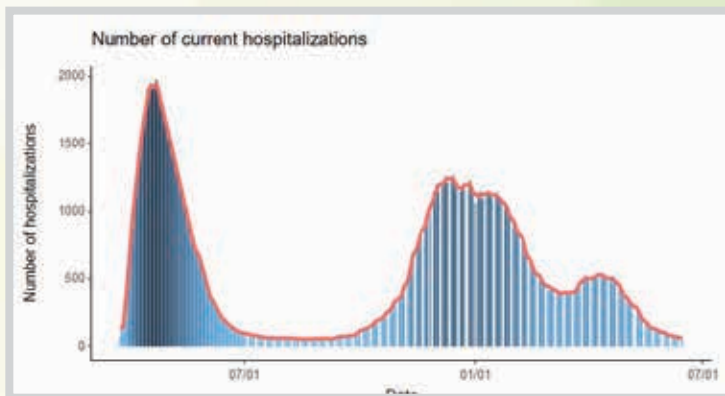
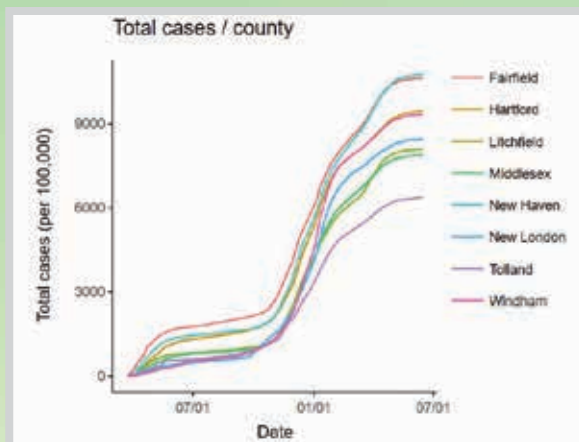


Data analytics institute tracks COVID-19 data

Throughout the pandemic, the Eastern Institute for Data Analytics (EIDA) has maintained an interactive website that monitors Connecticut's COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths at the state and county levels.

The project utilizes primary data from state agencies and features interactive maps and graphs for data visualization and interpretation. The website features an up-to-date scorecard of the state's COVID-19 situation; breaks out the data by county, age and sex; and more. The project also launches a weekly email to subscribers that provides week-to-week updates on the changes in COVID-19 numbers.

EIDA is led by six faculty researchers with expertise in public health, mathematical and statistical modeling, data science, computational biology and geographic information systems. For more information, visit <https://eida.easternct.edu/shiny/app/covid-ct>.



Minority Health Conference looks at COVID-19 disparities in Connecticut

In observance of National Minority Health Month, Eastern hosted a Minority Health Conference in April that examined COVID-19's disproportionate impact on people of color and racial/ethnic health disparities in general across Connecticut. The virtual conference featured state and local health officials.

"The purpose of this conference is to engage students and the local community on issues that affect minority health based on social determinants of health," said conference organizer **Harley Webley '21**.

The keynote presentation was titled "Debunking Myths: COVID-19 Vaccine" and featured **Keith Grant**, senior system director of Infection Prevention at Hartford HealthCare, with



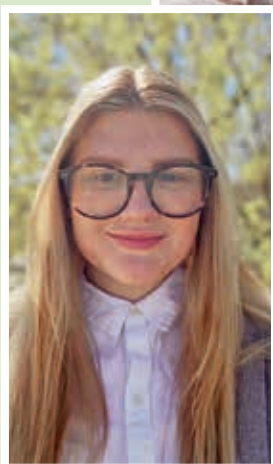
sponsorship by the Office of Governor Ned Lamont; Health Equity Solutions; and Premier Consultant Services (LLC).

Other speakers included **Liany E. Arroyo**, director of Hartford's Department of Health and Human Services; **Rosana Ferraro**, policy and program officer for Universal Healthcare at the Foundation of Connecticut; **Lacoy Brown '20**, COVID-19 contact tracing supervisor; and **Erica Watson**, biology lecturer at Eastern whose work concerns racial health disparities and anti-racist advocacy.

Students close spring 2021 with virtual show(s) of research



Jack Cerra '21



Olivia Anderson '21

The springtime bloom of collegiate research conferences took a virtual appearance this spring 2021 semester, but that didn't stop Eastern students from continuing to present their scholarly work at the local, regional and national levels.

For the second year in a row, Eastern's annual CREATE conference was presented online. CREATE stands for "Celebrating Research and Creative Activity at Eastern" and is the University's premier showcase of undergraduate research and creative activity. This year marked CREATE's 20th anniversary and featured more than 75 students from all majors presenting projects spanning the arts, sciences and humanities. See the CREATE website at <https://www.easternct.edu/create/create-2021/create-2021.html>.

Environmental Earth Science major **Jack Cerra '21** presented at the virtual meeting of the New England Estuarine Research Society in April, where he was awarded the Rankin Award for best undergraduate oral presentation. His research looks at bluff erosion on Block Island, RI, using Airborne LiDAR technology.

Political Science major **Olivia Anderson '21** presented at the prestigious Posters on the Hill Conference in Washington, DC, in April. Out of hundreds of applicants nationwide, Anderson was one of 60 students selected to present before an audience of U.S. senators and other government officials. Her project looks at the impact of partisanship on climate change opinion.

Students also presented at the North East Decision Sciences Institute; the annual Pi Sigma Alpha National Student Research Conference; the National Conference on Undergraduate Research; the Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society and more.

Theatre program bounces back with three adaptations

After a fall 2020 semester spent reinventing itself due to the pandemic, the Theatre Program emerged in spring 2021 with a slate of three theatrical performances adapted for film and online streaming.

The season opened in February with “Hotel Universe,” a play from the 1930s written by Philip Barry. The show was directed by Theatre Professor **David Pellegrini** and featured two separate casts.

“(We) transformed a show that was originally intended to be played before a live audience into a film,” said Pellegrini. “What you see is a hybrid of film and live performance, yet another experiment for our program.”

The student-directed play “Blood at the Root” followed in March. Written by Dominique Morisseau and based on the 2006 Jena Six case in Louisiana, the show was directed by students **Austin Washington ’22**, **Massiel Evans ’21** and **Edwards Lorsin ’22**, with supervision by Theatre Professor **DeRon Williams**.

The play grapples with issues of race and homophobia. “It was an honor to put on a show so relevant to our time,” said Washington. “It reflects generational struggles of racism, homophobia, systemic oppression and division that we see every day.”

The season closed with “Cultivating Dignity,” an Eastern original devised by professors **Kristen Morgan** and **Alycia Bright-Holland** that is based on Martin Luther King Jr.’s summer in Connecticut working on a tobacco farm.

Due to the warmer weather, filming took place outside, affording performers ample space to move and interact while maintaining COVID-19 precautions. As with all spring 2021 shows, the film adaptation was supported by film students and Professor Brian Day.



Community service flourishes in spring

The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) had a busy season of service in spring 2021, deploying students

for projects including COVID-19 testing, snow removal, gardening and more. The majority of the CCE’s efforts went toward a series of nine student-led community programs that flourished despite the pandemic.

“This was such a tough year,” said CCE Director **Kim Silcox**, speaking of the pandemic that caused Eastern to rethink how it engages with the community. “We are incredibly proud of our students, who have truly stepped up to make this year the best it can be. Their hard work has provided a great benefit to the community members we work with.”

Students devoted hundreds of hours to weekly programs supporting some of the community’s most vulnerable populations: at-risk youth, incarcerated individuals, elderly people and those battling addiction.