

Jenna Goldsmith led her class at the Oregon State University-Cascades campus in creating a book made up of journal entries they wrote during the pandemic.



Students document pandemic life in new book

By **DAVID JASPER**
THE BULLETIN

In fall 2020, then-Oregon State University-Cascades writing instructor Jenna Goldsmith asked her students to keep journals about life after the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now, the over 100-page book including essays and more by her former students is available for all to read in the new book “There is no College in COVID: Selections from the Oregon

State University-Cascades COVID-19 Journaling Project.”

It may sound like old hat now that we’re all nearly two-year veterans of the “new” normal, but there was a time when life felt like it had been turned upside down. The fear, confusion and disinformation afoot were disorienting. And when remarkable, challenging times hit, they can prove fruitful to creative minds.

The writings were produced in the course U-Engage, designed to accli-

mate first-year students to college life.

Student-conducted interviews were key in the course, but because of COVID-19 restrictions, meeting in person stopped being an option. As fall quarter loomed that year, Goldsmith prepared to try something else.

“Students (couldn’t) meet with each other in person, and I didn’t want them to be spending more time on Zoom than they were already spending. So, I had to reconceptualize the major project in that class,” Goldsmith said from

Illinois, where she moved last summer to take a new teaching position. “The assignment was that they’d write two journal entries per week, and if the students wanted them to be potentially public, they had to let me know at the beginning of the project.”

While some shied away from the idea of being published, according to Goldsmith, “most of the students were actually really excited about this going

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