



MSE Students and Alumni

Spring 2020

A message from Dr. Walker, Department Head

Dear Friends of UTD MSE,

We have been thinking about you, your family, and your health and safety, during this unprecedented time. Our students, faculty, staff, collaborator, alumni and friends are our priority, the heart of everything we do, and the center of all our planning and decision-making. MSE remains open and here to support you all.

Given the current events that we are experiencing, it feels as though 2020 is flying by. Currently, we are working remotely and teaching on-line for the rest of the semester. I am truly honored to be working with a fantastic staff and faculty who have made all this happen in a very short time. MSE is still full operational! Just in the past week four students – Qingxiao Wang, Ava Khosravi, Arul Ravichandran and Harrison Kim – passed their PhD defenses. I would like to congratulate them all!

If you would like to hear more about our activities please follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Keep safe, strong, and healthy.

Best wishes,

Amy Walker

Interim Head of Materials Science and Engineering

Hear from Alumni around the US

The current pandemic has forced everyone to rapidly change day-to-day routine in order to adapt to this "new world". In this newsletter you will read from alumni around the US, who share their current working situation.

If you have news to share or would like to be in touch with the MSE community you can join our quarterly newsletter [here](#). Stay distanced, stay safe.



Adrian Avendano, PhD
Co Founder / COO at Ares Materials

This pandemic has affected us all. In our particular case, in Ares, as a materials research company, most of the company is working remotely from home and the lab is open for the people that are essential. However, because of the nature of the company, it is not possible for us to do all of our work remotely, which means that there are 2 to 3 people still going to the lab and office, the whole building just for them so each one has plenty of space for social distancing.

We deployed some of our small equipment to people's homes so they can keep testing and working from home, which has allowed us to not lose pace in our research. As a startup, this is very challenging since we do not have the runway that big companies have, so we have to be creative, work as a team and stay in constant communication.

I am sure we will survive this whole situation if we keep focused, however, the sooner the better!!

Hear from alumni around the US

Audrey Hammack, PhD

Process Engineer at UTDallas



The university has become a ghost town. While the students were on a 2 week spring break, this gave instructors time to move their classes to an online format.

Of course, while undergrads welcomed spring break, it has never mattered much to graduate students. The cleanroom remains open in order to serve the steady trickle of users. We are operating with minimal staffing. Everyday we will have the director, one engineer, and one tech on duty. We want to keep the lab running for existing users, but no new users are being introduced to the lab; all the staff is encouraged to check emails and phones frequently, as some of the older staff are asked to stay home entirely to minimize the risk of exposure that comes with advanced age.

I was able to regen a cryo pump for the first time, with the help of one of the technicians on the phone! Some external business users have mentioned that they are using this time to get their work to a stopping point before their company halts operations completely. I'm not sure if this is the case for users from the university, and of course, it depends on instructions that come from the university president

Lindsey Smith, PhD

Process Engineer at Intel



I am working from home as much as possible and although not ideal I am glad we have the infrastructure to do so. I can't speak for the entirety of Intel, but our campus is pushing to only have minimal number of people on site at any time and has increased cleanings along with other safety precautions.

Although it's difficult to keep up with everything remotely, I keep telling myself I am lucky to still be able to help support my family.

Liang Xu, PhD

DRAM Yield Enhancement Data Analysis
Engineer at Micron Technology



Micron has been handling the COVID-19 very proactively since its initial outbreak in China early on. Back in the end of January, people who traveled from China were asked to self-quarantine for 14 days before returning back to work. Starting early February, temperature monitors were implemented at building entrances for screening purposes, and anyone with a temperature of 100.4 F or higher were not allowed to enter. In late February/early March, all international and domestic travel plans were suspended. On March 17th, work-from-home was issued for the majority of employees.

For those who have to be on site due to their job responsibilities, different shifts are assigned to minimize contact. Last but not least, a \$1000 payment is on the

way to any employee with an annual salary lower than \$100K, to help with the difficulties during this period.



John Murphy, PhD

Research and Development Engineer at
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

LLNL is currently operating in very bare bones state on site, with almost all employees being asked to work from home if possible. This has been going on for one week so far, and is planned to last for at least the following two weeks, however, given that it appears as though California public schools will likely be cancelled through the end of the school year (late May or early June), I think the telecommuting will likely last at least a month or two.

So far it's been a bit hectic at home managing two children doing teleschool while Laura and I try to telework. If anything I would say work/life balance feels like it has shifted towards more work just because there is no clear line anymore - we're just at home all day doing a mishmash of school, work, and home stuff - but hopefully we'll get into more of a routine for however long this lasts.

Thank you everyone, we sincerely hope things go back to normal, a better normal, as soon as possible.

If anyone else would like to share their current work-life situation, I would highly encourage you to do so. Send me an e-mail: mirelesmarce@gmail.com

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