

Goodbye, Momo!

Closing after 13 years



Tom Kleifgen and Lei Ann Shiramizu

By Vivian Nguyen
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

In the International District (ID), on the corner of South Jackson Street and Sixth Avenue South, sits Momo—the Asian- and Scandinavian-inspired clothing, jewelry,

and home goods shop. Long viewed as a must-visit destination by locals and tourists alike, the shop will soon come to a close after 13 years of operation.

For Lei Ann Shiramizu and Tom

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22 arrested during Labor Day demonstration



Demonstrators near 5th and Jackson on Sept. 7.

Twenty-two people were arrested after a large group marched from the International District down to the Seattle Police Officer's Guild building on 4th Avenue South on Sept. 7. The arrests were for arson, assault, obstructing and failure to disperse.

Officers recovered intact molotov cocktails dropped by rioters outside the building as officers began making arrests. Officers arrested a number of individuals on 4th Avenue South as they continued to receive rocks, bottles, and explosives thrown at them by rioters. ■

State colleges grapple with fewer international student enrollments



Gauri Nayak

By Janice Nesamani
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

If things had gone according to plan, 22-year-old Gauri Nayak would have been on campus at the University of Washington (UW), one step closer to fulfilling her dream of becoming a User Experience Researcher. But if anything, 2020 showed her how even the best laid plans can go awry.

“I got my admission letter on March 14, 2020 and was very happy. I didn't have a clear idea of how bad things were in the United States, because at the time, the pandemic hadn't reached India yet,” Nayak said. “There were rumors, but couldn't

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New Public Health report on COVID-19 deaths in King County

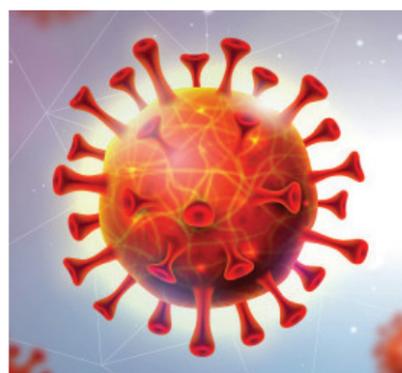
An analysis of deaths associated with COVID-19 in King County published on Sept. 1 shows that deaths have slowed dramatically since the early peak of the outbreak in April. However, COVID-19 still ranks overall as the 6th leading cause of deaths in 2020 in King County.

These are among the findings in a new report from Public Health—Seattle &

King County, “Summary Report on Deaths Associated with COVID-19.”

Through Sept. 1, there have been 724 deaths attributed to COVID-19, with 680 of those confirmed and another 44 that are suspected or pending. In March, the report found that COVID-19 ranked as the third

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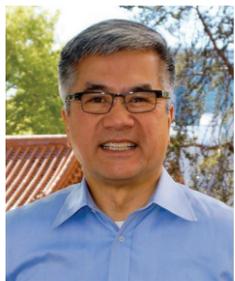
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wait to complete my internship in July and fly to Seattle in September,” she said.

A few weeks later, Nayak received an email that changed everything. “UW said they might have to conduct all their courses online due to the pandemic, in which case it would be safer, especially for international students, to not come to campus,” she said. UW sent out a form asking if she would like to defer the course or do it virtually with the option of coming to campus when the situation improved. Nayak chose to defer.

“I was very skeptical about remote education. To me, taking classes online defeats the very purpose of wanting to study at a foreign university. You are in the same environment and though you meet new people virtually, the value of physical meetings is priceless. You can’t have those same conversations online,” Nayak said. “When you pay that high tuition fee, you’re buying the whole experience of being in Seattle, at the university, and having conversations with your professors and peers,” she said, “Paying that much for an online experience was not really worth it to me,” she added.

Then, the Trump administration announced foreign students taking virtual classes would not be allowed to stay in the country. “That was very scary. I felt if I decided to go, the policy may change and they could kick me out,” Nayak said. She admits she was depressed by the turn of events. Since then, however, she has had some time to process the situation and hopes to head to UW in Fall 2021. Her experience is just one among thousands whose plans for a life-molding experience at college or university has either stopped in its tracks or switched gears virtually.



Former Gov. Gary Locke

Former Gov. Gary Locke, who is the Interim President of Bellevue College (BC), agrees that enrollments at colleges and universities across the state are down, especially among international students, and the drop is hurting education institute revenues.

“Add to that the fact that the state is also reducing funding for all public universities, whether it’s UW, BC, or Seattle Community Colleges. It is all going to hurt and all colleges are having to look at reducing programs and cutting back and reducing cost,” he said.

While international student enrollments have dropped, BC is still accepting applications and Locke said that when it comes to students within the United States, they might be close to the enrollment figures compared to last year.

“In these tough economic times, people want more job training and retraining, they want that education BC offers. People who have been laid off want new skills they can apply for jobs with, and if they are already working at a company, they want to upgrade their skills so that they can move up and avoid being laid off,” Locke said. “Community colleges are very affordable and we offer programs that range from up to a few months to even a four-year program,” he added.



Scott K. McClellan

Scott K. McClellan, Vice President for University Affairs at Seattle University, explains they will not know the final numbers for a couple of more weeks.

“Overall, our numbers look strong across continuing and transfer undergraduate students with both tracking on goal. The law school has exceeded its goal (they are on semester and started Aug. 24) and it is too early to know overall graduate enrollment numbers, although we expect those numbers to be within range,” McClellan said.

“Our incoming freshman class, like at many institutions, will be lower. We expect to be down at least 100 in our first-time-in-college class over last Fall,” he said. “With the

added expenses for our COVID-19 safety measures, lost revenue from student housing, and a lower than expected freshman class, like other institutions, we are having to address some financial challenges as a result of the pandemic,” he added.

Executive Director of Communications & Recruitment of Seattle Colleges, Barbara Childs, said, “International FTES saw a significant decrease due to coronavirus international travel restrictions and visa regulations. Seattle Colleges had a 30% decrease (327 International FTES) in the Summer Quarter 2020, compared to 2019.” “Although a dramatic decline, the international programs’ office has continued to recruit and enroll students who are attending both in the United States and in their home countries,” Childs said.

Childs shared that in Seattle College’s most recent quarter, Summer 2020, they enrolled 4,155 FTES, 8% less (357 FTES) than their 2019 Summer enrollment. “It’s important to note that both Seattle Central College and North Seattle College increased FTES compared to Summer 2019, despite remote operations and the majority of online-only classes due to COVID-19,” she said. “Seattle Central College was at 108% and North Seattle College was at 105% of their summer enrollment targets,” she said. “South Seattle College, our college that offers proportionately more hands-on professional technical and apprenticeship programs and faced traffic impacts due to the West Seattle bridge closure, decreased by 37% (520 FTES),” she added.

For Seattle University, the health and safety of its campus community has been paramount in its planning. “We are in a primarily virtual learning format for the fall with 90% of classes being taught remotely. The exceptions are a limited number of performance-based, clinical and laboratory courses and a small number of other courses,” McClellan said. With the exception of some programs that include licensure requirements, every student has been given the option to take their courses virtually and every faculty member, the option to teach remotely. “We also moved the Fall quarter up to start September 9 and end November 24 to reduce the amount of travel for students living on campus,” he said.

Childs confirmed that Seattle Colleges will be operating remotely with Fall 2020 classes held online and are taking measures to ensure all students have the access and support they need.

“We are providing for in-person, by appointment, student services for the two weeks leading up to the start of the Fall quarter and for the first two weeks of the quarter,” Childs said. “We will provide computer hardware and hotspots for students in need and have increased virtual services to students by using online video conferencing, web chat tools, and other software to advise and assist them remotely,” she said. Seattle Colleges will also offer a limited number of in-person classes for programs that have been approved for instruction because of their subject matter.

“We are providing a virtual orientation or Summer Bridge program for Seattle Promise students, which will include information on how best to access technology for classes and have adopted a directed self-placement tool for English classes that can be completed online,” Childs said.

At BC, too, some courses will be hybrid.

“You can’t teach brain surgery, how to draw blood, or how to use an MRI machine over the internet. Some of these sophisticated, health-related courses need to have in-person instruction. Those students will come to campus for instruction a few days a week,” Locke said.

Nicole Beattie, Associate Director of Communications at BC, said, “Some of the precautionary measures we’ve taken for in-person classes include mandatory social distancing, mask wearing, temperature checks, and daily health assessments prior to coming to class or work.”

Explaining that the health and safety of the community is their top priority, Beattie said. “Some of the measures we have taken are health screening stations for buildings that are holding class (like the T Building for our healthcare labs), and we’ve also developed required training for faculty, staff, and students.” “We also have a process in

place if we do learn a member of our community has tested positive for COVID-19,” she said.

Most faculty and staff at Seattle University will be working remotely and most students learning remotely. “We have taken a comprehensive approach to our health and safety practices that are consistent with or, in some cases, go beyond the state’s guidelines for higher education, and all our planning has been closely coordinated with a highly respected epidemiologist,” McClellan said. “We have limited university-owned housing to single occupancy only rooms, with few exceptions for two students who request to room together,” he said. “All students coming to campus are required to be tested for COVID-19 before arriving. All students, faculty, and staff on campus are also required to perform a daily Safe Start health check screening. Masks, or face coverings, are required of all on campus, whether indoors or outdoors. Enhanced clearing protocols and measures are in place,” he added.

“As a Jesuit university that places a high value on the care of each individual student, we have made equity a priority through technology access and other academic accommodations,” McClellan said. Seattle University has made laptops and internet hotspots available for those who need them. “Additional academic accommodations have been carefully considered and are available for those with disabilities. We developed an enhanced, one-stop student support center to respond to and help students in a timely manner,” he said.

The pandemic has created huge challenges for many students as everything is going online, so ensuring students have laptops and high-speed internet is critical.

“During the Spring of 2020, BC was awarded \$2,072,545 in federal CARES Act funding to allocate to students through emergency financial aid grants. They disbursed about \$1 million to 1,310 students in the Spring Quarter, with the remaining \$1 million set aside for students enrolled in Summer and Fall. “Through our Foundation’s Safety Net Fund, we were able to support more than 50 additional students who weren’t eligible for federal aid,” Beattie said.

BC also received a federal grant of \$1,473,625 to support its campus’ TRIO program, which serves low income, first generation or students with disabilities.

“Our associated student government allocated \$100,000 to fund laptops for students who didn’t have access to technology, which is a great example of students finding creative ways to help each other,” she added.

BC transitioned its student support services to a virtual format, for example, offering remote counseling sessions through an online HIPAA compliant platform called Doxy.Me.

“Everybody is grappling with the challenges of this pandemic whether you are a faculty member, a student, or even a parent. We have counselors to help our students, especially faculty members and students of color who have the added concerns over social issues such as racial injustice,” Locke said.

McClellan points to surveys from last spring at Seattle University that indicated high student satisfaction with its virtual learning with overall numbers meeting and, in some cases, exceeding last fall’s levels.

“Our Center for Digital Learning and Innovation has provided great support and extensive training for faculty to make the transition even smoother this fall as we had more time to prepare for the transition than last March,” he added.

Locke points out that BC was very quick to pivot to online teaching.

“I have to applaud our faculty and staff at BC with how quickly they were able to move online. They were very nimble and dedicated,” Locke said. “The reason we were so successful is we already had some online and hybrid courses. Even so, we want to make sure that the online experience is useful and beneficial, so we have ongoing programs to help our faculty to be even better teaching online,” he added. ■

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YOGA from 8

“It helps you feel more empowered to deal with many situations that are beyond your control,” said Grant.

She teaches yoga with Satya Yoga Cooperative, a Denver-based group operated by people of color that was launched in June 2019, inspired partly by the Black Lives Matter and (hash)MeToo movements. The co-op’s mission: Offer yoga to members of diverse communities to

help them deal with trauma and grief before it shows up in their bodies as mental health conditions, pain and chronic disease.

“When I think about racism, I think about stress and how much stress causes illness in the body,” said Satya founder Lakshmi Nair, who grew up in a Hindu family in Aurora. “We believe that yoga is medicine that has the power to heal.”

Satya’s efforts are part of a growing movement to diversify yoga nationwide. From the Black Yoga Teachers Alliance

to new Trap Yoga classes that incorporate the popular Southern hip-hop music style to the Yoga Green Book online directory that helps Black yoga-seekers find classes, change appears to be happening. According to National Health Interview Survey data, the percentage of non-Hispanic Black adults who reported practicing yoga jumped from 2.5% in 2002 to 9.3% in 2017.

Blacks and Latinos consistently top national health disparities lists, with elevated risks for obesity and chronic

conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer, which has made them more susceptible to contracting and dying of COVID-19. They also face an elevated risk for depression and other mental health conditions.

Yoga is obviously not a panacea for racism, but it has shown positive results in helping people manage stress, and as a complement to therapeutic work on trauma. ■