

Tim Foster Oral History



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Transcription for: Tim Foster
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Interviewer: Kate Michaelis

Kate Michaelis: We're here today with President Foster from Colorado Mesa University. Today is July 11, 2022. Tim, we wanted to ask you some questions about the COVID-19 pandemic at Mesa. Can you, how that happened for personally, and then also how that happened Colorado Mesa University, and how you got the university through that? So, let's start with: How did you start hear about COVID? How did that first come to your notice?

Tim Foster: You started hearing something about it back of early 2020. It was like the fog, and how serious it is going to be, and we've had a number of those at the point that out of panic, you know, when, because we started things like China, and then it's at a million at the same time to be aware of them. And the thing that is, I remember one of the NBA players as an interview he got himself in a lot of trouble because he coughed on the microphone. So, at that point, he had tested positive for COVID, so he wasn't going to be able to play. He made a big deal about it. He obviously thought that the way as big deal, he coughed on the microphone and managed over. And as I played one, everyone was like, "Oh, my God, you probably infected two people at once." It just got the whole thing.

Foster: Then, it began. It accelerated fairly quickly. Everyone was very concerned about how it would be, but also how fatal it was, and just all these uncertainties. It was pretty calm by the spring that we were going to go off to Spring break and not come back. There the uncertainty for us was as

Foster: We did a substantial amount of online work. And all of our faculty pretty much were doing the same thing. And the government today just doesn't do anything other than a lockdown and a pause of all of it. But to this day to everybody, you want to take all of your classes and take those 100% online. It was amazing. It was amazing people's ability to step into the breach, and as soon as, and just across the call, and not just from these units, and say, "We're not going to help." And as a case study, they had themselves out of it. One of those cases Michael Michaelis wrote. All of a sudden, okay, God, is this a pandemic? And it's not by known what it is. And it was in doing a meeting. So, we figured it out and got that done. And we were able to finish out the semester, as best we could, which wasn't great. But students were able to finish out the semester. We did not have a chance if people wanted outside, we just said, "We really had to find a way to get going what you thought you were going to get. If you think that doesn't work, okay." We included that in our agreement, but we're not of students to live up to it. It's not of them to live up to it. And we didn't come from within in these GPA. Or if they were getting themselves into academic trouble, we just set of grades that they didn't get out of probation or get suspended. Because you had to understand that all of a sudden, we'd given to a university that didn't work for them. It was just that one case. Let's get ourselves out of town.

Michaelis: And then dealing with all the closures externally. We had the state ordered, we had the March 11 Guard, we had one or two other agencies. It was fascinating to watch the happen, where

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