

## **2020 Stories Project Prompts**

### **St. Olaf College Special Collections & Archives**

#### **General:**

- What were the months of self-isolation like for you? Were you living with anyone else?
- Are you still self-isolating? What factors led to that decision?
- Tell us about any jobs that you have. Have you been an essential worker who needed to work in person throughout the pandemic? Have you been working from home? Have you lost a job during the pandemic?
- How did you feel when you first heard about St. Olaf moving to remote learning for the rest of the spring semester?
- How did you feel when you first heard about St. Olaf reopening for the fall semester?
- When did you realize that the pandemic was going to alter your daily life? How did you feel about that?
- How has your experience of time shifted or changed throughout the pandemic?
- What has surprised you about working/learning/teaching from home?
- How has your daily life changed or evolved over the months since March?
- If you were self-isolating with children, how did that impact your experience?
- How have you found ways to celebrate during the pandemic (birthdays, graduations, anniversaries, Pride Month, holidays etc.)?
- How have you been dealing with grief, either relating to the loss of everyday life or a specific event? Do you feel that you've had enough time and space to process your grief?
- What kinds of things have you done to maintain social connections despite physical distancing? Has this changed over the months?
- What are your hopes right now? What are your fears?
- Have you tested positive for/contracted COVID-19? If so, what was it like?
- What would you like people in the future to understand about your current experience?
- How has the pandemic impacted you economically?
- How has the pandemic impacted your personal/family life? Your relationships with coworkers?
- Were you or people you know impacted by the number of natural disasters happening this year (California wildfires, hurricanes, Iowa inland hurricane)? How was it dealing with this on top of months of a pandemic?
- What is your relationship with news media outlets right now? Social media? - What are some things you have found joy in recently?
- This summer saw thousands of Black Lives Matter demonstrations held in all 50 states and in countries across the world.
  - Have you attended any Black Lives Matter protests? Has it felt any different from protests that you may have attended pre-pandemic?
  - Did you bring any of those actions or feelings with you from your home community

back to campus?

- In what ways did your responses to calls for change in our larger American culture intersect with your response to calls for change that took place on campus?
- Tell a story about something that's happened since March 2020 - inspirational, funny, anything!

**Students:**

- Where did you finish your classes when they were made remote for the remainder of spring semester?
- If you were studying abroad during the Spring 2020 semester, please describe the experience of having your program recalled.
- If you are an International student:
  - Were you able to return home or did you stay in the US?
  - What are your observations on the way that different countries have handled the pandemic? How has this perspective influenced you?
  - What difficulties have you faced specifically as an international student?
- If you continued to live on campus during the spring and summer, what was that experience like?
- If you graduated from high school last spring, what ways did you find to still celebrate? What experiences did you mourn the loss of?
- How do you feel about the adjusted academic calendar this year?
- If you decided to take your Fall 2020 classes online:
  - What factors led to that decision?
  - Where are you now, and who are you with?
  - Do you notice a difference in online classes from last spring to this fall?
  - What are you doing to remain socially connected?
- If you decided to return to take in-person classes in Fall 2020:
  - What factors led to that decision?
  - How do you feel about procedures put into place to enforce physical distancing in high-traffic areas like the cafeteria, the gym, and dorm common spaces? Do you feel safe?
  - How was your experience with the initial two-week quarantine of students at the beginning of the semester?
  - If you have been put into isolation for a positive COVID-19 test, would you describe what it was like?
  - What is one thing that has surprised you about being back on campus?
- If you are involved in a campus organization/music ensemble/athletic team:
  - How has your group adapted to pandemic-related physical safety measures? How have you found new ways to maintain community?
  - Have you seen an increase/decrease in student involvement with your org? What do you think has caused that?

- The summer of the pandemic has also been a summer of heightened awareness about racism nationwide. As a student organization/athletic team/music ensemble, have you felt called to respond to appeals for change on campus? Has your group engaged in anti-racist action?

**College Staff & Faculty:**

- If you have been working remotely: How much of your work was dependent on in-person communication before? Was it hard to adapt to virtual meetings?
- If you needed to isolate because of a positive COVID-19 test, would you describe what it was like?
- How have you had to change routines/practices to adapt to the pandemic? What new safety practices have you established? Any creative solutions that surprised you?
- How has onboarding for new employees/new student employees changed?
- If you were furloughed over the summer, would you describe what it was like?
- The summer of the pandemic has also been a summer of heightened awareness about racism nationwide. As a member of the St. Olaf community, have you felt called to respond to appeals for change on campus? Has your department/office engaged in anti-racist action?
- If you are working/teaching in person this year, what has it been like to be back on campus? Given the new procedures put into place to enforce physical distancing, do you feel safe?
- If you are working/teaching remotely this year, have you noticed any difference in online class & work from last spring? What ways are you finding to continue to create community?
- Do you have any other experiences/emotions that you'd like to share?

**Deans:**

- What kinds of issues have students/faculty been coming to you with? Are these any different than previous years?
- Have you had to come up with new ways of doing things? What has been difficult? Easy?
- With the uncertainty of the pandemic and rapidly-changing situations, how did you cope with questions from students, parents, and faculty? Did you feel prepared to help people making significant life choices?
- The summer of the pandemic has also been a summer of heightened awareness about racism nationwide. As a representative of the college and as an individual, have you felt called to respond to appeals for change on campus? Has your department engaged in anti-racist action?

**Department Heads:**

- How has your department had to adapt to the pandemic? Any specific innovations you'd like to mention?
- The summer of the pandemic has also been a summer of heightened awareness about

racism nationwide. As a department, have you felt called to respond to appeals for change on campus? Has your department engaged in anti-racist action?

### **COVID Testing:**

#### College staff

- What made you decide to volunteer for COVID testing? Did you feel safe?
- What was the experience like? Were there any interesting occurrences?

#### Medical professionals

- Where do you normally work? Did you choose to be a tester at St. Olaf, or were you assigned?
- How has work in the healthcare industry changed with the pandemic? How have these changes impacted you emotionally as well as physically?
- Did you feel protected with the safety precautions put into place at St. Olaf's COVID-19 testing (physical distancing, temperature checks, etc.)?
- Was conducting COVID-19 tests with the St. Olaf community of students, staff, and faculty different from testing the general public? Did anything about the experience surprise you?

### **Emerita:**

- Retirement can be a very emotional process. If you retired last spring, how did it feel to have your goodbye cut short? In what ways did you celebrate?
- If you live in the Northfield community, how has it felt to have the St. Olaf campus closed to the general public? Have you missed being able to visit?
- What are your thoughts on online learning? Have you thought at all about how you would teach online class if you were still a professor now?

### **Alumni:**

- What was it like to participate in the virtual commencement ceremony? Do you plan to come back if there is a future in-person commencement ceremony for the Class of 2020?
- What parts of your senior year did you mourn the loss of? What ways did you find to still celebrate?
- What has it been like trying to find a job given the current economic uncertainty? Have you found a job?
- Are there any ways that being a St. Olaf alumni has been a supportive experience for you during this transitional time?