

Samantha Rukert:

I have been teaching full-time at Loyola University Maryland since 2014. Over the last 6 years, I have taught 8 or 9 different undergraduate, master's level and doctoral courses, everything from 101 and abnormal to ethics, substance abuse and the history of psychology.

Last fall I applied to be on the Maryland Board of Psychology. In February I got word that I had been appointed to the board by the Governor. My confirmation hearing at the state Senate building in Annapolis was scheduled for March 16. Unfortunately, this was for all intents and purposes, the day that everything shut down in Maryland. I am still scheduled to begin my four-year term next month, but I am disappointed to have missed the in-person hearing, even if it was just a formality.

The first day of classes after spring break was totally normal. Then at 5pm that same day, Loyola announced that the students were returning home and all classes would be "transitioning" to on-line. We had about a week to prepare. This was incredibly stressful for me as I had zero experience or interest in teaching on-line. The rest of the semester was an absolute blur. Just about every aspect of each course changed in some way from lecturing to grading. I heard someone refer to these abrupt and significant changes as "building the car while driving it 90 miles an hour."

I had high anxiety and low expectations. I also had 80 students whose lives had been turned upside down. My initial goal was to just get through it and avoid disaster. Each week got easier and I focused on keeping the students engaged and being a stabilizing force amidst all the uncertainty. Loyola is founded on Jesuit principles, one of which is *cura personalis*, or care for the whole person. The pandemic was an opportunity to practice what we preach. I talked with all of my classes about recognizing and promoting resilience in themselves and others. Radical acceptance was another staple conversation. I had to and did summon every resource I could.

I am proud to say that all 80 of my students finished their assignments and the semester. Several students emailed me later to say thank you. Despite the chaos, learning still happened and some students uncovered new sources of strength and resilience. They thanked me for caring for them and treating them as whole people. Surviving and even thriving through the pandemic was the culmination of all my training and professional work, including my experiences being mentored and mentoring others. It all came together, perhaps when it mattered most.

Being appointed to the board and making it through the semester has left me thinking about Antioch. Antioch is the primary place where I learned to be a psychologist. I was in an Antioch classroom on September 11, 2001. It was my second day of graduate school. I remember the shock, fear, and uncertainty. And I remember seeing my professors also hurting and scared, but

there for me and my classmates. Now I have had my turn at living through something extraordinary and difficult with my students.

