

Language trips on hold

Coronavirus hinders travel for schools

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All of the foreign language trips to different countries have been canceled or postponed until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the summer of 2020, Spanish classes were planning on traveling to Spain and German classes were planning on visiting Germany. During the spring of this year, French classes were planning on going to Martinique, a French-speaking island in the Caribbean. And, in the summer of this year, Spanish classes were planning a trip to Peru. However, all of these trips have been suspended for the time being. After spring break, the French department will be re-assessing with the company (Language & Friendship) and the Rockwood School District to determine safety and planning for another trip to Martinique according to French teacher Kacey Schlotz.

“We would like to do the same trip we were planning for this spring again. We will also reopen registration after the break so that any current French students can attend,” Schlotz said.

Similarly, the German department is looking into their next possible trip to

Germany to be in 2022. German teacher Christopher Paladin said that one of the biggest letdowns about their trip being canceled was that seniors could no longer attend another trip.

“I have a student who is a senior this year and was planning on going on the trip last year, but as it was canceled and there is no trip this summer, she is going to miss out and that is definitely a bummer,” Paladin said.

It was disappointing to Spanish teacher Kimberly Lackey that the Spain trip was called off because she said it was the first big thing for her to be canceled due to the pandemic.

“We had spent so much time and effort planning the trip, including a training weekend for the teacher-leaders in January in Minneapolis and a full day workshop for preparation with the participants during Presidents Day weekend. It was devastating to have to cancel the trip,” Kimberly Lackey said.

Junior Emma Hale said that she was looking forward to traveling to Martinique this spring break but is now uncertain whether she will go next year.

“I understand that things are happening

and why we aren’t allowed to go, but I have been looking forward to going on a French trip since seventh grade. I was looking forward to the homestay and being able to completely immerse myself into

the life of the country and now we are never going to experience Martinique like that,” Hale said. “I’m not sure [if I plan on going next year] because it won’t be the same people going, and I am not sure if I want to spend the money on that or enjoy my senior spring break, but I’m considering it based on who else plans on attending next year.”

On the other hand, if another Spanish trip is offered again, junior Calvin Lackey said that he is certain he would go.

“I would really like to travel before I go to college. I was glad that I was only planning on going [to Spain] the summer after my sophomore year because there is still time for [me to go again] if the trip gets rescheduled,” Calvin Lackey said.

Schlotz said that she was devastated when she had to make the call to cancel the trip because she was looking forward to taking her students to a beautiful and unique place in the Francophone world.

“Providing opportunities for my students to speak French outside of the classroom is my jam. There’s nothing better,” Schlotz said. “We have a hope that we will be able to travel again next year. A year from now, everything could look different. As they would say in Martinique, ‘croisons les doigts’ (cross your fingers).”

NHS adapts hour requirement

Pandemic limits service opportunities

Siri Mandava
Of The Talon staff

National Honor Society (NHS), a program involved in community service, has faced several changes this year because of COVID-19.

NHS sponsor Gayle Piepho said that this year the number of activities and usual service opportunities has been reduced.

“Typically, we have a monthly agenda that is jam-packed with service projects. But this year, the organized opportunities are just not as widely available. We are encouraging our members to keep their eyes open and find ways to serve others,” Piepho said.

Another change to NHS this year was the hour requirement. In a normal year the hour requirement would usually be 12 hours per semester, but this year the requirement has been changed to a goal of 12 hours for the whole year. NHS co-sponsor Taylor Downey said that they are asking students to get hours however they are able to.

“We’re honestly just asking people to do whatever they can this year, which I think most people are doing kind of outside school related stuff,” Downey said.

Piepho said that the hour requirement change was because they did not know what students or their families were going through. She also said that the

pandemic and virtual learning takes up more time which was part of the reasoning for cutting down the number of hours.

“We know that the pandemic is affecting everyone in different ways. We want to encourage members to [serve] as they find opportunities, but did not want to cause extra stress. We wanted to respect the fact that students were going to have to learn how to learn differently this school year,” Piepho said. “Time has been a big issue. Personally, anything I have to prepare for virtual learning takes about five times as long as in-person school. I also have a family to take care of, so finding time to make decisions about NHS has been a challenge for me. I think that’s why I have so much empathy for our members and relaxed the hour requirement.”

The group has not had any meetings so far this year and has been using the officers, who are in charge of a small group of students in NHS, and the Remind app to communicate with the students. Senior Johanna Broten said that though the responsibilities of an officer have been similar to previous years, it has been difficult being an officer this year.

“This year has been a challenge as an officer because there are simply not as many opportunities to serve our community in groups. There are still plenty of service opportunities but a lot of the responsibility has been placed on each member to coordinate their own service. We also

haven’t been able to have club meetings in person so it has been difficult to keep people engaged and involved,” Broten said.

The induction for new members of NHS is in April, last year the induction was virtual, but regarding this year, Downey said they do not know exactly what the format will be.

“The date will be in April but we don’t know if we’re allowed to have an in-person yet one, or if it’s gonna have to be virtual but we don’t think we’re going to know that information till closer to when we tell all the people who’s in it for next year,” Downey said.

If next year proceeds as a ‘normal’ school year, Piepho said that some of the new changes might be kept but that she and Downey do not know for sure what the plans for next year will be.

“I think there are some changes that we may keep, but honestly, I can barely think past this week because I’m also swamped with school stuff. So that reflection will have to come later and probably in the summer,” Piepho said.

Despite all the challenges the pandemic has caused, Piepho said that there have been some positives to this year despite the changes brought by the pandemic to the program.

“I think this year has forced all of us to be flexible and make things work. We have relied more heavily on the officers to get information out to members, which shows great leadership,” Piepho said.

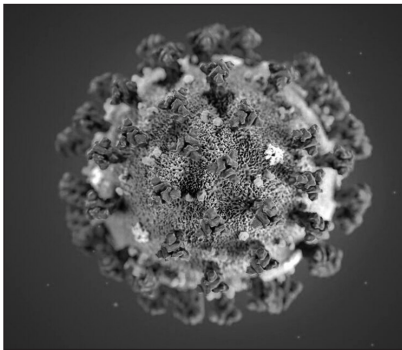
Up to Date

World News



After exiting the United Kingdom, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle went public in an interview with Oprah about the treatment they endured from the royal family. Markle said there were concerns raised in regards to the color of her son Archie’s skin when she was pregnant with him, along with tabloid magazines portraying her as a villain in the royal family. Some tabloids would constantly compare Markle to Duchess Kate Middleton in how they dressed, presented themselves in public, and carry out the duties of a duchess; all of them connoting Markle as the lesser, in a negative context.

National News



Johnson & Johnson received approval for vaccine distribution amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of this, the projection is that by May 1, every American adult will have the opportunity to receive at least one dose of a vaccine, two months earlier than expected. In addition, the states of Texas and Mississippi lifted their mask mandates and reopened their states, citing their vaccine rollout situations as reasons to do so.

Summit News



Falcons have begun their spring sports seasons. The sports to watch out for are girls lacrosse, girls soccer, water polo, boys tennis, boys and girls track and field, boys volleyball, and boys golf. In addition to the start of spring sports is a new spectator rule, in which there is no limit on the amount of spectators at home games for the sports of lacrosse, baseball, golf, soccer, and tennis.