Leadership found that female researchers were being disproportionately impacted by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, particularly in areas of childcare responsibilities. Upon discovering this, our program maintained social contact with scholars who were acting as caregivers via Zoom meetings to offer support and raise awareness of the various wellness interventions and childcare support systems available through our academic institution.

A lack of available research study participants was a major issue for most scholars. To adapt to this we gave them permission to delay the hard recruitment endpoints of their projects and shifted their focus to completion of proposed courses, which had all been moved to a virtual format. We also connected researchers who were facing challenges in recruitment with other researchers in the program who were conducting similar projects to promote collaborative studies that did not require subject recruitment.

In addition to the interventions mentioned above, we raised awareness of other pandemic-related grant support which was becoming available through federal funding mechanisms. We believe that these ongoing approaches reduced academic pressure and psychological stress and allowed scholars to conserve funds for use when COVID-related social distancing becomes less widespread.