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Longwood: Life during COVID-19

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Covid-19 Reflection

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COVID-19 Reflection

When Longwood University sent out the initial email to temporarily not hold in-person classes, there were many different reactions that I saw. One reaction was the students who were happy to go back home and have a second spring break. I noticed that most of these students were freshmen, which makes sense. They left in a joyous frenzy not thinking of the future complications this would bring. Then there were the students who immediately left, panicked that they were going to get sick. Some students were apathetic to the situation and believed this was not going to last or have a deep impact. All I could say was that I truly hoped they wouldn't close the school.

After some thought, I decided that I would stay at the school until there was a definite decision to continue the rest of the semester online. My parents live in a location that is tucked away and has hardly any internet connection. Leaving the school was going to take a toll on my grades. But after a strongly worded phone call from my parents, I was packing up to go home. My friends watched me pack up with looks of concern, they know toxic truth about my family. I said that maybe because everything going on there would be more compassion and respect. Despite everything I will always be an optimist. From personal life experiences, it is always the people who choose to be happy who make the world a better place. It's those who only see and act on the bad that make it worse.

Unfortunately, the whole no internet issue never got solved for me. Everyone was telling "well you're smart and you'll come up with something." I'm so sorry but no amount of intelligence is going to change the fact that I live in an isolated location and have no service. We have a satellite but once we use a certain amount of data, it's gone. I have two younger siblings and I wanted them to be able to get their work done as well. Thankfully I have a car so I would

drive out 45 minutes to sit in a store parking lot to connect to the Wi-Fi. I would sit in my car for hours trying to complete all my school work in one trip. But this really was not a great environment to concentrate and the connectivity still was not good. Unfortunately, I also have really bad luck with people approaching me. I had a middle-aged man start to come up to my car and it happened more than once. I felt stuck because my area is a smaller community and this store is one of the only ones that remained open. I also was afraid to get help because I was using the store for the internet and I was not going in. I was worried that I would be banned from parking there if I told anyone. I would switch stores, I would drive out another 20 minutes to the next nearest store that was open. But that made my commute about an hour. Driving for 2 hours like that just wasn't efficient and was using up gas.

As the situation with the virus escalated, my parents began to dislike my long trips out of the house. I tried to do them less and used the school's check to boost the satellite connection. It actually worked really well, but the idea of better internet caused the family to use it at a faster rate than we normally do. And again, the poor and slower than a turtle walking through peanut butter internet connection returned.

Then the worst possible thing that could have happened in this time happened. Someone broke my trust about my identity. I had only told two people from home that I identify under the LBGTQ+ community. One of them told their parents, who told my parents, and I was placed in a real bad situation. I do not want to get into details, but I lost access to technology for about 2 weeks. My parents told me that I should just fail out of college because somehow I failed them. Once things cooled down a little bit I pushed to get two weeks' worth of work done as speedily as possible. Like they say, "anything worth doing is worth doing badly." Anything is better than a zero. I had two professors at the time that I really felt comfortable explaining my situation too.

It was also exhausting writing these emails, it contained some of the most personal information about myself. Their emails back contained the kindest words I had heard in a while. It gave me that motivation to end the semester strong and not give up.