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Longwood: Life during COVID-19

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### Covid-19 Personal Essay

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## **COVID-19 Personal Essay**

### **Introduction**

Covid-19 has shut down our economy, our schools, and our relationships with each other. It has taken innocent lives from us and scared us all into hiding. Question marks are appearing all over the news due to controversies in science and politics. The world is a MESS. In this essay I will briefly summarize the major impacts in my life from this deadly pathogen.

### **Education**

The first major impact that Covid-19 caused in my life was when the virus stripped an in-person education from me in my final year of college. For nearly five years I have very much enjoyed living in Farmville and being a part of the Longwood community. I miss seeing my peers going about their normal routines and saying hello as I pass by a friend on Brock Commons or at Greenwood Library. No longer can I enjoy these small underrated moments that have been a part of my life for so long. I knew this was my final semester of courses at Longwood, but I never imagined this is what it would look like at the end of my college career. The joy and pride of graduating that I thought I would feel by this point has eluded me.

### **Family**

It deeply saddens me when I think of the families harmed by financial troubles from unemployment caused by Covid-19, and families that have come directly into contact with the pathogen itself. Thinking of them I worry for my own family's health and financial wellbeing. There is no guarantee when we will return to our normal lives, if that will ever be possible, and as time goes on and uncertainty increases, fear for my friend's and family's health is swelling up inside me.

Fortunately, both my parents (divorced) have their jobs. My father is an IT consultant for Booz Allen Hamilton and has been able to work remotely for half of each work week. My mother is a nurse at Prince William Hospital. Her job is the most worrisome to me since she is spending parts of her days working directly with patients infected by Covid-19. Because my sister and I both have type 1 diabetes, we have been living with only our father for over a month now. The risk to our health from living with our mother now is too high to chance. Every day I call her though to check in and I ask her if the hospital is being safe while treating the patients. I am very proud of my mother, but at the same time I have never been more worried about her.

### **Job/internship outlook**

Tomorrow, I will have completed all my college courses. Now I can gradu-WAIT! I may be finished with classes, but Longwood requires its students to complete an internship in the field they are studying to graduate. A requirement that I have not satisfied yet, and one that still holds despite circumstances caused by Covid-19.

Before schools, restaurants, and cities began closing I had two very good internship opportunities lined up. Both employers had interviewed me and were offering me a position for the summer of 2020. Both offers were taken away as soon as fear in the world spiked and the economy plummeted. Now here I am, almost graduated, in the middle of our worst pandemic and financial crisis in over 100 years. Hmm...lucky me.

Although clearly a significant obstacle faces me, I do not plan on letting it stop me. Not without a fight at least. I have been applying non-stop for internships and entry level jobs since missing out on the previous opportunities, and I am one day from beginning training for a

Tableau software certification which will certainly boost my resume. There is still hope for a career in my future.

## **Friends**

As I said before, my sister and I have type 1 diabetes. If one of us gets infected by Covid-19, our chance of surviving is significantly lower than our peers'. For this reason, we have been social distancing to the max. Our home is closed to friends, extended family, and any other visitors. When we go into a store, we wear a mask and gloves to avoid infection.

Social distancing may be beneficial to our health, but it is not kind to our relationships with our friends. Put very simply: I MISS MY FRIENDS! I have not seen my close friends in months, and I have no idea when I will be able to reunite with them. I am thankful that we live in a time where phone calls and video chat is easily accessible. But months or potentially a year of not seeing my friends is just brutal. When times are tough like this, we need our best friends. Unfortunately, in my case, I cannot have them around.

## **Mental Health**

I have experienced uncertainty and sadness in my life before, but I have never felt these emotions to the degree that I do now. I want to be strong and hopeful, but as time goes on and uncertainty and controversy from politicians and health professionals increases, it is becoming harder and harder to stay positive. It seems that every piece of news regarding Covid-19 is saddening and/or causes confusion. I know that I am not alone with these emotions, and I pray for my peers to stay strong as they battle the relentless fear and anxiety that is tormenting our every day lives.

## **The positive**

On one positive note, I have been going on hikes and/or camping trips every single weekend for 6 weeks now with my family. This is my only escape from the harsh reality that we face back at home. Next weekend, I plan on celebrating my “almost graduation” by hiking to the highest point in West Virginia – Spruce Knob.

## **Conclusion**

There is one important thing to be grateful for. My family, close friends, and I are all in good health still. This is something I make sure to be thankful for every day now. Especially when it is so clear to us how delicate life really is. There is no telling how or when we will get through this and return to our normal lives, but I do know that IF all of humanity unites as one against this virus, then we truly do stand a fighting chance.