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Longwood: Life during COVID-19

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Students Experience with Covid

Anonymous

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2020 Pandemic Experience : COVID-19

Future Researchers,

This is crazy. I have never experienced so much panic and fear of the unknown in the world. Currently, I am a second semester as Junior at Longwood (Spring 2020). I am scheduled to graduate on time, next Spring 2021. I am very lucky this pandemic has not affected my senior year in college. However, I have many friends who were not as fortunate as myself and are currently seniors. This saddens me to no end.

Let's start at the beginning, before the world was flipped upside down. Longwood was one of many other relatively small schools to attend spring break "earlier" than some bigger schools. With that being said, we returned to school about the time the pandemic began. For example, James Maddison University was on spring break the week we returned from spring break. They were instructed to not return to campus and that classes would be resumed online for the remainder of the semester. Longwood on the other hand, had already brought students back to campus and in classrooms. We attended in person meetings for a few days until it was discovered that a student whom returned to campus had been previously exposed to COVID-19. Fear escalated throughout the entire campus; the student was self-quarantining until the test results were returned. Sure enough, the test results were positive. Following this information, Longwood made the decision to close campus and move classes online. Students were then instructed to move off campus and back home. I happen to live in off campus housing, so I was able to go back and forth to complete assignments or if I needed some time away. I am sure the transition to online classes was anything but easy for some students. Luckily, I have taken some online classes in the past and was already familiar with the set-up of the class. I am also fortunate enough to have strong WIFI connect and internet access at home that allows me to complete

assignments and participate via ZOOM calls if necessary. However, it is unsettling that some of my classmates do not have these same privileges. In fact, a lot of student simply gave up and have not submitted any assignments since moving to online. This is so upsetting to me! I will say, Longwood did give students the option to use Pass or Fail this semester which could be the driving force to a lack of motivation. Either way, it is sad to know so many students have lost interest and motivation.

Once things settled down and everyone realized life would be far from normal for a while, we began to make things work as we could. For example, the government shut everything down except for essential businesses. This includes shopping centers such as grocery stores, Target, Walmart, and Health Care. When people found the world around us was going into quarantine, people went insane!! I mean INSANE, for weeks which turned into months you couldn't even buy toilet paper... people were so scared and worked up about this pandemic they bought everything they could in bulk. The grocery stores looked as if a bomb exploded, I have never seen so many shelves completely empty in my whole life (see pictures below). I'm talking complete aisle EMPTY. Not only did people hoard toilet paper, this included meats, dairy, frozen foods, bread, and water. Not to mention don't even think about finding Clorox wipes, hand sanitizer, or any other general cleaning supplies, yeah right. It got to the point where stores are having to limit purchasing these items to 1 per family/customer.

However, through all the chaos there were a few things I found to be positive in this situation. Families are now spending more time as a family. Children are now getting to enjoy eating dinner at home with their parents and siblings. Children are now able to spend time learning and exploring their environment and the world around them. Although, parks and other

places of enjoyment were closed, families now go on walks and bike through the neighborhood daily. I have never seen so many friendly and happy faces walking through my neighborhood.

I must say, with everything going on I am extremely impressed with Longwood's ability to handle this situation. I know it was devastating for the graduating Seniors to be told that their Senior year was coming to an abrupt end. However, President Reveley stepped up to the plate by ensuring the Senior class of 2020 would have an in-person graduation ceremony the follow semester. This was and is not an easy transition for anyone, everyone had to make adjustments and changes accordingly. Eventually, things will be normal again but for now that is not the case.

Sincerely,

A Longwood Student

