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Longwood: Life during COVID-19

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Experiencing a Pandemic

Anonymous

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Before starting the Spring 2020 semester of my junior year at Longwood University, I was extremely excited and grateful for the opportunities that were to come. I was looking forward to having many new experiences, living with my friends again, and being able to participate in the organizations I am apart of on campus.

Being a social work major comes with a junior internship, so that is one semester-long experience I was looking forward to. I have recently become Historian on the exec board of two of the organizations I am in, so I was looking forward to having new opportunities within those, as well.

Before I knew it, the coronavirus pandemic hit, and all of my opportunities and experiences were taken away from me. When COVID-19 first began affecting the Longwood community, it was a scary situation because it was so full of unknowns. I had so many questions but no one to ask because it was just as unknown for everyone else. I wondered if my internship will be ending only after a month of being able to be there. I wondered if all classes were going to be cancelled or moved online. I also wondered if we would have to leave campus and move home. Unfortunately, all of my questions were answered, but they were the answers I did not want to hear, or any Lancer for that matter.

I instantly was feeling so many emotions when I heard that we will be moving classes online for a few weeks. I was sad to be leaving my roommates and friends at school. I was confused on if I will get to finish out my internship. I was also anxious and nervous to do classes online because that is such a huge adjustment. I left my apartment at Longwood the day after hearing that we will be doing online classes but expecting to come back not thinking the couple of weeks would be extended to the rest of the semester.

During the first few weeks of online classes, it was really hard to adjust and absorb the new way of learning. Most professors did online classes with Zoom, but none of my professors did that for my specific classes. After a few weeks into online classes, we got the announcement that classes will be online for the rest of the semester. Hearing that, I got a sudden feeling of relief but also sadness. I was relieved because I felt more comfortable being home during this pandemic, but sadness because I would not be able to see my friends, professors, finish out my internship, or have many interactions with people anymore. It was really starting to hit that the coronavirus pandemic was far from ending when I had to go back to my apartment at Longwood and move out and move back home permanently. It was the weirdest feeling to see people moving out way before the end of the semester. It was also scary because no one would stand close to each other or really talk to each other.

Restrictions started getting stronger throughout the state as the days go on. Social distancing is increasing, while the number of people we can see is decreasing. Driving around my town is extremely depressing seeing all of the stores, restaurants, gyms, movie theaters, malls, and more closed down. Only certain stores can be open and only some restaurants are open for curbside pickup or to-go orders only. It is a whole new life that the world has had to adjust to very quickly.

With not being able to go anywhere or do anything, my focus has been all of my schoolwork and how I can succeed in my online classes. Although, it has been a struggle due to not being able to ask my professors questions in-person, not learning the course content in-person, or go see my advisor or any campus official, if needed. However, I have taken advantage of the options to call or text professors, schedule a Zoom meeting, or email my professors when needed.

With the semester ending, I could never imagine this is how it would have gone. I was expecting my spring semester of junior year to be one of the best semesters I have had. It is extremely difficult to look at what has happened on campus, in my hometown, and around the world. It is sad seeing people constantly wearing masks or gloves to protect themselves if they go out in public, however that is becoming the new norm. I have been home for almost two months and have not had many interactions with friends or family, which is extremely hard for me because I am someone who thrives off of social interaction.

When COVID-19 is gone and we can all live normally again, the experience of living through a pandemic is something I know I will never forget. With summer approaching, and the Fall 2020 semester in a few months, I hope that the coronavirus pandemic will be over, and I can enjoy my last year at Longwood University!