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Longwood: Life during COVID-19

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Covid Journey

Tyler Hall

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What a year we have embarked upon. 2020 has already been very exhausting, to say the least. I left 2019 a very excited Longwood Junior who was super pumped for what the spring semester held for me. Little did I know that the semester fun would be cut short and everything would be drastically changed. Classes have become all digital and it's crazy to think that the next time I will be on Longwood's campus, which my hopeful plan is in August, I will be a senior on his way to graduating from college!

My journey through this "pandemic" has been eventful, to say the least. I have had my fair share of struggling and relaxing days. Speaking about classes alone, the transition to an online format has come with a lot of confusion. That confusion comes not only from the student's perspective but after hearing many professors' perspectives, I understand that they also have been very confused at times. For some professors, this is the first time that they have had to teach online classes, which to students, we can spot that a mile away. It is very easy to tell which professors have and have not taught online classes before and it all has to do with organization and communication. Those two characteristics are what makes or breaks a student experience for an online class. Luckily for myself, the professors that I have for this semester all seem very experienced with online formatting.

I have never taken an online class before, so boy was this eye-opening. Being that my major is Communication Studies, I lucked out with the classes that I needed to take this semester. I really do feel for some of my fellow Communication Studies students. If your concentration is Digital Media, your workload is heavily focused on video editing and requires you to be behind a camera, which is very tough given the circumstances that our world is in right now. I decided to dedicate my spring semester to knocking out all my heavily writing oriented prerequisite and gen-ed courses. For my semester, my professors have given flexible deadlines and the instructions for my coursework could not have been any clearer. For that, I want to give a quick shoutout for Dr. Mitten and Dr. Paal of the Communication Studies Department, and Dr. Broaddus and Dr. Nez of the English Department for all their great work during this challenging time for Longwood students.

Something that was a new experience for me was the introduction of Zoom in an educational setting. There were several occasions over the last two months where I found myself on a Zoom call with one of my professors. What an interesting thing Zoom is. I always wondered where Zoom came from. Like, if it were not for the pandemic, would Zoom be as big as it is? Has Zoom always been a go-to for jobs and other video call needed settings? Back to my point, I think that the idea of Zoom made the idea of meeting with professors very accessible and doable. I do not know how the semester would have gone without having that available.

Bittersweet is a word that I would like to describe how this pandemic affected both my personal and academic life. There are so many benefits of being home, like having the opportunity to spend so much time with my loved ones, and I have the availability to continue my job back home. But I will say, I do miss all my friends from school and even seeing my professor's faces. To sum this all up, I will take time to enjoy my extended summer vacation, and I really am looking forward to what is next for me, whether it is more online college or a return to Longwood's campus. Senior year will still go on for me and for many others. My advice to the

current reader of this is to stay optimistic. Things will not always go to plan, so do your best to stay positive and hopeful.