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Covid-19 Journal

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The Global Pandemic of 2020

Joseph Kelly

It seems that every ten years or so, there's a major catastrophic event within the United States. In 2001, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania shook the U.S., permanently changing our country. In 2008, with the recession, the housing market crashed. Many families lost nearly everything. Now, in the year 2020, we have a deadly pandemic across the world. Seems like the world was overdue for its world changing event. As of May 4th, 2020, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports there's approximately 1.15 million current Covid-19 cases within the United States, along with 67,456 deaths from the virus, and that's just within the United States. As of writing, the United States is currently the worst hit, with major cities such as New York being the hardest hit. With this journal of sorts, I hope to try to shed some light on what it's like for a Longwood Student to try to deal with the sudden shift to online classes, and to reflect upon the changes that have suddenly happened upon our society. I hope that within the next half-century or so humanity as a whole will have found a quicker way to identify, investigate, and implement new ways to deal with these nasty viruses, so that we, as a species, can protect those who would otherwise needlessly die.

As a Longwood student, I can't decide how this has affected me. I personally study Computer Science and Spanish, both of which could be studied online. Most of my professors were able to move the majority of the content they would teach to an online format, allowing me, and my fellow Computer Science, or CS, students to continue to learn; and I'm thankful for this. I consider the ability to continue my education, albeit somewhat hindered, a blessing. The ability to use the internet to stay connected with professors, friends, and family has been

incredibly important in maintaining my own self-health. However, this online format makes it incredibly difficult for students who excel academically in a face-to-face classroom. Personally, reading a wall of text posted online, or in a book, is not a substitute for being able to ask questions, and potential follow up questions, in person. I'm fortunate though, as many people I know are not able to continue their classes. For example, I talked to someone who was a music major, and he had one major issue with online classes: "How do you take a piano class online when you don't own a piano?" He continued by saying that there's no way for a professor to continue to teach, assist, and correct piano playing when they can't be there in person, especially when the student doesn't own a piano of their own. I'm fortunate to be in the situation I am in, however, there are many students who are in much less fortunate situations.

On March 19th, 2020, Longwood's President Reveley announced that classes would be moved to an online format. While this caused a commotion within the student body, many understood. At the time, I personally did not worry for my own personal health, as if I do catch the virus, I will likely be able to fight it off myself. However, I greatly worry for some of my friends and family, as they could easily die if they catch the virus. I fear for my sister, who has many health problems. She with a surgery planned this May 2020 in New York City, one of the major epicenters of the virus within the United States, which hopefully goes without a hitch. I fear for my friends, many of whom have some sort of respiratory system issue, meaning that they cannot fight off the virus themselves. I fear for the students who remain in Longwood Housing, self-quarantining, unable to go home due to a higher risk of infection. I fear for those working in our health care system, sometimes working twelve to eighteen hour shifts, fighting this virus tirelessly. But for all those fears, there's something else I'm grateful for. I'm grateful

for those same healthcare workers, as without their tireless work, this pandemic surely would be much worse than it is. I'm grateful for the majority U.S. citizens, being able to pull together through this tough time, despite the idiotic protests from many to reopen closed states due to needed "hair appointments". I'm grateful for the state governors, especially Virginia's Governor, Ralph Northam, for taking a scientific approach to helping mitigate this terrible virus. There are legitimate reasons to be afraid right now, however, I believe it's more important to keep a focus on what you're grateful for in these trying times.

I don't know what the future will hold; if I did I'd be a rich man. I can only hope that with the addition of more research, and deep reflection, we can use this as an opportunity to adapt to future outbreaks, and hopefully, avoid many unnecessary deaths. To quote Mahatma Gandhi, "The future depends on what we do in the present"; I only hope we make the right choices now.