**COVID-19**

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Being at college during a pandemic is very difficult. Yes, I have done my best to stay calm and still try to have fun and make memories with my friends; but with most things being shut down or changed to accommodate Covid-19 regulations, my freshman year of college has not been the experience I envisioned. In the fall I was able to stay on campus for two weeks before I was sent to the nearby Paramount Apartments, which was storing students who contracted Covid-19. I stayed there for a week during which ECU shut down the causing me to return home to my family for the remainder of the semester, not returning to campus until the spring. In a normal year, I would have had in-person classes. Not only has my social life been impacted by the pandemic but my academic life as well; I have missed several assignments and my grades have been lower throughout these two semesters than throughout my entire school career. I know I will do better when everything gets to be back in person. Throughout the pandemic, I have come to learn that online instruction is very difficult for me, without face-to-face instruction and clear communication from an instructor it is very difficult for me to grasp concepts and keep up with my workload. I have even considered changing my major, computer science online has proven to be very difficult, and it feels as though I am only completing assignments rather than learning the concepts I would need later for my major. While I have made friends throughout the semester I still feel as though online instruction has made meeting people more difficult.

Graduating from high school during a pandemic was disappointing, to say the least. Working four years for something and looking forward to graduation, a rite of passage that most teenagers can experience then suddenly losing that is disheartening and something I have yet to fully process. In addition to missing graduation, the pandemic also stole my senior lacrosse season. Lacrosse is a very big part of my life and has given me so much, not to mention the hard work and hours I have put into the sport; the loss of my last high school season is something I will never be able to get back. On top of graduation and my final lacrosse season, the class of 2020 missed out on countless senior activities including prom, while in comparison to the trauma Covid-19 has caused this may seem minuscule for the class of 2020 these are missed opportunities to make memories we would have cherished for the rest of our lives.

Covid-19 has also affected more than just my social and academic life. I rarely get to see my grandparents now as they are in the high-risk group for contracting the virus. For me, family time is extremely important and to be cherished. I however just received my Johnson and Johnson vaccination this past week at school; so, one of the first things I plan on doing once home for the summer, is to see all my family that I have not been able to see in a while!

Shortly after receiving my Johnson and Johnson vaccination, the CDC shut down the distribution of that specific strand of the vaccine as it was causing rare blood clots in those who had received it. While I am doing fine and only experienced flu-like symptoms from the vaccination it is terrifying to know that the ‘solution’ to the pandemic that has caused so much heartache comes with a new set of issues.

In addition, my one outlet when it comes to my frustration stemming from the pandemic continues to be affected. Lacrosse is something I love and being on the club lacrosse team here at ECU has brought me so many new friends and opportunities but is still being affected by the virus. During practices we must always wear masks, it is extremely difficult to exert energy when your airways are being compromised. The team is also subject to weekly covid tests which are quite frustrating, and most days seem like a chore.

Overall Covid-19 has dramatically impacted many experiences that I would have had during the past year, which arguably may have been one of the best years of my life. I hope and pray that we are on the up come from this pandemic and that nothing like this occurs ever again.