**COVID-19**

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When the Covid-19 pandemic occurred, I was a senior in high school trying to figure out where I would spend the next four years of my life. This pandemic affected me tremendously. It took me by surprise on how quickly everything changed and how little we knew about this deadly disease. Covid-19 has affected me in several ways. It prevented me from playing my last year of baseball, attending my senior prom, having a normal high school graduation, and caused an odd first year of college. I have experienced Covid-19 firsthand and know the sacrifices one must make in order to keep others safe.

When first hearing of Covid-19, I wasn’t too worried. Initially, I had not heard of many cases in the United States. As each day went by at school, I began to hear more and more about this global pandemic. There were many rumors going around about what the schools were going to do in response to Covid-19. My whole school seemed to be puzzled. I heard bizarre talk of sending all students home, moving all classes to zoom meetings, cancelling all spring sports, and the possibility of no prom or graduation! Although no one knew what was really going on, there was one thing that was really bothering me. The thought of losing my senior season of baseball was devastating to me! I have played baseball since I was four years of age. Knowing that it could end abruptly was overwhelming. I tried not to think too much about it until I actually knew the facts. After a couple weeks of talk went by, many changes were made. All classes were moved to online and all events and spring sports, including baseball, were cancelled for the remainder of the season! This impacted my whole family because it was my senior year of baseball in high school and the end of my brother’s senior year of baseball at ECU.

The next obstacles that my classmates and I had to face was not having a senior prom or normal graduation. As the 2019-2020 school year came to an end, we had to accept that our high school graduation would be a small, limited ceremony. Since I went to school right here in Greenville, graduation was always at Minges Colosseum. This year, with Covid-19, we had graduation on our school football field. Graduation was split into two groups based on alphabetical order. Also, this year we only got two tickets to bring family members instead of ten tickets per student. Graduation didn’t feel like the exciting time that it should have since we were not even allowed to get close to friends or take pictures with several family members.

The next issue that I had to face and am still facing is my odd first year of college. In the beginning, students were not sure if they would be allowed to live in the dorms. After confirmation coming out that the dorms were available to live in for the first year, I was excited that maybe things could be going back to somewhat normal. Most of my classes where either all online or hybrid (lectures in person but all work was online) classes. After about only a week of being in the dorms, rumors began about the possibility of being sent home. After several rising cases of Covid-19 in the dorms, all students were sent home and classes were transferred to all online. This impacted thousands of students at several different colleges. After moving back home, my roommate reached out to me informing me that he had just tested positive for Covid-19. Immediately, I scheduled an appointment to get tested. After a few days went by, I had received my results. I was positive! This was a terrible feeling because I did not know how I was going to feel with this disease. I began quarantining right away. I hated not being able to be around my parents, grandparents, and many others, but I knew it was for the best. My only symptom of Covid-19 was loss of taste. I never felt tired or sick. I felt good enough to continue going on runs outside alone while having Covid-19. I was lucky. Although I was basically symptom free, I knew I had to take this disease seriously because, for others, it could be fatal. After quarantine was over, I was excited to be able to spend time with my family again.

As you can tell, Covid-19 has affected my life from the very beginning. Every day, I wish that I could go back and finish my last baseball season, have a senior prom and normal graduation, and a traditional first year of college. However, not all wishes come true. I am trying my best to follow all of the Covid-19 protocols so that things can go back to normal and other students will not have to give up what I had to. It is a crazy time right now in the world and with all of this going on I am trying my best to spread positivity. I want to lead by example.