

My Journey Through COVID-19

Never would I have thought that a deadly virus would turn into an international pandemic over the course of my freshman year. This virus is known commonly as COVID-19 and it has completely robbed millions of young adults of an invaluable piece of their social lives. I like to think back to when I used to walk to class from Jones Residence Hall, located on College Hill, and I remember watching the ecosystem of ECU flourish, ignorant to the idea that it would all come to a grinding halt.

When I first heard of COVID, My roommate at the time, Chris and I were hanging out in our dorm room on our phones and we started to see the virus gaining traction in Asia. At the time, I wasn't concerned as I related it to Ebola which had come in the years prior and it was quickly quarantined and halted. Over the next few days Chris and I started taking notice of the increasing infection rates in the U.S, more specifically the noticeable rate increase on the East Coast. This was when our concerns started to rise a bit, but it wasn't enough because Chris and I decided to take a trip to Myrtle Beach for Spring Break. When we got to our hotel, Chris started telling me that some states are restricting entry and exit due to COVID, and we started seeing all of the news about masks. This completely threw a rock in our plan while also being exhausted from the drive, eventually we concluded to get some rest and hoped we'd wake up to better news. Unfortunately, we were woken up with official news from the university that we'd

have to move out of our dorm immediately and classes were going completely online. Once we composed ourselves, we knew our trip had been spoiled and our time was better and definitely more safely spent back in Greenville where we could calmly figure out our situations.

COVID-19 ended up halting my businesses revenue at the time so I had to move in with my parents in Cary, NC and get a job at my old highschool job. This was extremely stressful by itself, with the addition of school, it made life extremely difficult. I worked long hours to save up enough money to finally be able to move back to Greenville in April of 2020. At the time, dozens of lockdown rules and restrictions were being enforced along with tons of different shortages from toilet paper to different food items. During this summer, I planned to work as much as possible in efforts to save all I could for the school year. Unfortunately my plans were once again ruined when I contracted COVID restricting me from working for 21 days. The infection created an extremely worrisome financial situation for me. This resulted in me having to get a Salesman job in Kinston having to work 60+ hours a week. This new job made me able to barely afford school but I was required to work all the time and had to take a minimal amount of classes. This continued over the course of my sophomore year and set me back immensely academically.

Now that COVID is slowing down, I am beyond thankful for the lessons I've learned. I truly believe the pandemic caused immense growth to my character. I have truly learned the value of perseverance, and have been able to integrate it into my everyday work. I have also been able to develop and follow a detailed academic plan, in

efforts of achieving all my goals as I had originally planned. As for the new Delta and Omicron Strain, I hope and pray that we're now as prepared as could be, but I know that we will be able to endure it!