**COVID-19**

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The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted our society as a whole. This virus has not only changed our perception on issues such as spread of disease, but it has also significantly affected the day-to-day lives of everyone. It has made being a first-year college student difficult, as we now have to get adjusted to a different school and harder work all while being online and no one is a fan of the changes it has brought about.

As a first-year college student, COVID-19 has made it incredibly hard for me to adjust to this next level of my education. As someone who has attention problems, being at home with hundreds of distractions is no way for me to be able to learn affectively. Personally, I need to be in a classroom setting where I can fully focus on my work. COVID has changed everything about school, as we currently must deal with remote learning due to a fear of spreading the disease among students. As a result of the virus, many people including myself, must now deal with this distance education learning, and are not handling it well. It is very difficult for me to sit down in front of a computer for hours on end and do assignments, as well as paying attention to due dates and keeping track of what I need to be doing. Even as I am writing this paper, I am stopping in the middle of my sentences to check other things and open other tabs. COVID has made school incredibly difficult for me, and my grades seem as if they are suffering from it.

Prior to having to adjust to distance education in college, COVID canceled my senior year of high school. Finishing senior year during a pandemic was a very challenging and very odd time. In my county, seniors who were passing their last semester courses were not required to partake in distance education. This meant that, without my knowledge, March 13 was my last day of high school. As much as I disliked having to sit in classrooms for hours a day, I was not ready for high school to end so suddenly. I was so excited for everything that came with the end

of my senior year: track season, counting down our last day, the senior picnic, and graduation. Sadly, none of that would happen. COVID never gave us the chance to have the excitement of ending the year with all our friends, and we’ll never get that time back, and graduation for me was disappointing to say the least. My entire life, I looked forward to the big day of graduation, being able to have that day with all my friends and being able to celebrate with my family, but it never happened. I had a drive through graduation ceremony and it just did not feel the same. The ceremony was very disappointing and not at all what I waited eighteen years for.

Finally, the worst part of COVID is that, personally, I believe it is blown way out of proportion. I fully believe that the virus is real, but I don’t believe that it is as dangerous as the media and many people are making it out to be. It should only be a genuine concern if you are someone with pre-existing health conditions that lead to a weak immune system. I personally know many people, including close friends from school, that had the virus and were perfectly fine. COVID should no longer be as large of an issue as in the past and has been perpetuated by the media as a political toy to make the Trump Administration look bad and hurt his chance of re-election. Numbers have shown that it is no more dangerous than the flu, yet we don’t shut down the country over the flu every year. I think it’s time to re-open the country and stop living in hysteria.

COVID-19 has affected the lives of everyone on the planet. It has had major impacts in learning, as most schools are forced to teach remotely. It affects students’ ability to transition int new beginnings. It took away the end of students’ senior years, never allowing us to get back the time we missed. It has negatively affected people’s mental health. The country shut down over a disease no worse than the yearly flu, and I believe that it is time for change.