

Journal Entry: May 16th, 2020

It has been almost two months since the shelter-in-place order was enacted. It feels like I'm finally adjusting to the new "normal". At the beginning, when people were just starting to talk about COVID-19, I was in my last semester at San Jose State University, working at the Spartan Recreation and Aquatic Center, interning at Healthier Kids Foundation, and working on a research project under the guidance of a faculty member. I was thrilled that in just a matter of months I would be graduating and walking the stage with my friends and peers celebrating everything that we had overcome to get our degrees.

In a matter of a couple weeks it felt like my whole life had shifted. All of a sudden, we were not allowed back on campus for classes or work and I went from seeing all my friends, peers, and coworkers every day to being socially isolated from them with the only in-person contact being with my family. Then the news came that graduation was going to be cancelled, but by that point there were already a lot of other events that had been cancelled, such as the undergraduate research grant exposition where I was going to present my poster board. At first, I was frustrated since it felt like so many things that I had been working toward were being taken away from me. I had completed two years of community college and then transferred to SJSU to finish my last two years all the while working, doing internships, and other extracurriculars like research and I felt like there were so many experiences that the last semester of college presents that I missed out on. I completely understood the necessity of sheltering in place and avoiding contact with others since the beginning of the pandemic, especially since I am majoring in Public Health, so I never questioned the measures everyone was taking to reduce the prevalence of COVID-19 but I still felt upset. Then I started feeling uneasy, since I am graduating this semester and it feels like the world has turned upside down. I was worried about job prospects after graduation, which is coming up fast, and about the future in general. There are so many unknowns and I am someone who likes to have a plan and know what is going to happen, which no one can answer since no one knows what will happen.

After the initial period of disappointment, I realized that I should be grateful for what I had and that so many other people were affected in much worse ways than I had been. I felt that I was being completely insensitive and selfish by what I was upset about. At the end of the day I still have my family and a home, and my job said they were going to pay employees up until the end of May and then try to figure out ways to open up again in accordance to guidelines. I also realized how extremely lucky and privileged I am to be able to stay at home with my family, who have jobs where they can work from home during this time, while essential workers still have to work among the chaos or others who have lost their jobs. I started to fully understand how unfair it is that essential workers are being paid so little for all they do, oftentimes without good benefits such as adequate medical coverage, while others have the opportunity to stay at home. Now I am at a place where I constantly remind myself of what I am thankful for and I try

to keep a positive attitude in regard to what will happen after graduation. This pandemic is something that everyone is going through and no one knows exactly what will happen, so it feels like I am not alone, which is comforting.