

My Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

By: Paola Santos

Journal Entry #1

February 26, 2020

I recently found out that I will be moving from San Francisco to San Jose. As an SJSU student, I have faced some challenges being a commuter student and am looking forward to living closer to campus. My new home will also be close to my health education internship. This is my last semester of undergrad as a Public Health student and I hope these changes will cut back on some of the barriers I have previously experienced. I plan on beginning my career working in Public Health within Santa Clara County and this is the best place for me to be. Although there have been reports of a new virus (Novel Coronavirus) spreading in some parts of the world, I am still hopeful for this new chapter.

Journal Entry #2

March 19, 2020

On March 9, 2020, SJSU's President Papazian announced that classes will be held online until further notice. This is for student safety and to slow the spread of COVID-19. I believe President Papazian is making the right choice to protect the community at San Jose State. I am hopeful to return to campus and be back on my regular schedule soon. For now, I am familiarizing myself with using Zoom which is the system students at San Jose State will use for online learning. I have used previously used Zoom and cannot wait to see how our professors will adjust to the changes and continue to make our classes engaging. Governor Newsom has also issued stay at home orders and social distancing guidelines. I will definitely miss seeing my family in San Francisco.

Journal Entry #3

March 23, 2020

Unfortunately, classes will remain online for the remainder of the semester and the Spring 2020 commencement ceremony has been postponed. At first, I felt saddened by this news but as a Public Health major, I completely understand and support this decision. I have also been facing a few challenges working at my health education internship. I am thankful for the opportunity to intern at an amazing hospital but have been feeling increasingly worried about my safety and health. I am still dedicated to showing up for each shift and helping patients in any way that I can.

Journal Entry #4

May 1, 2020

Today I received an email from my internship preceptor stating that my internship has been officially canceled due to the ongoing changes relating to COVID-19. My internship ended abruptly, and I did not have the chance to say my goodbyes to several co-workers. I was supposed to complete 200 internship hours and only completed 140 hours. My health education internship was a great introduction to the work I would be doing in the public health field. I am thankful for the knowledge I have gained, and the friendships I have made. I hope to apply for a position in health education after graduating.

Journal Entry #5

May 8, 2020

A few hours ago, I gave my first Zoom presentation to about 30 students interested in an internship in health education. I was nervous about experiencing technical difficulties as this was an important presentation for my final grade. My presentation went exceedingly well, and the experience has prepared me for future work from home. At times, worrying about school projects seems insignificant during a pandemic when thousands have lost their lives to COVID-19. I am thankful every day for my family's health. The best thing I can do now is stay home and continue to social distance. Wearing a mask in public at all times and being extra cautious when going to the grocery store is my new normal.

Journal Entry #6

May 12, 2020

As the semester wraps up, I have been reflecting on the past couple of months living through a pandemic. During normal times, I would be studying for finals with friends and preparing for graduation. I will not experience this the way that I had hoped. As a first-generation college student this moment would have been very special to me. My family will not get to see me walk across the stage during graduation. I will not be able to celebrate my biggest accomplishment with my loved ones. Regardless of this, I know they are incredibly proud of me.

Journal Entry #7

May 17, 2020

Going through this pandemic as a college student has made me more resilient. Concentrating on schoolwork is difficult when most of the world is just trying to survive and feed their families. This is such an important time for working in the public health field. I am ready to start working and contributing to keeping our country healthy and safe. I am optimistic that our government will coordinate an effective plan to get everyone back to work safely. Despite all the uncertainty ahead I am looking forward to what the next chapter holds.