

Spartans Speak on COVID-19

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When COVID-19 happened to the world, I happened to be in my last semester of my undergraduate career at San Jose State University. At first, I didn't expect the Corona Virus to be that serious. I thought the media was being dramatic and spreading fear into the audience. Once cities, states, and countries started going into quarantine, I soon realize how serious the virus was becoming. It still baffles me how we are in a pandemic situation right now. Never in my 28 years of life have I ever experienced a serious health issue such as COVID 19 that was killing so many people around the world.

COVID-19 has changed my life and normal routine in so many ways. I stopped having regular instruction classes on campus. This was extremely difficult for me because when we switched to remote learning on Zoom, I quickly realized how difficult it was to focus in an online class. I truly believe you need to have a serious dedication and discipline when you choose to do classes online. I was struggling to pay attention in class and often times found myself falling asleep during lecture. Even though I dragged physically going to class on campus, remote learning made me realize I am a much better learner when I am physically in a classroom and listening to a professor lecture to the students. It makes me focus more and having that interaction makes learning more fun. As far as switching to remote learning since the stay-at-home shelter took place, I truly hate it.

Not only was my academic life being affected by COVID-19, but so was my personal life as well. During this time, I have an 8-year-old daughter who was attending 2nd grade. Her life was quickly changed as well when her school started to shut down too because of COVID-19. It was difficult for her to deal with because she truly loved going to school to interact with her friends and teachers. I found myself having to do remote learning with my daughter as well

because she was also getting assignments from her teachers to complete during quarantine. At first, it was a simple packet that was supposed to last the students 3 weeks because initially, the stay-at-home order was only supposed to last from March 13th-April 4th. However, once the news from the district spread that the 2019-2020 academic year would officially not be completed physically at school, I soon found myself switching from packets to online assignments. Even though these online apps and assignments were not mandatory, I wanted my daughter to complete them so all her education and knowledge from 2nd grade does not slip her mind.

Once her schoolwork switched to online, this only got worse for the both of us. April to the present time in May was an extremely stressful time for me because all my homework assignments were back to back and never-ending. I had a major paper that was over 30 pages long, a 10 page paper for a multicultural health class, portfolios to complete for my health profession class, a case study paper in my nutrition class that was over 12 pages long, and many additional papers along the way that I honestly cannot remember at the top of my head at this point. I was extremely stressed and tried my best to complete these assignments on time. In doing so, I found myself neglecting the homework my daughter had. At first, I would remind her to complete them on her iPad without me physically being there to help her but later on, I realized it is unrealistic to expect an 8-year-old to do homework on her own without me actually supervising her. I even got a text from her principal asking if my daughter had access to resources to do these assignments because she could see my daughter wasn't completing a lot of them. After explaining my school situation about having assignments piling up and the stress of graduating this semester, she completely understood what I was going through. However, this still did not eliminate the fact that I was having "mom-guilt" for not helping my daughter as much as I could. On top of that, my daughter even noticed I could not play with her all day,

every day when we were at home because I was always in my room attending class online or had so many homework assignments to focus on.

COVID-19 has overall been hard for my mental health. I miss seeing my classmates and friends and simply hanging out with them. It has been even more difficult to come to the realization that I will not be physically graduating in a cap and gown and crossing the stage at graduation. This has affected me more and more as the original graduation date is approaching. It has made me extremely sad because it has taken me almost 10 years to finally earn my bachelor's degree. With all the struggles I have gone through in my undergraduate career, it was extremely disheartening to see that when I was finally at the finish line, a situation like the Corona Virus completely shattered my goal of physically walking the stage and having my friends and family cheer me on. Even though we have the option to participate in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021's graduation ceremony, it still doesn't feel the same compared to when you actually finish at the time you did. However, I am very thankful that President Mary Papazian has done an incredible job at making sure the Spring 2020 graduates can still have alternative ways in participating in graduation because she understood how big of an accomplishment this is to any student's life. It shows how much she cares, and she doesn't disregard any of our hard work at achieving the degrees we have worked extremely hard in.

Currently, it is May 7th, 2020. My graduation was supposed to be exactly 2 weeks from now on May 21st, 2020. The stay-at-home shelter still has not been lifted in Santa Clara County nor throughout California. It has already been extended twice and supposedly it is supposed to end on May 21st, 2020. I'm honestly not hopeful it actually will, and it makes me sad for even having that mentality. I understand it is supposed to help everyone in the long run, but I do not think people also consider what it does to a person's mental health. I can only help everyone in

the world is slowly recovering and that there is a solution/vaccine for this horrible virus sometime in the near future. I miss simple things such as going to the store without having to wear a mask or keeping 6 feet apart from other people because we need to practice social distancing. I miss simply shaking a person's hand without the fear of getting sick or vice versa. I miss going into restaurants to sit down and eat because that's when I usually catch up with my friends. I miss giving hugs to people I love. I miss going down to L.A. to visit my sister. I miss watching sports (!). I miss taking my daughter to school and seeing her interact with her friends and seeing her face light up when she sees her teachers. I miss taking her to parks so she can play on the playground. I miss sitting on the bench of a playground and watching her play. I hate the fear and judgment COVID-19 has created ever since we have been quarantined. My only hope for the future is having it go back to normal as soon as it can and maybe the world will finally see how important it is to wash your hands WITH soap from here on out, not just when we're going through a pandemic.