

Transcript of Interview with Lauren Murray by Katherine Carney

Interviewee: Lauren Murray

Interviewer: Katherine Carney

Date: 09/18/2020

Location (Interviewee): Boston, Massachusetts

Location (Interviewer):

Abstract: Lauren discusses how the pandemic has affected her university studies.

Katherine Carney 00:03

Okay, so hi.

Lauren Murray 00:06

Hi.

Katherine Carney 00:07

So, this is Katherine Carney interviewing—can you say your name?

Lauren Murray 00:12

Lauren Murray.

Katherine Carney 00:14

For—she’s a second-year student at Northeastern University. Is it okay if I record this conversation for the COVID-19 archive project?

Lauren Murray 00:23

Absolutely.

Katherine Carney 00:24

And can you state the date and time for me, please?

Lauren Murray 00:27

It is September 18, 2020 at 11am in Boston.

Katherine Carney 00:33

Wonderful. So where are you from?

Lauren Murray 00:38

I am originally from Augusta, Maine.

Katherine Carney 00:41

And where did you go when you got sent home from school?

Lauren Murray 00:45

Right back to Augusta, Maine with- to stay with my parents for a while.

Katherine Carney 00:52

How strict were the stay-at-home orders in your area?

Lauren Murray 00:56

Um, I would say they were pretty strict at first, um, our governor implemented a lot of orders that we saw, like within states that were much worse such as, like New York and Massachusetts, and it was a lot of the same stuff. But due to like how small our state is, we didn't have that many like, case numbers and stuff. So, a lot of people, especially in my area, I live in Central Maine. So, it's kind of more a conservative part of the state. A lot of people were very upset by the stay at home orders and the mask mandates. So, as we got deeper into the pandemic, I would say even around May, although like our orders didn't like, get rescinded and we still had like stay at home orders in place and mask mandates and a lot of businesses still couldn't function to full capacity, a lot of people weren't taking it as seriously. And honestly, like, whenever I would go to like Target or like the grocery store, and these were stores that you were supposed to be wearing a mask and like, the majority of people I would see while I was out and about just wouldn't.

Katherine Carney 02:18

Yeah, that's crazy. Did that make you like, stay home more? Did that make you take the orders more seriously than you would have to think?

Lauren Murray 02:27

Um, yeah, I mean, I think I took it like, more serious than a lot of people there in the first place, I think mainly because like, we saw how bad it got in Boston, and like, I have a connection to Boston. So, I was like, man, I just want to be back at school, I want to do anything to get me back to school, really, and like help protect the people around me too. Honestly, within the first probably three months of quarantine, I only went to the grocery store a couple times. But that's really it.

Katherine Carney 03:05

And how did you generally feel during this time?

Lauren Murray 03:10

Um, it was really hard. I think, coming back home from school and like being constantly surrounded like, by my best friends and stuff, and not really, not really having like, you know, like a curfew again, and stuff. Um, it was really hard coming back home because it was just like, college is just one big adjustment and then I guess coming home was another big adjustment. Doing classes online and stuff, too, was extremely difficult, and I felt way less motivated while I was at home. Mainly because like the only place to do class was really from like my bed. So, it was a little hard.

Katherine Carney 03:58

Yeah, how would you say that the online classes were compared to the in-person classes? Do you think that the switch to online learning was handled well by your university?

Lauren Murray 04:09

Um, I think they did the best that they could given the situation, but it was still pretty difficult. Like, a lot of my classes that were regularly scheduled to meet in person just went completely asynchronous when we went home. And that was a big adjustment, especially because I think I'm such like a hands-on like, have to see it like, in person to like kind of understand, like, what I'm learning, um, it was really hard and, I mean, I ended up taking classes throughout the summer to stay on track and I think by the time summer classes came around, I was a little more adapted to the style of online class, but, um, it was really hard at first. I think a lot of the teachers that I had, I mean, I don't want to sound like mean in a sense, but a lot of them didn't really use technology in the classroom or anything. So, I don't know if they had a lot of prior knowledge and having to teach a whole course online, especially into finals was, I think, challenging for them, too. So, I think everyone kind of tried to do the best that they could do.

Katherine Carney 05:26

Yeah, it was definitely a big transition for everyone. So, you said you took online classes this summer? What else did you do this summer and how would you say it was different from previous summers?

Lauren Murray 05:37

I only took online classes this summer. Like I really didn't leave my house. I was, um, I took one class in summer one and two classes in summer two, so I was pretty busy with that, and I think it was a lot different from previous summers, because I took kind of quarantine as like a, oh, like, since there's nothing else I can really do, like, I'll just do schoolwork when, like, ever since I was 15 I've worked a full-time job throughout the summer like, throughout high school and everything. So being at home alone, just head in the books this summer was a lot different from being able to socialize with coworkers and, you know, work an actual job.

Katherine Carney 06:28

Yeah, definitely. Did this make you become more worried or anxious? How did this impact your mental health?

Lauren Murray 06:35

Um, I think it was really hard on my mental health and stuff, and I think that was kind of like a resounding answer from a lot of people during quarantine because having that like, isolation time kind of, I don't want to say exposes these issues, but like, brings them to like a better light of how we like, handle stress and how we handle anxiety and stuff. So, um, I would say, it definitely got worse. But like, since coming back to school and stuff, it started to get better, which is good.

Katherine Carney 07:14

So, um, what made you decide to go back to school this semester?

Lauren Murray 07:20

I, I knew that Northeastern had a solid coming back plan and compared to, I think, most of the Boston schools around us, they probably have the strictest protocols and testing system and the fact that we have a regulated 20 or not 24/7, but pretty open testing center on campus that's free for all students, I think that's really important and that kind of eased my mind of coming back to school because I knew that they were going to try to make it the safest place that we could come back to. And I just kind of wanted

to get back to normalcy, with my friends who I also knew were taking the pandemic seriously, and I think when it comes down to it, it was kind of about my mental health and like getting back into a healthier place. So, it's good to be back.

Katherine Carney 08:29

Yeah, great answer. So, we only have a few seconds left. So, I'll leave you with one final question. In a couple sentences. How do you feel that the pandemic has changed you or do you feel like it's changed you at all?

Lauren Murray 08:45

Yeah, I think I'm definitely more self-aware. I think I'm definitely more left leaning in my politics now. Um, I think, I think it's changed all of us and maybe some good, some for the bad. But overall, yeah, I think the change was inevitable, but it's what we do with it now. So, thank you for interviewing me.

Katherine Carney 9:15

Yeah. Thank you for your answers. It was a wonderful opportunity. All right. Have a nice day!

Lauren Murray 09:22

You too. Thank you.