

Transcript of Anonymous Oral History

Interviewee: Anonymous

Interviewer: Corryn McPherson

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Abstract: Anonymous student from University of Buffalo [UB] discusses thoughts on how COVID was handled at UB, vaccines, family life, living on campus, and gives future recommendations on how UB could handle another pandemic.

Corryn McPherson 00:00

Would you like to remain anonymous?

Anonymous 00:01

Yes, I do.

Corryn McPherson 00:02

Well, how old were you when COVID took place?

Anonymous 00:05

I was 18 years old.

Corryn McPherson 00:08

And what year college were you in?

Anonymous 00:09

I was a freshman at the University of Buffalo.

Corryn McPherson 00:13

Okay, and what? What ethnicity? Are you?

Anonymous 00:15

I'm Hispanic.

Corryn McPherson 00:19

Okay, so where were you when it first started? Were you in school? Were you home?

Anonymous 00:23

I was on school at [unknown word] on campus.

Corryn McPherson 00:26

Okay, why didn't you go home?

Anonymous 00:29

Why didn't I go home?

Corryn McPherson 00:30

Yeah.

Anonymous 00:30

Because I felt that I lived too far away. So commuting all the way back there would have been too much hectic.

Corryn McPherson 00:37

So what was it like living on campus in the dorms during COVID? When it first started.

Anonymous 00:45

Pretty much there was nobody really there besides me and my friends. So the building was not very occupied. Living in there was very tough in terms of schoolwork, because I'm so used to going on campus and trying to answer you know, get my questions answered and stuff like that. But the whole transition had to limit how I operated.

Corryn McPherson 01:08

So what was it like in the food courts? Like in SU? Was it harder to obtain food? Did you have the Biden technology? Because you had to go online? Did you depend on the school for technology?

Anonymous 01:20

So the school only offered one service of food at the time, and it was only selected times that you could go get it. And which was normally no good. So I wouldn't normally order food around, which would be very costly.

Corryn McPherson 01:36

Okay, so did you have to buy any new technology?

Anonymous 01:40

No, they also provided laptops for any students that were still on the [unknown word].

Corryn McPherson 01:45

Was there a deadline for it, or you had just had to give it back during that semester?

Anonymous 01:49

You just had to hand it back before this semester.

Corryn McPherson 01:52

So what was your income? Like during COVID? Did you have... even though you're a freshman, you just came here? I'm sure you didn't work but did like your financing, like finances? Like get worse? Did you have to I know you said you had to get food off the campus because the food on campus was only one source. What was that like?

Anonymous 02:08

Well, they also offered us a meal plan with additional dining dollars for the inconvenience of everything. So in terms of needing money for food, I was okay for the most part. But in terms of back home, everything was kind of slow because of you know, living in jobs people having to take off and stuff like that

Corryn McPherson 02:31

Did the COVID affect your family negatively?

Anonymous 02:33

Um, yeah, my mom had was working at a hospital in which she and other employees had to lay off for a couple of weeks. So that kind of played a big toll.

Corryn McPherson 02:44

Did anyone in your family like die of COVID? Or get COVID?

Anonymous 02:48

Oh, no, not that I know.

Corryn McPherson 02:50

So what was it like sitting home, well not sitting home sitting in your dorm doing Blackboard online? And just you know, because I know sometimes a video recorded during the test and we had to have technology and stuff like that. Was that an inconvenience for you? Like, what was that like learning online?

Anonymous 03:08

It was so much of a difference, because now I'm sitting down for like, a couple of hours a day. And you know, the teacher has had to alter how they teaching, so delayed a whole bunch of work and require you to learn more independently. So it was kind of Yes. A big inconvenience for me, in terms of learning.

Corryn McPherson 03:28

So how did you be restrictions with COVID effects you? Did they have curfews were you? Did you have to wear a mask all the time? Was there a certain time you like weren't allowed to go places? Was everything close? Like? Do you think you be recovered from COVID?

Anonymous 03:45

In the beginning, yeah, it was kind of very, took a lot of precautions. You had to wear a mask everywhere. When it first started libraries and stuff wasn't open at the time. But over the course they've gotten better I feel as and recovered in terms of only limited to wearing a mask and all the resources were still available and then now you know, it's lifted so you can walk freely or wear masks of your choice.

Corryn McPherson 04:14

What do you do?

Anonymous 04:17

I still wear a mask of my choice.

Corryn McPherson 04:20

Okay, and can I ask why?

Anonymous 04:22

I just feel like I just want to keep my precaution, safety for my safety.

Corryn McPherson 04:30

Okay, in that, do other people make you feel uncomfortable when you do that? Do people ask you why you still wear your masks?

Anonymous 04:37

No, because everybody still respects you know, everybody knows that people still respect their safety and their stuff. But I wear a mask because you know, I'm just hearing a lot of theories and I just want to prevent it from getting sick because you know it is a very crucial time in the semester. So

Corryn McPherson 04:53

okay, what's... How did COVID negatively affect you as a minority? If it did it or if it did not, you can say some negatives, you might not have none. And then we can jump to positives.

Anonymous 05:05

It eliminated me from seeing my friends and being able to connect with different people because of having to be distance.

Corryn McPherson 05:16

Okay, what was some of the positives that came from COVID? If there was any?

Anonymous 05:22

For me, I had a lot of alone time, which allowed me to develop better habits personally and academically. So that was really my positive outcome.

Corryn McPherson 05:36

Did it affect your income positively? When COVID hit? Like? Did you benefit from the checks that students were getting? If you qualified?

Anonymous 05:44

Um, yeah, I was getting a substantial refund checks that I would often use here and there.

Corryn McPherson 05:51

what did you use them if I can ask?

Anonymous 05:53

For academic supplies, and you know, just for food or anything. You know, just in case?

Corryn McPherson 05:59

Yeah. So it was just basically money you put in your savings, and if you needed to cover the cost of getting the food off campus, and supplies and stuff like that.

Anonymous 06:09

Correct.

Corryn McPherson 06:09

So you don't think COVID affected your learning in any type of way.

Anonymous 06:15

I would say it delayed my learning, because like I said, for a substantial amount of time, I had to alternative to being only online base, which can be very distracting considering your at home. And sometimes if you have a roommate, you can get distracted or lazy or forget, obviously, it was all bunch of stuff. But

Corryn McPherson 06:35

Did you lose lack of motivation due to COVID? And if you did lose it, did it affect you negatively and have you recovered?

Anonymous 06:45

It did affect me, in terms of I was less motivated, because I would sometimes oversleep or just stare at the computer for so long would irritate me. So I definitely did recover now that they did offered some classes in the beginning to be open. And then until they lifted it were all classes, you can go with mask or just in person, but yeah.

Corryn McPherson 07:11

where your professors lenient during COVID. Because I know like a lot of people, especially students, there was a lot of people getting depressed and losing lack of, you know, motivation. Did you get depressed? Was it like a hard time for you being that we were not forced to go to school, but we had to go to school, and continue to learn, you know what I mean, while people were dying, and the world was like, on fire in the background?

Anonymous 07:35

Yes, I was very devastated due to the fact.

Corryn McPherson 07:41

Why were you devastated?

Anonymous 07:43

I was devastated because COVID had affected many lives of people that I know. So seeing, you know, people have to choose to still attend school, a lot of their families were in need, and, you know, not able to do stuff on their own due to COVID. So I felt as, health was first priority, and then academics at the moment.

Corryn McPherson 08:06

Do you think that the school and the professors were lenient and understood, we're going through hard times?

Anonymous 08:12

Yeah. Because in majority of my classes, they were allowed us to turn in work late or have, you know, extensions on many words, and stuff like that, due to the inconvenience, because I noticed a lot of technical issues and stuff like that.

Corryn McPherson 08:29

So what was COVID like back home where you're from, like, if you can say, like?

Anonymous 08:35

so back home, like many stores was closed, and you know, that limited a lot of people from doing stuff. I know, a lot of people around that area was it was high in COVID cases. So, you know, having precautions was very on top tier over there so.

Corryn McPherson 08:56

Okay, was... Did your parents not have work? Were they able to be where they supported like financially? Or?

Anonymous 09:04

Um, yeah, like I said, at first, my mom was, like, temporarily had to step away from the workforce. And when she received like, you know, still checks and stuff from the inconvenience, but eventually they allowed her to come back and many other people who worked in the hospital needs as long as you had a COVID shot.

Corryn McPherson 09:23

So did the negative effects at home affect you here when you were at UB? Or were you just were you worried at all?

Anonymous 09:30

Yes I was very concerned because at the end of the day, it's my family. So if anything, any of one of my primary family had caught COVID That would affected how we operate as a family and you know, work and siblings and etc. So

Corryn McPherson 09:45

what did you think what do you think you be or its staff could have did as a whole to make this a smoother like transition through this hard time because you know, you And when it first started, you never knew if it was overdoing it or not doing enough until we were at the end of it.

Anonymous 10:08

I feel as personally UB could have maybe did something where they could have allowed or not counted the grades that was still have to be submitted that semester. Because I know a lot of people still, even

though it was very inconvenient, don't have to turn in work goes to have to get a good grade and take tests and stuff. So I felt that as curving grades was a big thing for a lot of people wasn't really focus and it was so much going on. So I just felt like they shouldn't have could have been considered.

Corryn McPherson 10:43

What was one of the positive things that UB did.

Anonymous 10:48

They was very financially there. Like I said they would give us emergency funding and allow us to have free printing and free transportation and free stuff like that. So I guess they really did a lot.

Corryn McPherson 11:05

Do you think it was fair that you'd be made the vaccinations mandatory? And think about like religious reasons? And did it negatively affect you? Were you against it.

Anonymous 11:14

I think very wrong for up to require students to get a boosters because I know many people have different religious beliefs and stuff. And UB was very strict on that. So it kind of made many students have to decide whether they was going to go to school or stay because they was getting dropped out of all classes. So I felt that they could have been very strict on like the in person tactics such as enforcing masks, hand sanitizer, wiping down and allowing students to get vaccinated or keep on doing weekly COVID tests. But I don't feel as as a whole, everyone should have did it. Negatively, I felt like I was effected also, because I felt like I was one of the students put in a situation where I needed to get the vaccine to attend classes, or I was going to stay home in school and just waste a whole semester.

Corryn McPherson 12:11

Do you think the students who did not get the vaccine should be compensated for missing the semester and missing out on school? Because some people can't go home? Because they don't have a home to go to? You know what I mean?

Anonymous 12:25

No know, because, as you said, many people wouldn't have anything to do, especially for students like myself last on off campus housing, and you're paying rent every month to not be able to attend school anymore would have been like a waste of time and a waste of money. So I've personally felt like that wouldn't be smart.

Corryn McPherson 12:45

So, moving forward. If this did happen again, what do you think UB should do to jump ahead of it, that would be effective.

Anonymous 12:52

I feel like they should now that vaccines are in use, I feel like they should offer a both online and, you know, in person classes due to the fact that many kids came from far distance. And we're dorming and living off campus here. So now that we feel a little bit more safer with the vaccines and the boosters and, and wearing masks to be even more precautions, we would still like to attend school and still be able to get equal learning distance. But for some of those who want to stay very, like sanitized and stuff, they can also have the option of learning from home and still be able to be on pace with school.

Corryn McPherson 13:34

So you don't think that they should send students home early, you just think that they should give them by getting ahead of it. They should give them the choice if they want to stay home or attend class.

Anonymous 13:44

Yes, I felt like if they will let students know that ahead of time that can be convenient for many students have they wanted to go back home they can make arrangements or if they wanted to stay they can know like to sign up for classes or, you know, to let their professor know that they want to do it in person instead of online. So I feel like that would be smart.

Corryn McPherson 14:08

What do you think the University of Buffalo should do? Well not do excuse me.

Anonymous 14:11

I believe the university shouldn't wait too long to send out reminders on whether students want to take the courses virtually or physically. And I also feel like they should not enforce any of the vaccinations or any other booster shots if someone doesn't want to.

Corryn McPherson 14:34

What should they do?

Anonymous 14:35

I believe they should be ahead on scheduling separate seedings within the six distance or I also felt like they should cut down lines and other food courses over here so that way students are not on top of each other and hovering over each other in the food centers. I feel like they should put dividers up on in the libraries as well just in case people still want to go there

Corryn McPherson 15:03

Okay thank you.