

## The Difficulties of a College Student During a Pandemic

During the start of the school semester of spring 2020, talks of a very contagious illness started to spread. Most students on campus believed COVID-19 to be a threat but one month later, all colleges across the world shut down.

While moving out, my friend's dad said we would be back that same semester. I believed him until infection rates increased across the United States. States started to shut down including the one I lived in. Restrictions, isolation, and guidelines were enforced to ensure public safety. Instead, thousands of people went into depression including me.

Not being able to leave my house during the pandemic was difficult. Not only was I hundreds of miles away from my friends at school, but I couldn't see my friends at home too. My experience with online class didn't make interacting with people any easier. Most of my classes didn't require the camera to be on, while the other class didn't even meet online. This was very difficult for me because I was used to being around friends everyday. I started to become depressed as I spent 2 months without interacting with anyone but my family and my teacher. Fortunately, restrictions eased up as the spring semester came to a close. I was able to get a job at a donation center for the summer. I still wasn't allowed to see my friends which made for a disappointing summer but working helped the time go by. When it was time to go back to college, I was relieved. My college was fortunate enough to have students on campus for the fall 2020 semester. I was overly excited to see any friends after months. I counted down the days until we moved in. But I knew the semester would be different.

When arriving on campus, I learned that several rules and regulations were implemented to "keep the community safe." Some of these included no visiting anyone's dorm room, scheduling when to eat, certain doors were entrances while others were exits, no guests from off campus, must wear a green bracelet at all times, must get randomly tested, etc. I made sure to read the rules and regulations but unfortunately, my roommates didn't.

The very first night on campus, my roommates decided to have friends over. I told my roommates that it wasn't allowed but it did not matter. The guests stayed until there was banging at the door. The Resident Assistant working that night wrote us up, and we had to meet with the Dean. While meeting with the Dean, I explained how it was not my fault and I was against having guests over, but I was charged with a \$200 fine. Completely upset, I change all my classes to online classes and moved back home. I did not trust my roommates enough to stay. The last thing I wanted was several fines that weren't my fault.

When I got home, I was really depressed. I was the only one home out of all my friends and I was back to remote learning. I couldn't see anyone while home and I felt betrayed by my roommates. I felt like my life was crumbling as another semester of my college experience was being wasted. This caused me to have a mental breakdown, and lose all motivation to do work. Four months passed by slowly and I escaped the semester with mediocre grades and a crippling mind. Fortunately, my parents noticed I was not in the best shape of mind.

They had me see a therapist and find new activities to do during the pandemic. This got me back on my feet and my friends from home started returning from school. The gap between semesters when well and I was joyful again. However, it was time to decide if I wanted to return to campus for the 2021 Spring Semester. I was torn because some of my friends were staying home that semester and I still did not trust my roommates. I thought rationally and contacted them to see our their semester went. To my surprise, they received 4 fines and one of them had to quarantine. This gave me reassurance that I made the right choice on leaving campus during the fall semester. Currently I am taking the 2021 Spring Semester all remotely and I am happy. I am seeing friends and have synchronous classes. I am confident that I will keep seeing my friends at home and keep a good mindset throughout the semester. I wish for everyone to stay strong during the pandemic and seek help if you're depressed.