The Unfolding of COVID-19

In January and December, I remember hearing news about a virus in China. At that point, however, I ignored the news and prepared to go back to school assuming a normal semester. I packed my things and flew to the east coast, excited about my classes.

One day, I was walking down to get my haircut and I listened to a new podcast episode on the coronavirus. The moderator was explaining the horrible situation and cover up in China; he argued that the virus would inevitably become a global pandemic. I wrongly shrugged at his claim, assuming he was just another alarmist.

The coverage of the virus amplified: Korea, Italy, Spain, English, and finally the United States in my home state of Washington. I remember my conservative relatives texted my mom saying, “this seems more like a blue state problem, not a red state one.”

My parents began talking about avoiding restaurants and predicted schools would be cancelled. Echoing this message, the professor I TAed for discussed plans if the school went online for the remaining part of the spring. Then, after our spring training trip was cancelled due to rising case counts, we eventually were forced to leave campus.

I flew home. I did not wear a mask, which in hindsight was poor judgment. As I tried to avoid my fellow travelers, the plane was virtually empty. I had never experienced a scenario so peculiar in all of my years of flyers.

After arriving home, I continued my coursework virtually. In addition to my coursework, my position as a TA become more complicated. I had to coordinate with students in different time zones and countries to finish their schoolwork. Clearly, universities here were not designed to move online.

On top of the stress of school, I became increasingly more frustrated with the inaction from the federal government. Cases kept, and keep, going higher. People walk around without masks. However, there is hope of a vaccine by late this Fall. Hopefully, things will become more normal by then.