



Telling Our Stories: Western's Response to COVID-19

Story ID: 25

Story date	Tuesday, October 13, 2020
Name	Arick Grootveld
Affiliation	Student;Staff; Research Assistant, Assistant Computer Programmer at Restek, and Senior in EE department

Story contribution

Online classes have been both better and worse than traditional classes. I enjoy being able to watch the recordings of lectures whenever I want, so I can review the content that I might have missed during a lecture, or skip a lecture for a research meeting and not feel behind. I also like the freedom of being able to decide my schedule, as many of my classes do not require me to do something at a set time, unlike in previous quarters, when I had designated lab times I needed to be there for, homework had to be turned in right before class, etc. I really really miss seeing and talking to my fellow classmates though, the worst part of the whole experience is feeling so isolated all the time. A lot of the inside jokes and fun things I used to be able to do with my classmates are gone, since telecommunication has certain limitations and problems.

I think the pandemic has made me more effective at leveraging online tools and resources to do my work. I've gotten pretty good at executing matlab and python scripts remotely via ssh, on the research computers my professor has provided me. I've learned a lot about Overleaf and Google Docs, since I've been using them for collaboration a lot more recently. At work we've put a lot more focus in learning API's for stuff like Teams, Slack, and Youtrack, since those are common ways that communications come through. For school, we've been allowed back on campus sparingly to do in person labs and to access tools. Most of the engineers have found ways to survive this, and some of us have even created our own tools to make things slightly easier, but I for one miss having a lab space available where everyone would be working on projects and devices, because it was wonderful to learn about what other people were working on. Either way, we'll continue to survive this, and maybe some good innovations will come out of our engineering department because of it.