



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

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Story contribution

At the beginning of 2020 COVID-19 didn't seem real, or more like it was something that was happening to other states but not Washington, and Bellingham felt like a bubble separate and safe from what was happening in the world around it. During spring break, I made the decision to stay at home and not come back to campus, not wanting to be isolated from everyone around me. It was hard to clean out and pack up my dorm and take it all home. To give up that bit of independence that comes with being away from home. I suppose I am lucky to have had at least that little bit of independence, unlike the kids who graduated online and transitioned to college online, but mostly I just feel bitter about missing out on that opportunity to grow. My first quarter online was a nightmare. I had no set schedule and got into the habit of waiting til Sunday to finish all my schoolwork and assignments, mostly because I knew I could get away with it. I hated that I did that, but it was like an addiction, doing school work didn't feel like a distraction from what was going on; not being able to see friends, stuck in a house with 5 adults, everything else going on in the world. I just wanted to escape, and so, I did. I passed all of my classes that quarter, but I didn't feel any better for it or accomplished, I just felt a little numb. I worked as a nanny for my cousins that summer which helped motivate me, Lily and Henry are good kids. I took up crocheting as a hobby, which helped me feel better about the time I had on my hands. I watched movies, series, and crocheted, feeling like I was actually doing something. I took them to the zoo a couple of times, and swimming at Lake Washington. I never felt like a better cousin than then, and after when I took them out for slurpee's at 7-11. Giving them fond memories like that made me feel better and more whole. No matter the bruises and scratches I got from them using me as a diving board. I miss in person classes, being able to be in an environment that encourages learning, being surrounded by people who are there because they want to learn. I have a study space in my home where I have access to the materials I need and still have it a bit separate from my daily life around the household. I am very grateful for it, but it's hard to learn. To separate each day from the next. I have trouble remembering the day of the week beyond what days I zoom and the days that I don't. It all just... blurs together. I am in the same room each day doing the same work, it's hard to separate and keep track of different schoolwork because it all turns into a chunk of time where I'm just taking notes and trying to focus on what is due next. All classes are schoolwork, there's no separation between lectures in class and readings or assignments done outside it, because it is all the same. I miss that simple separation. Being able to easily define what is in class and out of class. It is harder to make that distinction now. My family talks about how impressed they are that I have been able to do this, to keep up with classes and study and do it all online. My parents and siblings claim they would never have been able to. I wasn't able to either at first, I learned how to be better at it though. It doesn't feel very special, I'm just tired. I hope that this isn't the norm for the future because it's so hard. At home it's hard to reach out, meet people from classes, get to know professors. Nothing seems totally real when only learned through the computer. I feel as though I'm a sponge, soaking up the knowledge. And then as soon as a quarter is over, I am wrung dry so I can do it again for the next.

End of contributed text from Story ID: 45 - Anonymous