



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

Story ID: 56

Source: "Telling Our Stories: Western's Response to COVID-19," a project initiated at Western Washington University by Western Libraries Heritage Resources division. Originally published online at: <https://mabel.wvu.edu/islandora/object/wvu:37686>

Story date 03/16/2021

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Story contribution

My COVID experience has been very up and down from the start of the pandemic. In the beginning it seemed like a beneficial short break, as rules were being enforced, Winter quarter finals were coming up. Then once the pandemic got more intense, I found myself stuck at home for the next six months, looking for a job in a destroyed economy, and missing out on face to face learning. The social distancing/quarantine part of COVID is probably the most frustrating part of the pandemic, not being able to visit family and friends, being in only online classes. For the first couple months being back home I was in quarantine and was only able to see my immediate family. Once I was able to see my friends and family in small gatherings, I finally was able to leave my house and somewhat enjoy the rest of my summer. The first quarter of online classes wasn't too bad, I took three classes and the teaching was alright, but I found myself struggling to connect with my Computer Science (CSCI) class because I usually struggle in the beginning of my CSCI labs but I usually get a lot of help in labs either from the TA or one of my classmates. But the way our labs were set up, I couldn't really connect with any of my classmates, and because everyone else seemed to instantly understand the assignments, I would always hesitate to ask the TA. After the first quarter of online learning, I spent the summer still looking for a job, and did not see myself successful after the 6 months. But I was able to work on my Design portfolio, creating logos for my uncle's company, created a mural for one of the King County bus stops, and some other freelance design work. So my summer wasn't completely ruined by COVID because it allowed me to practice my craft and network whenever I was able to leave the house. I believe the pandemic was not handled well at the executive level, I believe with the proper preparation, the initial impact of the virus would've been much less severe. But considering that nothing like this has ever occurred, I believe that Western has done well in most areas adjusting to the pandemic. The classes online, while they aren't as effective as in person courses, have been working so far. But I have been looking to join the Design department, and from what I have been told, the department is only accepting a fraction of the normal amount of applicants in hopes to allow the current majors to graduate in time. But where does that leave me after 3 years of completing GURs and prerequisites for my major that I have been looking to join since I was a kid? I'm now very unsure of my future because of COVID and its effect on my ability to attain a job and now my major. While staying in the house for 2 months was an extremely challenging time, I'd say the struggle to keep working on my portfolio with a low chance of getting into my major has been the most challenging. And the most rewarding part of this experience would be the times that I was able to see my family and friends because it was never taken for granted.

End of contributed text from Jaivier