

COVID-19 Reflection

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On March 10th 2020, students, faculty and staff received an email notification that per the instructions of public health officials, school would continue being conducted through remote learning, as COVID-19 posed a threat to the health of the campus community. Additionally, UCLA announced that in person classes would resume one month later. However, little did we know that this alarming email would serve as a hint of foreshadowing in what was yet to come. Although we all knew that COVID-19 was a global pandemic that was on everyone's radar, this email confirmed the significance the virus carried in that it had the ability to cancel in person learning throughout the world and almost everything else that was part of a daily routine. Shortly after, due to the rapid spread of the disease, stores, businesses and places of leisure around the community began to close their doors, too. This unprecedented shift and alteration of everyday life forever changed the landscape and mindset of how we socialize, interact, and function with one another. Never did we think every human would encounter a common enemy like this in our lifetime. Today, COVID-19 has inflicted a number of ramifications to my life and all of mankind including a weakened economy, an inconvenient education, and most importantly a deprivation on my social life.

On a larger scale, the rapid spread of COVID-19 has greatly impacted the economy as an obligatory lockdown has required stores and businesses to close down. Shutting down businesses had a domino effect of creating a dramatic decline in revenue, a groundbreaking amount of job loss, and moreover caused an inability for individuals to support themselves and their families. Furthermore, a vast amount of business owners are unable to keep their employees on payroll, leaving many Americans with no income. As a result of job loss, there is a lack of money circulating throughout the economy. Many chain businesses across my community that I have

grown up with have either declared for bankruptcy or gone out of business, such as Souplantation, JCPenney and Neiman Marcus. Furthermore, because COVID-19 is a pandemic, businesses that involve importation from other countries such as China have additionally slowed down, as not only America, but countries worldwide are experiencing lockdowns as well. Almost every sector felt a shock wave of loss, including airlines and the stock market. It is difficult to see that the United States, the most powerful country in the world, is plummeting before our eyes.

Furthermore, on a personal level, my family is one of many families that has been impacted by the virus, as the stable income we once had declined a bit. I myself am no longer able to carry out my part time tutoring job. As a college student, it is difficult to find internships and a summer job simply because life is on hold for everyone with a downturn in the workforce. The decline in the economy is making it difficult for college students to job hunt and essentially begin a career, which would lead to a bright future. The downside to this is that we do not know when the crisis is going to end and when it does, it is certainly going to take time and energy in order to resume where we left off. Ultimately, the virus has left an immediate impact on the world economy and will gradually see an incline given there will not be another wave after the current one we are experiencing.

The dramatic economic decline is inextricably linked to the world of politics. In addition to economic ramifications, this global pandemic has had dramatic effects on politics as well. Political figures such as President Trump, have been denounced for the way in which they are controlling the spread of the disease and for the decisions they are making during the crisis. In turn, this affects the way political figures are seen through the public eye. Furthermore, United

States citizens criticize the President for the economic downfall of the nation, potentially lowering his chances of being reelected in 2020. The coronavirus has additionally affected presidential campaigns as attention has primarily been focused on fundamental challenges they are facing, including how to support a family or cope with the disease. Overall, the pandemic has casted a shadow over the 2020 presidential election and the body politics of the United States on a wider level.

The Covid crisis has furthermore affected the way in which students learn and professors instruct. As a history major, a majority of my courses are capable of being taught remotely, however, there are a number of other courses with specialized needs which cannot simply be digitally transferred through video communication. For example, I am enrolled in an ethnomusicology class which introduces the art of Persian culture through songs and ethnic instruments such as the tombak, a Persian drum. When practicing music it is difficult to properly catch the beat and rhythm of instruments and songs, as there are glitches in noise transmission. As a result, through great effort, my instructor thought of alternative and effective ways of teaching such as sharing recorded videos of himself singing and playing the instruments. It is evident that there are flaws in the transition to virtual learning as students are incapable of singing in cohesion, are continuously disconnected from the internet and experience glitches in the midst of instruction. Nevertheless, although it is certainly difficult to acquire the learning experience that was originally intended at the start of the quarter, the determination of UCLA instructors and the hard work of students, mitigate the negative impacts of virtual learning, striving to make it as effective as in person learning.

On a larger scale, the decision to close schools has additionally affected the lives of many parents and kids across the community, country and world. This means that during the pandemic parents are responsible for making sure their young children gain the education and skills they would have otherwise been receiving in school. On top of the pressure of needing to provide and support a family during a world crisis, parents are also in charge of making sure their kids receive a proper education. The deprivation of resources, test taking skills and student teacher interaction will potentially pose long term effects on students. Not only do kids worldwide lack a successful education during this time, yet also shortfall the need for play and the necessary social skills that come with communicating with their peers, creating potential consequences on a child's physical and mental health.

In response to COVID-19, individuals have been instructed to abide by Stay At Home orders, causing many to be deprived of social interaction. It has been about two months since Los Angeles County has been instructed to stay at home and it is certain to say that being stuck in a confined space is damaging to one's state of mind. The inability for social activity and interaction has set grounds for mental side effects. I can personally attest to this, as everyday is a rollercoaster. I wake up one day full of energy, determined to get my schoolwork done and go on walks; whereas the next day I wake up unmotivated, anxious and stressed as there is no alteration in my everyday routine. It is confining and exhausting to study and write papers from a corner of my room. It is evident that social activity is necessary for one to stay sane, function properly and carry on with one's life.

Furthermore, during these uncertain times, self-care must be practiced in order to cope with the crisis and maintain a healthy state of mind. Being deviated from my normal daily

activities such as walking to classes, grabbing lunch and socializing with friends has taken a heavy toll on my state of mind. In order to lift my spirits during this dark time, I put in a tremendous amount of effort in performing stress reducing meditation and going on walks with my friends, of course following the social distancing guidelines of walking six feet apart while also wearing a mask.

It is not the first time our world has come face to face with a life threatening virus. As I am learning in History 129A, when Columbus and other Europeans colonized the Caribbean, they brought all sorts of diseases with them such as measles, smallpox and influenza. These illnesses nearly wiped out the entire indigenous population in the Caribbean, as the native people were not immune to the virus that the Europeans had already built an immunity to. By 1517, in Hispaniola alone, out of a population of approximately 250,000 people, an astonishing 236,000 lives were lost due to the viruses, and the mortality rate was only on the rise (Prescott).

According to Yale Medicine, as of May 15th, 2020, there were four million confirmed cases of the coronavirus while the worldwide death rate marked around 300,000 individuals (Katella).

Living in the twenty-first century, we are fortunate enough to be medically advanced in order to understand the disease, be aware of the symptoms, take appropriate measures in preventing the spread and ultimately find a solution. Unfortunately, the native people did not have access to medical technology nor did they have the knowledge to properly prevent and treat the disease. Therefore, they suffered a greater percentage in population loss.

The nature of the world soon to be aborning from this experience will be unlike the way we left it. Even when the vaccination for the coronavirus is found and the stay at home orders are lifted, individuals will suffer from PTSD brought upon by the virus. The hardship and trauma

that is encountered during this time period has a great possibility of being catalyzed even after the pandemic. Additionally, it is highly likely that community members will still be paranoid to be in crowded areas as the fear of catching the infectious disease is deeply rooted in their minds.

When putting aside the immediate economic, educational, and social impacts of the virus, we must additionally consider that there is indubitably a silver lining to it all, unification. What COVID-19 means to me is unity; knowing that people of all religions, races, and genders are united in sharing a common goal of fighting an invisible enemy. Individuals sympathize with one another as they are all suffering identical life challenges. Furthermore, a new type of love and appreciation is communicated throughout communities, especially to the frontline health workers who have their lives on the line in order to treat the ill. Suddenly, the world is becoming less selfish, as there is an increase in the desire to help those who have been majorly affected by the virus through donations and the creations of new nonprofit organizations.

Not only are individuals across the globe more united, but families are able to spend a greater amount of quality time with one another, and show family members a new sense of attentiveness. Although this is a difficult time for all, there is comfort in knowing that the world is unified and supporting one another every step of the way. This virus made me forever grateful for the small pleasures in life such as walking around the UCLA campus, grabbing lunch with friends and the gratification that comes with hugging my loved ones.

Bibliography

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