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Covid-19 Reflection

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*My Reflection on the Worldwide Pandemic, Covid-19*

Starting around February of the year 2020, I began to hear about this virus that was commonly being referred to as the “CoronaVirus” that originated from China, and people had all kinds of stories as to how it began. There were hundreds of different theories of why it began, from people eating contaminated food, all the way to the governments of the world creating the virus to wipe out part of the population. However, I had no real response initially, I figured it was similar to the swine flu a few years ago, that it was nothing that I should seriously be worried about and that it would all blow over in just a few months. In the meantime life did not change at all for me or the people around me, everyone still went to class, went to the grocery store and followed our daily routines as if everything going on was completely normal. I personally just figured it was the media and people freaking out over a minor wave of sickness, that these people were just being hypersensitive and that there's no way this could go on for more than a few months. For the following weeks, everybody was making jokes about the virus almost mocking it as if there was no possible way it could have an effect on them, playing it off like it was not a serious problem. Little did we know that shortly after we would all be on quarantine, stuck at home due to the stay at home orders from the Government.

On March 11, my roommates and I were going about our day normally, everybody was done with their day of classes and practice just hanging out in our living room. We were all gathered on the couch getting ready to watch Zion Williamson and the New Orleans Pelicans take on the Sacramento Kings, my friend Bobby was wearing his Zion jersey very excited to watch his favorite player play since it was one of his first few games in the NBA. Seemingly out of nowhere there was an announcement on the screen, all games the rest of the day and for the time being were postponed, due to a player in the NBA testing positive for the Coronavirus. In other parts of the world, professional sports teams in Germany and Italy were already playing their games with absolutely no fans in attendance, but the NBA stopping play made the situation truly hit me. Never in my life did sports ever halt like this, the concept was difficult to wrap my head around since my whole life sports have seemed to play a central role. Six of my roommates are members of the baseball team at UCLA, and during the upcoming weekend they were scheduled to play a home series against the University of Oregon, where my brother is currently a freshman pitcher. Much of my family lives in Southern California, and many of them had planned on making the short trip up to UCLA to see my brother compete collegiately for the first time, nonetheless against my own school and my close friends. The morning after the NBA announced that games were postponed and suspended indefinitely, my brother and his team were supposed to fly from Eugene to LAX at the crack of dawn that thursday. However, that morning the trip

was canceled, as the entire NCAA suspended all of spring and winter sports taking place at that time, that is when the severity of the situation truly hit me. This was not just a minor sickness passing along part of the world affecting a small group, our world was about to drastically change.

During this same time, finals week were occurring at UCLA, and all of the in person classes were being canceled while some finals were not being taken and others were being transitioned to online. This was a new challenge all in itself, exams I had been studying tirelessly for were being altered by professors and us students did not really know what to expect. Were we going to have all essay questions on the final? Would it be multiple choice? Would we have to write fifteen pages in response to one question that would determine ten weeks of hard work? Personally, I managed to finish the quarter strong and perform well on my online final exams, but I worried for what school would look like in the future. This past quarter the entirety of school has been online, and it has proven to be one of my toughest quarters here at UCLA. Due to the university being so prominent, and arguably the best public university in the world, the workload for students has remained steady, if not increasing during our times of quarantine. Professors have been attempting to uphold the high standards of being a bruin student, which as challenging as that was before continues true to this online day. To begin with, the home environment provides challenges in itself. As a student, I typically associate home as being a place of rest where I am away from school and all of my responsibilities in a sense. Some material is also proving itself more difficult to

learn, students are unable to simply raise their hand during lecture to ask the professor a question from their slides or lecture, or interact with their TA before and after class. Students are forced to learn the material on their own more or less, they must do their best to interpret the information they are given through their computer screen, which we have never been forced to do before.

My parents have each been uniquely affected by the virus, but thankfully we have not incurred a financial hardship during this time as so many people are experiencing. My father is a high school teacher, and their school went completely online around the same time UCLA did, but their level of curriculum did not keep the same level since not every student has the same resources who attends a public high school. It has proven challenging to him to get all of his students to complete their online work, let alone have his complete list of students sign up for the online coursework. To go along with it, my father is a very active person who goes to the gym nearly everyday and coaches baseball, so this transition to being stuck at home all day for the past 3 months has been very challenging to his usual active lifestyle. On the other hand, my mother works for the county of Riverside and is considered an essential worker, so she has been forced to go into work and interact with other people which can be scary during this time. It is definitely an uneasy feeling knowing that my mother has to be in person communicating with people who we have no idea what they do in their free time or who they surround themselves with, the last thing we want is for my mother or another member of my family to become sick with this potentially life threatening virus. On the other hand, it has forced our

family to slow down our lifestyle of constantly being busy and on the run, we spend much more time together and under the same roof. Although it has caused numerous family fights that occur when you simply spend too much time together, it has made us appreciate a lot of the little things we typically look over. On a not so positive note, early in April my grandfather was hospitalized due to a long battle with his lungs which he needed some help with from the doctors. Suddenly his condition went from stable to critical overnight, and our families first reaction was to go visit him, because we did not know if he could manage to survive another day. However, due to the very strict hospital visitation rules during the times of Covid-19, my family and I were not allowed any type of visitation with my grandfather, prohibiting us from saying our final goodbyes or having any sort of last moment with him. This was truly devastating for my family, especially to my mother who never got her last chance to say goodbye to her father that she looked up to her entire life, which she missed out on because of the Coronavirus.

Historically, I would relate the Coronavirus pandemic to how impacted the smallpox virus was to the indigenous people of America during the 1600s when European settlers brought it along with them. The smallpox outbreak wiped out entire Native American tribes, and the effect was felt all throughout North America at the time. Although the corona virus is not wiping out entire states or countries, it is a pandemic that took everybody by surprise, and it seems that nobody had any idea that it was coming similar to the Native Americans getting blindsided by smallpox. However, there eventually was a vaccine from smallpox, and people

stopped dying from it, which I believe the same is possible for the Coronavirus. Scientists and medical professionals will be able to find the vaccine to save thousands of lives and prevent more families from facing the hardship of losing somebody they love.

In my community there are a lot of people who have been hit hard during these times, I personally have three friends whose mothers have been laid off from their nursing jobs because people were not coming into hospitals for surgeries and non-coronavirus treatments during this time. To lose half of the household income at a time like this is extremely devastating, and for many families it will be nearly impossible to bounce back from. It is difficult to predict what will happen in the future for our economy, many small businesses all across America and the world are being hit extremely hard, especially businesses that rely on in person interactions that were forced to close down during the pandemic. Not only will these small businesses be hurt along with the people who own and operate them, the economy needs these types of businesses to remain successful, without them it will be hurt tremendously. Although this is a challenging time, and nearly no person alive has dealt with a situation like this in their lifetime, there is no doubt in my mind that the world will be able to bounce back. Even with all of the uncertainty that is presented with the future, I hope one day life will return to normal, but until then all we can do is continue to adjust to our “new normal” of quarantine and limited lifestyles.