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COVID-19, the word brings up in my mind depression from what it has taken from me and how it has taken a lot of the freedoms I took for granted while going to school at UCLA in Winter and Spring quarter of 2020. COVID-19 has now become part of our culture regardless of where you are in the world and what language you speak. COVID-19 as a historical event has changed my life in how it shut down my school, affected my job positions, and my future. I remember sitting overlooking the occupied Westbank in Israel on New Years not knowing what would be happen in the ensuing months that would change my life and the world. Learning about a virus that I did not take seriously to seeing how its shutdown my school and straided me financially. COVID-19 has been a hard experience that has challenged me and made see this event as an opportunity.

COVID-19 was a disease that I thought would not affect my life and those around me because I did not take it seriously until it shut down my school, family, and life. First time hearing about COVID-19 was from an article from BBC that reported about a new disease that was striking the population of Wuhan province in late January of 2020 which I didn't really pay much attention to because we had just lost Coby in a helicopter crash in LA. The winter quarter was the same as any other quarter, but the difference was that it seemed the news were getting worse about COVID-19 in China which was spreading to other parts of the world. It was the emails that the UCLA administration sent out to the

entire student body regarding travel on March 2nd that caused me to be aware of the implications of COVID-19. Michael Beck, Vice Chancellor stated in the email that “UCLA is taking measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Examples include: Installing hand sanitizer stations across campus, and in university-provided housing and dining area entries and on Bruin Buses, Cleaning restrooms and public areas with anti-viral, anti-bacterial chemical solutions, Increasing frequency of cleaning in residential and dining area high-touch surfaces, Employing electrostatic sprayer systems in high-use areas to disinfect around curved and hard-to-reach surfaces” This email I thought was UCLA trying to cover their political bases in response to students complaining for the lack of intuitive in preparing for the COVID-19. Since hearing about COVID-19 through news outlets, I thought of it as not something that was going to affect me due to believing that China would be able to contain the virus. My friends and co-workers joked about the virus and COVID-19 was to know as Coronavirus which to me was a joke. The space of time leading up to when COVID-19 closed all in-person classes was a heady time with our basketball team winning game after game which meant UCLA had a chance to go to the NCAA basketball tournament. It on March 10th for tenth week is when the bomb dropped. My religious studies professor stated that there might be chance of our final, a take home final, would be no longer in person turn in but it was going to be online submission. I thought that it was weird because there had been no official word of our campus going online so I thought there would be any need for us to doing an online submission. As soon as I got back to my apartment from class, I heard from apartment mate that email had just been sent out saying that effectively immediately in person classes were canceled and online classes were going to commence. This was start of the crazy rollercoaster of what COVID-19 was going to do to my life.

As soon as covid-19 stopped in-person classes, switches to the rest of my life happened quickly. At the beginning of the shutdowns that started in week 10 of Winter quarter, I asked my boss at work if

that would mean the UCLA store would shut down, but he said to all of us employees that he did not know what would happen. The majority of campus was still open but that changed due to a email from UCLA saying that the libraries and gyms would be closing at the beginning of week 10 of winter quarter which meant that a lot of my friends would be out of job since they worked at these locations. my boss stated that we would remain open until things were clarified by the board of ASUCLA about what steps would they take in response to COVID-19. This was all happening during finals week, which is a stressful time for students, but added with the uncertainty of knowing if spring quarter was going to be online was extremely hard to deal with and hearing about new cases of COVID-19 in LA every day. I had planned to work over spring break to earn some very needed money for rent which was put in jeopardy by the closing of the store. My boss announced via email that all ASUCLA stores and restaurants would be closed except the Hilltop shop which would remain open due to international and out of state students forced to stay in LA due to travel restrictions. This was an opportunity for me because I was transferred to the hilltop shop so I could remain working per my request to my boss. I did not receive many hours to work due to ASUCLA cutting back operating hours because most of the students in the dorms were moving out. Going in to spring break, many of friends and co-workers left back home due to the announcement at the beginning of spring break by UCLA saying that the entire quarter would be online to prevent spread of COVID-19 and insure the safety of the students and faculty. Up to this time, UCLA had been criticized by students and educators saying that the administration was not acting fast enough to respond to this crisis, but I felt that it did the best could with the little information that it had. UCLA followed the example of other notable universities which shutdown there in person learning and switched to virtual. I am glad that UCLA let students who could not go home stay in the dorms instead of forcing students to move out which happened to my friend at the university of Pennsylvania. UCLA also has promised after canceling the in person graduation that they would a virtual ceremony and a in-

person ceremony when it's safe to have large gatherings. The shutdown of campus leading into spring break began nightmare of spring quarter for me.

Beginning of spring quarter marked the scariest and worst times for me and my family during the height of the COVID-19 panic. The realization that a pandemic was happening led to shortages of toilet paper and other food items. Week 1-2 of Spring quarter, I could only buy items for peanut butter and jelly sandwiches due to the little hours I was working and could only afford that because most of my paycheck was going to rent and car insurance. I was living off PBJ for an entire 2 weeks till I started to work more hours which was an experience that I will never forget. It made me realize how fortunate I am to still have food when I knew other who did not have food. As an adult, my parents will not financially help with anything due to their philosophy of an adult living by oneself must provide for oneself and not rely on others. This was hard because in the 3 years I have been living on my own, I had never experienced being in such dire financial troubles, but I made it through which I thank COVID-19 for giving me the experience to test my resilience. The use of Zoom for classes was hard for me because I learn better in person and taking classes online was hard due to losing the human connection that is used in in-person learning. The professors in all my classes have done a valiant effort in their recorded lectures to keep their lectures lively and providing extra office hours and resources to make a student successful. It was also extremely helpful to have friends in some of my classes which we would zoom call each other and discuss what the lectures meant while listening to the zoom call. My routine during spring quarter seemed to revolve around listening to lectures, working, and looking for jobs which became very isolating due to getting to see my friends who most had moved back home. COVID-19 made seeing my family harder due to my parents employing me not to come home because during first half of April due to the amount of COVID-19 cases in the Sacramento area were greater before LA took over for the most COVID-19 cases. During week 1, my sister told via zoom that she had been diagnosed

with breast cancer, which was hard, but it was much harder that I could not see her since she is living with my parents. COVID-19 has prevented me from seeing my family and not being to see my family.

COVID-19 has been a pandemic that has caused splits in friends on how serious this pandemic is and the long-lasting effects that it will have on our society. Since the start of this pandemic, my friend group has been split into two different groups on the bias of those who take the social distancing and other safety precautions seriously and those who do not. I personally believe that though this virus has a low death rate, it is especially important that we help those who are in fear or at risk during this pandemic. I have a friend who has diabetes who is considered at risk for who we took extreme measures to ensure his safety. His roommate went home for spring break then returned and quarantined at my apartment to ensure his safety. By week 4, my friends and I made a group of us no larger than 5 guys who only hung out with each other and no one else to ensure that we kept to the guidelines regarding social distancing. Some of my friends do feel like that COVID-19 has been blown out of proportions which has caused splits in my friend group. My family takes the safety precautions seriously because my father works as district manager for CVS Pharmacy who actually warned me that this was coming on a phone call in February that I disregarded. My family looks out for my safety by keeping quarantine and not letting me come to visit even though I want to be there to support my sister as she battles breast cancer during the pandemic. COVID-19 has changed my life by altering what the job market will look like after graduation which I have regarded with dread. I had a job offer with a non-profit in Baltimore, Maryland that provided after school tutoring and mentorship to inner-city elementary kids which I was looking forward to, but because of the shutdown of economy has been canceled. I have been looking for jobs and sending out resumes, but I get the same answer in my email box which says we are not hiring at this time which has been same for many of my friends. The class of 2020 believed that they had bright futures ahead at the beginning of the new year, but now we look at

the future with dread. The shelter in place order that have been in place for a month is starting to lift, but many new restrictions for opening. I thought this quarantine was going to be short, but it seems that normal life after COVID-19 is not going to be normal like before ,but a new normal with many different restrictions to prevent COVID-19 from coming back.

COVID-19 is a pandemic that has hit me and challenged me to push me outside my comfort zone. Through the start of this pandemic, I did not take this threat seriously and was unprepared for the changes that COVID-19 would bring to my life. I learned that PJB as a meal for 2 weeks help you appreciate what food you have when others have little or none. Real friends are those who support you when you are at your worst and feel isolated from those you love. Caring for other is when you put their well-being above your own which is sacrificing some freedoms to ensure those who are not able to support themselves are protected. COVID-19 is looked upon by my generation as an event that spoiled the rest of our lives which is untrue, but understandable with how it has hurt our chances for employment. COVID-19 has brought families together including mine even though I'm not able to see them, but I can talk through zoom and other communication apps. COVID-19 as historical event has shown me that being in quarantine has been an opportunity to grow friendships and see COVID-19 as opportunity to grow instead of as a negative experience.