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### A Covid-19 Reflection

It was the last two weeks of the winter quarter when I started receiving emails from Chancellor Gene D. Block about COVID-19 and like most students, didn't pay much attention to the news considering finals week was soon approaching. However, the situation became serious when I received the email that three students were being tested for the coronavirus that I began to worry about my health while attending school. The week before I was to take my finals, was one I will not forget, I remember that it was raining practically every day and my stress levels were at an all-time high due to the flood of emails regarding the virus. Although the three students tested negative for COVID-19, the email came on April tenth that UCLA has suspended all in-person classes starting March eleventh and will be effective until April tenth, the second week into the spring quarter. The news of UCLA making the transition to online classes struck the whole community, especially for students who were living on the Hill. The school encouraged students to begin the spring quarter remotely from home, but during this time decisions were being made that were in the best interest of the students yet it added more stress to me personally.

My first two quarters at UCLA proved very difficult for me to handle and I was lucky enough to find a circle of friends and have a family to support me in every way, but that week before finals was one of the hardest weeks to deal with. After being encouraged by UCLA to learn remotely from home, I had only three days left to say, what would become my final

goodbyes to my amazing friends because I would move out of my dorm on March fourteenth. All of my friends had left the dorms before me, so the Friday before I moved out, I took my last walk around campus, went to De Neve's late-night, and glumly slept in my dorm room for the final time. Although I was eager to go home for spring break, I would now give anything to be with my friends enjoying the spring quarter at UCLA and having finished my first year the "normal way."

Nevertheless, I was happy to be able to come home earlier than expected since I was already hearing that other universities were already closing due to the coronavirus and switching to remote learning. Upon coming home, I was made aware of the severity of what was happening not just in America, but all over the world. Countries in Europe were on lock-down and in China, where the virus originated, law enforcement were taking extreme measures in order to contain the spread of the virus. Most leaders around the world took the necessary precautions and actions once the World Health Organization announced that COVID-19 is officially a global pandemic, however, our president was sadly not one of those leaders.

Luckily, Gavin Newsom headed the warnings and on March nineteenth he became the first governor to enforce mandatory stay-at-home orders for all Californians in an effort to combat the spreading of the coronavirus. The governor stated that only essential businesses were to stay open and that if people were to go to the grocery stores or banks they must practice social distancing, meaning you must stand six feet away from others while wearing a face mask. My older sister and stepfather were considered essential workers due to the jobs they have and every day when they left the house they both wore face masks and gloves. My family and I took no risks when it came to the safety of our health, so we did not go anywhere to socialize and no one

was allowed to stay and visit us. Every Saturday when my stepfather went to the grocery store is was a nightmare for him because he would have to wait in long lines before the stores opened and it was difficult for him to find disinfectant supplies such as Clorox wipes and Lysol spray, to find non-perishable foods, and even toilet paper! It was incredibly disappointing to see all the videos on the news about how people were treating each other and how some were hoarding such things as toilet paper, leaving most shelves empty for the elderly and less fortunate. There was one video that went viral when a woman hits an elderly lady because she got the last packet of toilet paper even though that woman had a cart full of the product. Americans treated each other so horribly that stores were setting aside special hours for the elderly so that they can have a chance at getting food or household supplies, and it just makes you feel that it is every man for themselves once you leave your home.

The virus can be very dangerous to specific groups of people who have underlying medical conditions and are over the age of sixty. My stepdad has diabetes, my younger brother has asthma, and my five-year-old sister are the ones we worry the most when it comes to this contagious virus, so my mother always tells the rest of us to practice social distancing and to disinfect whatever comes into our home. My older sister had to get tested for COVID-19 twice, the first time was because one of her coworkers had tested positive for the virus and the second time was because she was hanging out with our cousin who later tested positive for coronavirus. For my sister to have to get tested because she came into contact with someone who tested positive absolutely terrified me and the scariest part of it all being that she could have exposed our whole family without ever showing the symptoms. Thankfully, my sister tested negative both

times and my cousin hasn't shown any symptoms of having COVID-19, which makes me feel so grateful because I know that some families have lost loved ones due to the virus.

Since most businesses are closed like bars, hair salons, gyms, etc., many people have been struggling to buy food and pay their bills, but the state of California has been very generous and helpful to people who need money during this time. For example, if you are a small business owner you have the chance to keep your business because rents are being extended. Our president has done something right by issuing stimulus checks to all Americans who filed taxes in 2018 or 2019 and most people are receiving one thousand two hundred dollars and if you have children under the age of seventeen you will get five hundred dollars more for each child. However, the unemployment rate has surged due to this pandemic, and thirty million Americans have filed for unemployment to get benefits that will help them keep their homes and food on the table. All educational institutions have closed and have switched to remote learning, but the government hopes that the schools can open back up again in the fall, although the possibility of that happening is not promising. My other sister, who is the eldest of the six, was supposed to have a graduation ceremony on May sixteenth, where we would have seen her walk across a big stage to receive her master's degree in teaching, instead, she made the five-hour drive home to celebrate her accomplishment with her family. Many high school and university graduates had to be celebrated in this way and all their hard work is still valid and acknowledged, but they being rewarded with virtual or drive through graduation ceremonies, a memory that will certainly never be forgotten.

President Trump did not put the best interests of the American people first when it came to his response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I personally believe that he downplayed the severity

of the situation when cases were popping up here in the U.S. and this is why the United States now surpasses other countries in the number of deaths due to the coronavirus. I remember when Trump claimed that this whole thing was a hoax created by the democrats and then saying that the COVID-19 will spread in the U.S. to some people, but it will go away once the weather warms up. Our president stated on national television that maybe if healthcare workers injected patients with disinfectant spray it can help rid them of the virus. President Trump encourages people in different states to protest the stay-at-home orders and claims that they are protesting because their freedom is at risk even though medical doctors have said that by social distancing and wearing face masks combats the spread of the coronavirus. In a time when my country desperately needs to be unified, President Trump does everything he can to fan the flames of division because he does not want to follow the medical advice from healthcare professionals, who are the ones doing everything they can to save American lives. The president insists on reopening the country to get the economy back up and running again, but he must do it the safe way and listen to the doctors who advise him because his priority should be the lives of the American people, not his fulfillment of a campaign promise.

Racism has also been very prominent throughout this whole COVID-19 pandemic and has been directed towards Asian Americans. People were trying to steer clear of coming into any contact with Asian people by not going to restaurants or even having them as their Uber drivers. It grieves me to say that some Asians have been verbally or physically attacked because ignorant people want to blame them because the virus originated from Wuhan, China. President Trump addressed the nation and blatantly called the coronavirus the “Chinese Virus” because it came from China. At a press conference that took place recently an Asian American journalist, Weijia

Jiang, asked President Trump why he felt it necessary to make testing a global competition when thousands of American lives have been lost, he told her that she should go and ask China that question. As I watched that press conference I could not believe he had the audacity to give her such a disrespectful response and when she asked him why he specifically told her to go ask China, I thought that the fierceness and bravery of her response is what made him leave the conference before it was scheduled to be over. This scapegoat of putting the whole blame on China and calling it the “Chinese Virus” reminds me of the 1918 Influenza pandemic when the whole world was referring to it as the “Spanish Flu” and all the blame was put on Spain because they were the first to announce that there was a deadly outbreak of the flu infecting many people in the country, however, it did not originate from Spain. I find it to be very dangerous for President Trump to continuously refer to the coronavirus as the “Chinese Virus” because it puts Asian Americans more at risk to experience racist attacks from other Americans.

Although the world has been turned upside down due to the pandemic, where healthcare workers are doing everything they can to save our lives, are being met with disrespect by some protestors who do not want to social distance, stay at home, or wear face masks anymore. I think that some Americans are forgetting that healthcare workers, such as doctors and nurses, are the ones who are on the frontlines doing everything they can to combat the spread and save as many lives as possible. My aunt is a nurse and she has her own family waiting for her at home, so to see people simply rejecting these protective measures infuriates me immensely and the fact that our president encourages these life-risking antics makes me question if he really cares about American lives at all. I have been trying to keep up with my studies and even though my concentration is disrupted from time to time, I am happy to be self-quarantined with my family

and doing my part to help the healthcare workers combat the virus. This has all been a test to each of us regarding our humanity and years from now when we all look back on how we treated each other during the 2020 pandemic, I will be able to say that I am proud of the decisions I made in order to save lives.