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### Covid-19 Impact

Over the past few months in 2020, the entire world has been put on hold due to the pandemic of the Coronavirus. While some reports from the WHO say that it was found in the very beginning of the 2020 year, people in the United States and specifically California noticed dramatic change in the second week of March. During that time, all non-essential businesses were forced to shutdown and a “Safer-At-Home” order was given to people in Los Angeles. This order was defined as not leaving your home unless essential. This quick order caused a panic in the city and throughout the country who had also been given similar orders. Sporting events, weddings, bars, restaurants were all forced to shut their doors to customers and fans, with the exception of takeout orders. The world as we knew it had suddenly drastically changed without any indication of a timetable and a looming possibility of not returning to the way it was before. No one knew if this would last a couple weeks, months, or years and this caused extreme anxiety and confusion for many people. For my family and I, as a student-athlete on the baseball team at UCLA, my future changed dramatically when the NCAA cancelled the remainder of the season and my parents were told to work at home. This Coronavirus pandemic is comparable to diseases seen in earlier centuries like Smallpox and the outbreak of a disease that impacted many people's lives in an economic and deadly way.

For my family and I, our lives changed dramatically the second week in March when numerous major events were cancelled which caused confusion and chaos. During the beginning of that week, my family, friends, and I only had a tiny idea as to what the Coronavirus was and what it did to one's body. Prior to that week, we had heard that it was like having a very bad flu, but also that there was not much to worry about. Thus, life went on as normal for a short time. As a baseball player at UCLA, we would receive updates about travel and keeping sure that we all kept up with proper hygiene to keep us safe. As a team, we had travelled to Texas about a week before the pandemic really caught attention and there seemed to be no issues regarding masks or even the thought of changing anything about our everyday life. Another week went by and there had been some growing news about the virus and that it was starting to grow in the United States. By the end of that first week in March, when we were driving back from USC, we began to question about the possible changes that would happen to our season. On March 9th and 10th, there had been no major changes to the future of any sporting events in any level. However, the very next day that same feeling would not remain. March 12th was a day filled with many firsts in the world that shocked the world. For us as Pac-12 athletes, we had received word that only essential personnel would be allowed at our games for the foreseeable future. While this was extremely difficult to understand, we still had hope the season would continue. Then, a few hours later after practice, we all found out that the NBA had suspended its season indefinitely. One of the most successful and well-known sporting leagues in the world had just suspended its season, so we knew our season was in serious jeopardy. Sure enough, the next day, while our entire team was at the field, our season had been cancelled. All

we could really do was chuckle at the idea that our season, which was only 15 games in, could be cancelled for the rest of the year. We had a million questions that had absolutely zero answers. In the next coming days, social distancing and Shelter-in-Place became everyday terms in our lives with no idea what was to come. Due to these orders, I was forced to move back home with my parents. For my parents, working at home was scarce and welcomed at first. However, as news came out about the longevity of this virus, worry set in. For many, social interaction with coworkers is extremely healthy and keeps the self-esteem high. The Coronavirus caused the sudden cancellation of my final season and my final on-campus quarter at UCLA. It made me move from my apartment in LA back home to live with my parents.

Due to the Coronavirus, our futures had to be put on hold and look for different options in the workplace. For me, I had dreamed of playing professional baseball and was going to use this year to perform and hopefully fulfill that dream. That dream is questionable now since there have been changes to the draft and more difficult for players like me to play professionally. So, I have to look for a job. That is looking grim as well because of the economy and the job market plummeting. It has created a very difficult situation for me and millions of others who are in similar circumstances. There are many ways that my future could have gone before this virus changed our world. However, some of those ways and dreams had to be put aside to deal with the situation at hand. Luckily, I do have the opportunity to look into graduate school around my area to increase my education while the job market is low. A graduate degree may be very helpful when looking for a job down the road when jobs become more

available. For now, I am keeping my eyes open for potential careers, but understanding that millions of others are doing the same exact thing.

While there are numerous major downsides to the Coronavirus, there have also allowed for some unique ways to stay connected to friends and family. There have been some reports that we may never get back to the same normal we knew before this pandemic. Some say we may never shake hands again and that terrifies me. Social interaction is essential to human life and contact with others makes us happier. Due to the social distancing and Stay-At-Home orders, friends and families cannot meet in close proximity. As time goes on during this pandemic, people are becoming creative in ways that they can be together at home or outside. For example, Zoom and other providers have allowed family and friends to be at home, but interact and socialize when they are not allowed to be together. A common occurrence now is the “virtual happy hour”. It allows friends and family from all over to enjoy each other’s company and talk about their lives with one another. Another example is the six-foot happy hours that are outside. I live on a cul-de-sac where there is not much car traffic on the street. So, my family and our neighbors have brought out chairs and enjoyed each other’s company from a safe social distance. All of these different forms of interaction have almost increased the conversations that we have with our friends. In my opinion, we have safely interacted with more people than we ever have before. I truly believe that as friends and family was have grown closer during this incredibly difficult time because of the unique ways we have found to have social interaction. Even though we cannot hug, shake hands, or get within six feet of another person, we have found ways to be closer than ever.

The Coronavirus can be compared to similar viruses that we are learning about, such as Smallpox, in that there was no immunity or vaccine which caused countless deaths, and economic turmoil. When the Europeans came over to the Americas and interacted with the Natives, many of the Native people grew sick from disease. The Europeans were immune to these diseases but had brought them over from Europe to the New World. So, when the Europeans stayed in the New World, Smallpox decimated many Natives. The Natives had no immunity or vaccine to this virus, so it destroyed populations. While the Coronavirus hopefully does not reach the limits that Smallpox did, the idea of zero immunity to the virus is comparable. As of now, there is no vaccine for Coronavirus and we have not yet reached a herd immunity to save ourselves from the virus. In both cases, no immunity has proven to be very deadly as almost 300,000 people have died from the Coronavirus. Smallpox was much more deadly to the Native people with estimates upwards of 20 million Natives dying from the European brought virus. Also, Smallpox caused changes in the economy that can be similarly attributed to the Coronavirus. One of the most important things to do when a disease like this breaks out is to find a vaccine. Finding a vaccine costs millions of dollars and could potentially cost people jobs. In the case of Smallpox, hundreds of millions of dollars was put to finding a vaccine which cause some turmoil within the economy. Similarly, for the Coronavirus, people have given millions of dollars to find a vaccine and keep people working. However, for the Coronavirus, the economy has tanked because many people are losing their jobs and cannot stimulate the economy. In both of these cases, the economy has changed and declined. People are out of jobs with uncertainty as to what the future holds.

The Coronavirus has affected my life by taking things that I will never get back and put my future on hold. Season, concerts, weddings have all be put aside to fight this virus and changed our everyday way of life. There can only be speculation as to what the future holds and how long it will take to get back to normal, if it ever does. The idea of minimal social interaction does concern me deeply as humans need interaction with others routinely. While we do have creative ways to interact the looming possibilities of never getting back to normal does scare many. However, with time and patience, the life we knew before may hopefully make its return soon.