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7-2020

Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal

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Recommended Citation

Linnertz, Ben, "*Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal*" (2020). *Public History Journals*. 13.

<https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/journals/13>

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Documenting the crisis caused by the rapid spread of coronavirus is essential for many reasons. The first being that any event that has an impact on the world should be recorded in some way, especially one that turns the entire planet upside down. Another reason the Coronanavirus should be recorded is the amount of loss that it has caused the world, and to not record an event of this size would be an injustice. The voices of college students are critical because they are the next generation that'll lead the world and usually are the leaders of change across the globe. I will be using written text as my medium of choice as I wish to improve my writing skills this summer.

It's hard to think about my last "normal" day. Ordinary life feels so distant, like it was forever ago. The day before everything turned upside down was extremely average, spent exactly like every other Thursday leading up to it. I attended my Netflix culture class at 9 am, where we spoke briefly about the rapid spread of Covid-19 and the possibility of the school closing. I'm not going to lie, at this point in the semester I was feeling pretty loaded on work and was ready to accept an extended spring break with open arms. After class, I went over to my girlfriend's apartment for our regularly scheduled Thursday afternoon nap. We did not sleep this day because we were refreshing our e-mails and news sources for incoming information about what was going to happen next. With no new information, I left her apartment to attend my Horticulture class at the Garfield Park Conservatory. Just moments before class began, I received an e-mail from Columbia, the school would be closed and taught online until further notice. Everything started to change so quickly after that.

Luckily, I have not had to develop many strategies for social isolation or reduction of physical contact. Due to my girlfriend losing her student housing and not being able to move home, she has been living with me for the duration of the quarantine. Between spending time with her and my roommates, I have had plenty of company in these strange times. Plus, it helps that I am more introverted and even a little bit of a homebody. I have struggled some with the lack of routine and outside time, especially as we entered Spring and Summer. The biggest help for any feelings of restlessness and isolation has been sticking to some sort of schedule. We are sure to take daily walks for a little exercise and Vitamin D, cook new recipes, and spend time talking and checking in on each other.

Third PHSP

As the quarantine restrictions for the Corona Virus are slowly lifted, my roommates and I have begun to discuss what are policies were regarding COVID and the apartment. One thing we discussed was if we were going to allow people into the apartment and, if so, how many and for how long. As restrictions are being lifted, we have gone to more businesses and have been able to do significantly more in-person errands. That being said, we never stay for more than an hour, we wear masks, and if it's a restaurant, we always get take out. Another change that I am taking as restrictions are lifted is that I'll be returning to work on occasion and then full time. As I transition back to working in the office, I have much more I have to be conscious of that I didn't before. I'll have to make sure I wear a mask and wash my hands more frequently and diligently than I may have in the past. The thing that may have to change the most is the way I commute. Hopefully, I will be able to cut down on my use of public transportation or potentially only travel at less busy times. It's weird to think about as things open up again what "normal" life will look like for us all.

PHSP Four

My ability to create and improve upon new relationships has been greatly hindered by the ongoing pandemic. One way I have been hindered is the lack of personal interaction with my peers. This lack of communication halts my ability to develop meaningful connections that will help me in the future and with my career. Another relationship that has stalled due to COVID is the relationships I was building at my job. These relationships would help teach me how to make genuine and useful work relationships that could benefit me. In an attempt to continue to gain experience from my job, I have offered to work from home and trying to build those relationships online. The last relationship that has changed due to this pandemic is the relationship I have with my girlfriend. Our relationship has changed due to her being removed from student housing and moving in with me. This change has caused us to be around each other pretty much 24/7 for the last few months. Which I believe has changed our relationship for the better, as this close confinement has acted as a catalyst in the development of our relationship

Self Portrait

My life experience has changed drastically over the last six months as everyday life as we know it has been turned on its head. I went seeing friends every week to not seeing them for months, and when we were able to connect, it was through a screen. The way I am able to socialize has been changed, and I think that I will always have a special connection to the people I have spent the first six months of this year with. My eyes have also been opened up significantly over the last couple of months to the social injustice committed against multiple groups of people, whether it be the police brutality committed against African Americans or the Crimes against Immigrants who are bravely trying to make a better life for themselves and their families. These revelations have caused me to be more outspoken politically, whether it be online or in-person. In the past, even when I saw things, I knew were wrong or disagreed with them, I wouldn't always speak up. Now, I want to put a more conscious effort into listening and being a better ally to people of color and other minority groups. I have realized the only way to change the future is to fight for it.

Predicting the Future

This year has been one for the ages, and it feels as if some new world-ending threat is revealed every month. That all being said, my general outlook for the future is hopeful; I believe this year has drawn back the currents and showed who we are as a species. Some of it may be ugly and hard to believe, but other parts are beautiful, powerful and make me think that somehow we'll make it, and make the world a place that we'd be proud to hand over to the next generation. My hope for the future is that we will be able to overcome our pride and hubris as a nation and do what's best for everyone, whether that includes America or not. I fear that people won't allow themselves to think and be guided to false hopes and fraudulent beliefs.