

Katalena Garcia

AIS-1273

Prof. Shelley Howell

20 September 2020

Adapting to College: Coronavirus Style

College is something that I have looked forward to for as long as I can remember. The thought of moving to a new city, being able to start a new life, and work towards my career choice has always been appealing to me. I applied to the University at Texas at San Antonio in the fall of 2019 and haven't looked back since. My friend (and now roommate) and I came to tour the campus and look for an apartment in February; we had everything planned out perfectly. All I had to do was finish my senior year and my new life would begin. Little did I, as well as every other high school senior, know that things would not end up the way I had planned for so long.

When the coronavirus pandemic first hit, no one believed that it was as serious as it turned out to be. Of course, this had to be expected considering no one in this lifetime has ever experienced anything of the sense. As the time approached for college to begin, the anxieties that correlated began to kick in. Living in a smaller city it was easier to not be as aware of how much things were affected elsewhere, but I had to begin to understand this when the announcement of most college classes at UTSA going online happened.

Moving to San Antonio knowing that I wouldn't be able to get the college experience I had looked forward to for so long was difficult- at first. Being doubtful towards my ability to actually learn online without the hands-on experience of being in class stressed me out beyond belief. I began to question whether I would actually be able to do it. When classes actually

began though, it became obvious that my fears were shared between everyone in the same position- even my professors. Throughout the first week, to my surprise, the professors made it easy to adjust, calming the anxieties that we were all facing. During the first few zoom calls they explained the way that our course would work despite the challenges at hand due to virtual learning. They made it as easy as possible to access our work and lectures, while still providing the college level of learning.

Another one of my ongoing fears was the fact I had to face that I wouldn't be able to go out and meet people in the way I always thought I would. Though I was rooming with my longtime friend, her and I both knew that it would be difficult not being able to socialize much else. We soon learned though, that making friends in the pandemic wouldn't be as difficult as expected. Though we can't go out and party like the normal college experience, we have been able to make friends online through classes and through people living in the area.

Although my college experience has not been able to be everything expected, lacking the in-person classes and socialization, the beginning to this year has not been in any way bad. The coronavirus pandemic has helped me be able to see college in a new way. Learning to adapt and adjust to the circumstances at hand has been difficult, but not impossible. I now feel honored to be alive in such an important time in history, and I know I will one day be able to look back at this time period and be thankful for the ways it helped me adapt to my new life.