

Documenting COVID-19 and the KSU Community



PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODS

On March 13 2020, Kennesaw State University closed its campuses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and announced that it would pivot to online instruction for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester. To document the personal experiences and reactions of the Kennesaw State University community during the pandemic, the KSU Archives launched the Documenting COVID-19 and the KSU Community Project on March 20, 2020. Using Qualtrics, Outreach Archivist Helen Thomas and Digital Archivist Alissa Helms created a form where KSU students, faculty, and staff were invited to share their stories about the shift to remote learning, displacement from student housing, off-campus jobs, staying in touch with friends and family during social distancing and self-quarantine, the challenges of international students or those with families abroad, and other changes witnessed within the KSU campus and community. Contributors were also invited to submit photographs, video, audio recordings, or artwork documenting their experience with the pandemic through a separate Google form.

The Documenting COVID-19 project received over forty responses between April and August 2020. Responses that did not meet the scope of the project as outlined in the instructions to contributors or that did not complete the donor agreement were not retained by the Archives. The personal narratives and images in this document are reproduced exactly as they were submitted by our project contributors and have not been altered to correct for typographical or grammatical errors.

PROMPTS

Each contributor was provided with questions to prompt their written responses. These were provided only as suggestions, and contributors were free to choose which aspects of the pandemic to write about.

The first question¹: **How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your day-to-day life and your experience as a member of the KSU community?** What is Kennesaw State like during the pandemic? Consider your experiences with the shift to remote learning, being displaced from student housing, on- and off-campus jobs, social distancing and self-quarantine, the challenges of travel, and so on.

The second question²: **What has been the most difficult change or adjustment that you have experienced in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic?**

¹ Indicated in this document as “Personal narrative”

² Indicated in this document as “Most difficult change or adjustment”

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Connor

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Everything changed so suddenly and without many changes to the grading standard at which we are being held. I am extremely sick this past week and am currently waiting for my results for my covid test. Some teachers have been understanding, while others have not. I think it is important to relay to teachers the extent of the situation and how students are being affected in more ways than just the pandemic by having to move home and deal with isolation. Some teachers have no absolutely no sentiment to what we are dealing with and I am scared my grades will suffer because of this.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Moving home and transitioning to working and doing school online. Doing so without any grace period, as the school and many teachers expected us to continue class like normal, which is absurd.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Cammie Conn

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I am a twin and both my sister and I had to completely move out of our dorms, which we had already renewed for the following semester. Because of this, we are back home and having to take care of the house and our little brother. All of my class are online now, which is disappointing for some of the more hands-on courses. I was employed at two positions on the Kennesaw campus and now I am totally out of two jobs until Fall semester resumes.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

It's really hard having to stay at home now and have no source of income. I was really planning on expanding my independence and living on campus over the Summer and working towards a trip I've been wanting to take for a long time. Until then, I'm trying to stay positive however I can.



Photograph of Jordan Adams' service dog, Moose (black greyhound), with her boyfriend's dog, Sky (black lab-mix). April 3, 2020.

Jordan Adams

APRIL 6, 2020

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

It started off not too bad, but I started working overtime with the looming threat of a shut down. When the state went into lockdown, my job closed and I was forced to pick up my boyfriend's dog early despite the fact that our current housing doesn't allow her breeds. I have fallen behind on classwork and my mental health has taken a decline for the past few days. My classes work loads have seemed to double or even triple, which makes keeping on top of it all seem impossible. Some of my professors are very understanding, others seem to not care and still expect us to meet the deadlines or quility with less guidance.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

It has been hard to not give up. School kept my going and it got me out of the house and forced me to take care of my mental and physical health, but that is so hard to do now that I am not allowed to leave. All I do is sleep, and most days I don't even eat because I'm not hungry. It's hard to keep track of the days and the times.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Courtney Schwartz

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

The COVID19 virus came seemingly out of nowhere. I'm a sophomore this year hoping to finish out my curriculum before transferring to a new university And finally moving away from home next semester. I made sure to take all in class courses as I've notoriously struggled with online learning. The COVID 19 virus has now made that goal an unattainable dream. With the sudden switch to all online classes and with me taking only core classes that were meant to keep me on track has made it hard to not only keep up with new assignments but also effectively complete them without proper instruction from my professors. As many have begun to realize that remote learning is only attainable to some due to lack of financial aid to purchase reliable technology in order to successfully log on and complete assignments. KSU did offer to provide assistance to those in need however professors and class time does not stop for these students and they are expected to play catch up. On top of that the access to my advisors and all KSU offices has been understandably but irritatingly limited. This is a very new and scary time for all of us but watching my dreams slowly but surely slip away due to the virus is heartbreaking.

Courtney Schwartz

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The most difficult change I've faced is no longer being able to effectively communicate with my professors, advisors, or KSU staff. The switch to online learning is something I had hoped I would be able to go through my entire schooling without doing. Not all younger people right now are as tech savvy as the media portrays us to be.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Lauren Holiday

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I had my doubts that the virus would ever get this viral on a global level just a month ago. As the days pressed on however, I began hoping the campus wouldn't close rather than doubting. I love being on campus, I had a smooth weekly flow that had brought the best out of me for my second semester. I was holding onto hope until the moment we had just a day to leave campus on the 13th. I had class that morning as well, and instead of packing, I went to class. I'm glad I did, my Friday class was the only class where I didn't despise everyone. I felt like if I had just a little but more time, I may have even made some good friends.

After class, I went to buy my last meal, and a friend stumbled into me along the way. She was mass buying from the stores with her dining money, and it intimidated me. However, I was still determined to believe we would come back to campus in just a few weeks. Me and my friend bought some more food, and then we returned to our dorms. The day prior to this, me and her stayed up until midnight reminiscing our school year and our home lives. We tried to have one last good night, to help us push through this trying time.

Yet Friday came so soon. And eventually, I had to start packing. I didn't even take that much in the beginning. I told myself, I would return. Even when I saw numerous

Lauren Holiday

other students acting like it was move out day. Perhaps if I had acted that way, I wouldn't have lost so much on the actual move out day. Regardless, me and my friend ended up helping each other pack. And I left with a heavy heart, I wanted this all to be over with, so I left campus early, and began my hour long drive home.

Since that day, online schooling began and so did home life. I focused and slept much better in my dorm, but I try to make the best of it. I like to have time to mentally prepare for big changes in my life. I was mentally preparing for a summer for the past few months, but I had no time to absorb this situation. In just the next week that I returned home, I was forced to quit my job. After that, I just felt defeated, especially when I recieved the email about having to move off campus.

My father came to help me move out, and he rushed me in the beginning. Then he grew more patient until a half hour passed. My father accidentally broke my christmas lights and one of my sculptures. Then in my own flustered state, I left my dishes, silverware, cups, and a rare collectable. The collectable was an action figure, I told my father to set it aside since it was fragile, and it slipped my mind entirely. I contacted my roommate, but she said she wouldn't send it back to me through the mail for a few months because of all this. Despite how much I insisted that it meant a lot to me, and it was simple to toss a letter into a blue box. I couldn't retrieve it myself because my parents wouldn't let me leave the house for a toy. My roommate was also dealing with a lot I'm sure, but I still miss the action figure. I don't buy a lot for myself, so it rubbed me the wrong way.

The hardest part of move out day was throwing things away. I'm a costume maker, and I had two costumes with me in my dorm. I was told by my parents that if I had made a second costume, they would destroy both of them. So I had to sacrifice one, in order to at least keep one. The one I threw

away was my first ever costume from eleventh grade. It had seen me through the good and bad times, and even moved in with me. It didn't drag me too much at the time, but now as I'm writing this, it kind of upsets me. I try to tell myself that that first costume is living its next life through the new one.

I'm sure a lot of people were excited to come home. Personally, I just wish I had more time to wrap up an amazing experience at Kennesaw. I'm hoping next year will bring me more happy memories to make up for all of this havoc. So, thank you Kennesaw for giving me an opportunity to find myself and appreciate who I am.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Staying focused on my classes.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Deanna Hebert

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I came to Kennesaw in 2017 to pursue a nursing degree, I was finally accepted in October 2019. I started the nursing program this semester and it has been challenging. Going to the hospital for clinical at 6am and studying for tests late into the night was a big transition from my general education courses. Now that classes have been moved to online, I actually miss those early mornings and late nights studying. I miss my cohort and my professors.

Covid-19 has impacted my life in more ways than one. I have been at my house for 4 weeks now and it is just now starting to get to me. I knew how severe this was from the beginning so we started stock piling food, however we did not expect to be in a toilet paper desert so we're lacking in that.

I live with my sister, her husband, and her two little girls, Eleanor and Hannah Rose. The girls are out of school but we adults still have school work or job work to do from home. It is extremely difficult to manage time to work and time to watch the girls. We have to have meetings almost every night to discuss what meetings we have or live online lectures we must attend. It's a balancing act even when we don't have work to do because watching a seven and two year old all day by yourself makes you go insane.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The most difficult thing has been watching my parents go about their lives as if nothing is happening. I adjusted my thought process about this pandemic a while ago. I rewired my brain to not think about going out or being absolutely positive I covered my mouth when I sneezed. My parents are most at risk for this, more so than I am, and yet they care the least. I talk to them as much as I can about it but they don't seem to care.

Thinking about my parents dying from this has been the most difficult thing about the Covid-19.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Madeline Terry

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I am a mother of a one-year-old and my husband is still considered essential. I am in the high risk category due to a respiratory illness I got back in September of last year. We are on day 28 of quarantine and today is April 6. I have left the house twice to go grocery shopping and both times I left the store in tears. The shelves were empty, all the essentials I needed for my son were gone, the people were unkind. I also battle anxiety and during this time, I have had panic attacks almost daily. I feel alone and overwhelmed. One of my professors, Jenny Petersen, has been a major source of comfort in this time. She has encouraged me and helped me with parenting advice. She has shown me nothing but kindness and support. Mrs. Petersen is one of the only reasons I do not feel COMPLETELY alone. I have dyslexia and ADHD and do not study well online. The only online class I have ever taken before all this, I failed. So not only do I already not do well online, but I am also having to adjust to being a full time stay at home mom, full time student, and still working part time from home.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Having no help or support with my child during the day. My mom can't come over and help, my husband is working, and I still have to be present and learn in class.. while having a whiny toddler on my ankles who wants my undivided attention. .

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Amy Murphy

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I am in the Family Nurse Practitioner program. We only went to campus for class every other weekend, so I do not really know what the campus is/was like during the pandemic. I do know that a large portion of our learning is through clinicals, which is not happening anymore. We were first told not to go to our clinical sites anymore, but then were told to go back to them. However, many of us could not because either the site would not take the risk of having a student there, or we worked in areas where we were exposed to COVID-19, so we could not return. Many of us are now short clinical hours for this semester. Our instructors are being very helpful and flexible with helping us figure out ways to get our hours. It's also very scary because when we do go back to our sites, we're potentially being exposed to this virus, and therefore exposing our families.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The most difficult adjustment I've had to make is with time management. I have 3 kids that are now doing "digital learning" from home. We've had many technical difficulties, and they need constant help figuring out what to do for each class, so my time to study is severely limited.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Marceline Lewis

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Having all online classes as a switch in the middle of the semester is very odd. I haven't been very involved in the KSU community due to living off campus, but it's been interesting and uplifting to see people come together to help each other out.

My 69 year old father was diagnosed with cancer in January of this year, and has had the bad luck to have to go to the hospital every weekday for treatment for the last 2 weeks and the next 4. I live with him, and I've had to temporarily quarantine with my boyfriend to make sure I don't spread the virus to or get it from him.

Online classes have, for me, gone about as smooth as they could have. I'm taking a lighter load this semester, and both professors I have are part time and have jobs and lives outside of their KSU classes, one being a high school history teacher, and the other being a psychologist. This has been interesting, as they are dealing with major entities in addition to the university, and luckily it seems that students have been understanding.

I have many friends who have had to come home from their other institutions, and I do have to say that it seems that KSU has been doing better than many other institutions with keeping us informed. Every one of my friends including

myself has a unique situation that adds more stress to this whole ordeal.

The atmosphere overall online has been fairly tense - everyone knows someone that could get the virus and have major consequences, and everyone also knows someone who hasn't been being as careful as they should be. Netflix has removed the option to stream in HD due to internet providers urging that an overload of the internet could occur due to do many people being at and working from home. I use an online board game system with my parents, and the system is almost always overloaded.

There's a general distrust and frustration with the state and national government, more so than normal, though I do see more liberal media, and I've seen that many conservatives are fairly satisfied with national response. It does seem that even some of those that voted for Kemp, our governor, are frustrated with his response - too slow and uninformed.

We've been trying to get more takeout than usual to support our local businesses through this time, and its been worrying to see empty parking lots at peak times on Saturday nights. My boyfriends potential internship offer was cancelled, and he will most likely be graduating into a recession, which is worrying.

We've taken to buying two gallons of milk to try and not go to the store for two to three weeks. It's been an adjustment - we never had to think about whether you'd be endangering someone by going to the grocery store before. Walmart was mayhem and I've heard that they out more preventative measures in place in the last few days, but Publix has been tolerable as long as you don't go at peak times.

The first week of quarantine was rough, but as we acclimated we found that making sure to get outside, go for a walk, and just get some sun has been incredibly good for mental health

Marceline Lewis

and well-being. We both work from home already do the shift in terms of work hasn't been too bad.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Not seeing my father, and worrying about him going to the hospital daily for something completely unrelated. He's told me that the unit he is in is far from the ER, and that no one is allowed into his unit at the moment without reason for being there - my mom can't even go in with him. I'm hopeful that he will get through this but very worried as the cancer was already stressful, and this is a very real scary addition.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Nardeen Saleb

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I don't think anyone was expecting COVID-19 to force everyone into virtual learning and shut down the campus. Even from a week before the campus was shut down, it was still just a rumor. I was lucky to not live on campus, I rent a nearby apartment, however my sister and I returned from college to be with our parents. The first week of online learning, my professors were almost completely silent. It wasn't until the second week that professors started telling us how things would go for the rest of the semester. The following week, it was KSU's scheduled spring break, which was pointless since everyone just stayed home. We are currently in the fourth week and stricter "shelter in place" orders have been implemented in Georgia. During the second week of virtual classes, my family started getting sick. My sister was tested positive for COVID-19. She had a fever that neared 103 and the doctor prescribed her antibiotics for the symptoms and to keep it out of her lungs. Due to the shortage of tests, the rest of us (my mother, father, and myself) did not get tested. We were blessed that it did not hit us hard, we just had high fevers and coughing. Our travel plans for the summer were derailed. Our family from Scotland, Dubai, and Egypt had already booked their plane tickets to come visit the first two weeks of May. That is most likely not going to happen. My immediate family and

Nardeen Saleb

I planned to visit Europe during the summer as well. We know for a fact this will not be taking place.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

I don't think I have ever stayed at home for this long. I have completely run out of things to do and I feel I have watched every movie and show on Netflix, Hulu, Disney +, and Prime Video. My sleep schedule has drastically been affected. I go to bed around 4 am and I wake up around noon.

Ransley Cummings

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I am a sophomore at KSU. I am studying Leadership through the Integrative Studies Program. I work on campus in the Department of Sports and Recreation with Outdoor Adventures. I am a trip leader and a Climbing Gym Attendant. The rec center has closed along with campus, leaving me and over 200 other students (with the Rec. Dept. alone) without our work. Not only is my job my only source of income, but it is my whole life. When I'm not in class I'm either working or at work. My coworkers and bosses mean so much to be, they have become like family. We had trips that were cancelled, one was a once in a lifetime trip to Maine, and events that are big and anticipated by many. I am sad, lonely, and struggling. I do in-person classes only, and never skip class unless I'm sick. Not being able to go to class has kept me off schedule, missing assignments, and missing the great connection I had with my professors this semester.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

I had to find a way to schedule my week. I never skip class, and I was always on top of my assignments. Being home and having everything different, I have missed assignments and missed the presence of classmates and professors.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Hayley Leavitt

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

It's become extremely isolating, classes for art majors struggle to function, and all around it's been very stressful and tough on my mental health. Having to jump almost immediately into classes after transitioning out of every single normal aspect of day to day life has been a struggle. Keeping up has been hard.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

For me it has been classes. Going to class was a large chunk of my social interaction, it kept me motivated and gave me a sense of purpose. It's been a bit like floating in a void.



KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Phaina Dubuisson

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Oh, man. Where do I even begin? I am a senior here at Kennesaw, and this is my final semester. Never in a million years did I imagine that this is how my last semester of undergrad would play out. I am a student, who really enjoys and honestly, needs the structure of going to class throughout the week. I very intentionally did not register for all online classes because it just wasn't the best fit for me. When Kennesaw announced that campus was closing for two weeks, I wasn't very shocked considering how many other schools were doing the same thing. The big surprise came when campus was closed for the remainder of the semester. I had no idea that my last time on campus was my last time. I didn't get to soak it in like I wanted and intended to. I didn't get around to taking senior pictures around campus. News of graduation ceremonies being postponed made me cry. What a shock it was to be holed in my house, not going to campus, not seeing other students and friends, not being able to finish out my internship, and so many other feelings layered in there.

Remote learning has really been a challenge for me. It's requiring a level of discipline and self control that I haven't really used prior. Life feels very dream-like. I am taking a class that's very difficult for me, so having to learn the content online has been stressful, especially because I need to pass

Phaina Dubuisson

this class in order to graduate! Thankfully, I was already living off campus, so I didn't need to move. I can't imagine the stress of those who did. Some of my friends were having a hard time with the idea considering their homes were not the best place for them to be.

Social distancing/self-quarantine have been interesting. The first week of this was incredibly challenging for my mental health. I felt very alone and trapped. I turned 22 while stuck in the house, unable to celebrate the way I had intended. Now, I've made myself a schedule to stick by for each day. My body wakes me up around 8, and I make breakfast then read my Bible with my roommates around 9. I do yoga around 10:30 then schoolwork for a majority of the day, especially since I am no longer working. My roommates and I watch a movie together around 6:30/7, and I usually go back to homework or do something fun like painting or reading before bed. This schedule really helps me stay on top of things and not slip into a rut.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The most difficult thing has been coming up with a new routine. Everything I did has now been taken away. I don't go to work, to campus, or to my internship site anymore. Another thing that has been hard for me is practicing gratitude. Despite the hardships, there are so many things I can be grateful for. I am grateful that graduation ceremonies are postponed rather than cancelled. I am grateful to not be sick. I am grateful to be able to finish out the semester, even if it's online. I am grateful to have not had to move. I am grateful to be alive.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Tatiana Gyori

APRIL 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

It's super weird, and it's sad to see how seniors don't get their graduation. I don't mind working from home, but at the same time I miss being around everyone and finishing my semester. It is bittersweet.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Moving from face to face to virtual classes. It's hard to stay on top of everything and I sometimes miss homework since I'm not used to it and my professors have not been lenient.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Aziza Bally

APRIL 7, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I am a full time student. I adapted the remote learning very easily because I am used to online classes. Being in quarantine at home is helping me focus on my last exams and assignments. We constantly received updates from the president of KSU and our professors. The hardest part is not to walk for my bachelor degree graduation in May. I am graduating in Organizational and Professional Communication.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The most difficult change is staying at home and not visiting friends and family members.



Davis Mullvain

APRIL 9, 2020

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

We got the news that the university systems of Georgia were shutting down member schools on Thursday March 12, 2020 it is a day, and a week, that no one will ever forget. The Wednesday before was when the impact of the virus became real in my life. Sitting in the Starbucks in the Social Science building on the morning of 3/11/20 I watched as the DOW fell 1,000 points at the open, and was promptly closed for 15 minutes. As the day wore on you could tell students around campus were becoming uneasy, a virus born across the world had reached home, and no one knew what to make of it. Wednesday the 11 would end up being the last day of “normal” life, at least up to this point. The next day began with the continued confusion shared between the students and professors. As word came in of local public school systems closing down, no professor I talked to had any idea what KSUs plan was, other than they were expected to be prepared to start teaching online, but when? After my classes on Thursday I was on the campus green with my friends, we were just enjoying the day and trying to figure out what was going on when someone yelled across the green, “UGA and UNG just shut down for 2 weeks”. I looked around as everyone around me immediately got on their phones to try and get information. As the world around us shut down, we tried to continue the day as normally as possible, with no

Davis Mullvain

official word from KSU, life had to go on. I had a play to see for my theatre class and a test on Friday I had to study for. But the rest of the day was filled with this eerie confusion and helpless feeling, no one wanted to be alone so my friends and I stayed together studying behind the student building until dark. As I took my seat in Stillwell theatre we finally heard official word from KSU, a near 4 hours after most state universities, everyone in the theatre picked up their phones, read the email and began to converse. Luckily the show had not started yet, but that was the moment our lives were officially changed. The news was not great, but at least we finally had heard official word. KSU was shutting down in person teaching and on campus living for 2 weeks. After the show I rushed to UV 600 to begin packing for 2 weeks away + spring break. That night and next morning was a blur, hundreds of cars rolled off campus that night, it looked like move in day but backwards. The mood was a confused sadness, with the NBA, MLB, March Madness and the Masters all canceled or postponed no one knew anything. It was the most confusing and uncertain period I've witnessed. I took pictures and videos of students' reactions and students moving out, recognizing the historical magnitude of these days, said goodbye to all the people I could and drove home, unsure of when I would be back. Shortly after, we were told KSU would be online for the rest of the semester. I had to move the rest of my stuff out of my dorm and adjust to a new normal. I am writing this on April 9th 2020 and every aspect of American life has been completely uprooted by the coronavirus. No sporting events, no in person church services, no "non essential" travel, no large crowds, really no anything. Spirits for now are high but the longer we're told to shelter in place the harder it will become. I was born in June of 2001 and do not remember much about the time following the attacks of 9/11 but the friendliness of strangers, general patriotism and sense of unification we as a nation are experiencing now, in the midst of Covid-19 is what I

imagine it being like when post 9/11 America was young. For now, we stay inside, avoid public places and other people, and wait for the day life in America returns to normal, what a “post corona America” will look like, no one knows. I only hope it is better and kinder than before. God bless America

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

I have found it difficult to be away from my friends and the community I enjoyed at KSU. Motivation to put max effort into my online classes is also a struggle sometimes. It is also difficult to stay positive and have a good attitude when the news is full of death and the presumed worsening of our situation.

KSU AFFILIATION

Staff

Kelly Hoomes

APRIL 10, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

After nearly a month of remote work as a staff member, I have settled into a new normal of telework, video meetings, and monitoring KSU Today email for daily updates or new virtual opportunities.

I remember on Thursday, March 12, it seemed likely that some action would be taken with the approaching virus looming. That evening my husband and I went to the grocery store for our normal weekly duty and found the store very crowded, many shelves empty, and check-out lines that snaked around the store. We ended up standing in the check-out line for 2 hours that night. In the grocery line, I checked my KSU email and read the email that was sent after I left for the day, indicating the two-week pause of working on-site for non-essential employees. Local schools had also received the notification and everyone flooded the grocery store. The next day back in the office, I rushed to finish all on-site work pack up my work and prepare to work from home for the next two weeks. Little did I know, the two weeks would stretch on longer.

Although this uncertain time is filled with fear and anxiety, I am thankful that KSU has taken the virus threat seriously from the beginning and wasted no time in taking the proper

precautions. I am proud to work for an institution that values the health and well being of staff and students.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Adapting to the uncertainty and wrapping my mind around the surreal nature of this event. I still find myself saying, “Is this really happening!?”

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Elizabeth

APRIL 11, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

This pandemic has really been exceptionally perplexing to live through and there has not been a single aspect of daily life that hasn't been impacted by it. Aside from the inconvenience and difficulty that has been caused by having to take intensive STEM classes online, outside life has been borderline apocalyptic. Living in the sub-urban Atlanta area you get used to the constant background noise of cars and sirens. But now there is just overwhelming silence, especially at night when I take my dog out for his walk. The dreaded Atlanta traffic is now missing and anyone would think that it would be a welcome change but, on the contrary, it is all the more unnerving.

Masks or face coverings of any kind are highly recommended and many people wear them when going out. I, myself, have just started wearing a homemade, pink, fabric mask that I was able to get at work for \$5.

The most alarming personal experience from this pandemic is a result of the desperation manifesting. I work at an independent bookstore on the outskirts of Kennesaw which sits next to a store that sells phone accessories and other merchandise. Two days ago, there was a break-in at the phone store next to ours through the back door early in the morning, in which hundreds of dollars worth of merchandise were stolen. The burglars also attempted to break into the back of my store, but thankfully, were unsuccessful. I was the one to find the displaced, and

fallen items in the back room that day. In my confusion, I circled around the store to the outside of the back door and found the door handle had been mangled by what looks like to be a hammer, and a wide gap in the door where the perpetrators tried to pry the door open with a crowbar. The paint was peeled off the door as well from this labor. Our thoughts at my store are that the burglars mistook our back door for the store next door and tried to pry it open. Realizing their mistake at some point they moved to their intended target and executed their job.

This violation has really put into perspective the desperation people are feeling at their onset unemployment. And after only three weeks. It will only get worse from here until the end of this shut down.

The mental and emotional impact from this pandemic are also acute. It's a beautiful spring outside and I can't even go to the local or state parks in the area to hike like I do every year because most of them are closed. I look forward to the spring every winter because I suffer from mild Seasonal Affective Disorder and the springs are always a welcome reprieve. But with staying indoors, the isolation triggers depression and loneliness.

Hopefully this pandemic will be eradicated soon and a vaccine developed to fight the future COVID break outs that are expected and inevitable.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Having to take extremely difficult STEM classes online, like my Calculus class, has been incredibly compromising. For such intensive classes being in a physical classroom should be mandatory as there is no other way to learn the coursework as effectively.

Staying inside, especially right after a whole winter indoors, is proving to be more difficult and discouraging than anticipated. Especially when no one knows how long this shut down will last.

KSU AFFILIATION

Staff

Adina Langer

APRIL 15, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

The week of March 13 was a whirlwind of change, with ups and downs in actions and expectations. I experienced my first unexpected day of tele-work on Tuesday, March 10, when my son was sent home from school when he complained of a headache and phlegm in his throat. By Friday the 13, we were informed that his school would be closed for at least the next two weeks, but I had a feeling that the closure would be indefinite.

I was scheduled to present at a Civil Rights conference sponsored by the KSU Department of African and African Diaspora Studies on Friday, March 13, along with my colleagues James Newberry and JoyEllen Williams. Even when I attended the conference on Thursday morning, and people were presenting as normal, uncertainty hung in the air. I remember implementing an intense regime of hand-washing and distancing myself from the other attendees, some of whom had traveled from other states to come to the conference. I had lunch that day with a friend who works at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, and by the time we were having lunch, she had already been asked to transition to telecommuting. By that evening, Thursday the 12, we were told that KSU campus would close at 5:00 p.m. on Friday. The emails from KSU reflecting the decisions of the USG Board of Regents were dizzying. My husband,

who works for GSU, had similar, but not identical, missives to follow. At one point, he was told not to say anything to his students about the possibility of a transition to remote learning, but that quickly changed when the directive came from the top.

Friday morning, March 13, was the last time I saw my colleagues in person. We presented our panel to a small (very small) group of conference attendees, and then we went back to our offices to gather supplies for an indeterminate amount of time working from home.

The first week of telecommuting was my husband's official spring break, so he took on full responsibility for childcare and education. We have a six-year-old and a three-year-old. I was able to use that time to plan out my schedule of projects to work on from home, and to update communications around cancellations. At that time, the official timetable on the closure was only two weeks, but I had a feeling it would last much longer. I figured it would be more than two weeks but less than four months. This remains to be seen. KSU has since moved all Maymester and summer classes online.

Now, we are in a new routine of sharing responsibilities for childcare and education and attempting to move projects forward. I have had to make the difficult decision to put some planned projects on hold in order to prioritize ones that we'd planned to launch in the spring or the summer. In some ways, this time has a pleasant rhythm. Gone are the long commutes and rushed breakfasts. However, the uncertainty is difficult to live with, and sometimes the fear of the worst-case-scenarios of COVID-19 hangs in the air. My anxiety intensifies when I go out now into a world full of familiar places that have been shuttered and people rushing around in home-made masks. The streets of my neighborhood and the rooms of my house are my refuge.

Adina Langer

I am keenly aware of my privilege in this moment. I am grateful for a job that allows me to work from home, my access to digital technology, my smart and understanding colleagues, and for my health. I know that others are not nearly so lucky. I have tried my best to support local businesses, domestic workers, refugees and immigrants, even as I feel myself growing more distant from the diversity of people who touched my normal life. I am aware of the challenges and heroism of physicians and medical staff, even as I pray that no one in my family will need to encounter them during this time. My father, a medical oncologist, has filled me in on changes that his hospital has made to allow him to continue to practice medicine and support his patients without endangering his life or the life of his patients.

I am also aware of my blessings. I have grown closer to my immediate family and friends, with regularly scheduled Zoom calls. My synagogue has offered an array of digital options including meditation and Friday night virtual candle-lightings for young families. Passover and Easter both took on a lovely gravity this year as we were unable to travel and had to rely on the warmth of our own home. I've watched my children blossom and remain committed to learning, even as their school scrambled to provide meaningful digital resources.

It can be difficult to reflect on an important historical moment as it is happening. I can only write my piece of the narrative and record my experiences for future analysis.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Balancing work and the education of my children.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Alexandria Powe

APRIL 19, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Thankfully, I wasn't displaced from housing in the Spring Semester of 2020, but I am trying to secure a room for the fall. My family actually lives in Dallas, Georgia and as such all six of our regular household members, plus my niece and soon to be one of my cousins and my older brother newly liberated from jail, have been sequestered in a four bed three bath. I am sick of their faces.

As far a school, to be honest, I'm losing my motivation so close to the end of this semester. Everyday is like the last and I dread every assignment, but not more than I dread failure. I have already dropped my French class, mostly because the online instruction was tedious and the purpose of learning French has been rendered null. I know how I learn best and I didn't see myself succeeding in the current online environment.

The stress may not seem like a lot or to you or it may seem trivial, but it's the compound of responsibilities to my family and myself. Schoolwork, future job opportunities, constant managing of children or pets, changing class registration, bickering with my family, going out for groceries, the news, helping with others Schoolwork, FAFSA.

In my house I am one of the three people that ever leave and it is for groceries. We are still waiting on masks and I have

Alexandria Powe

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MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The waiting. Waiting for a decision, waiting for a stimulus check, waiting for a cure. I think that the waiting has given me time to overthink and drive myself crazy. It feels like nothing happens yet it all happens at the same time.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Jasmine Carter

APRIL 21, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Due to the Covid pandemic, I've been put out of work, locked in a room for over a month, and forced to abandon laboratory experiments that were set to complete by the end of the semester. My relaxing spring break at my beach condo in South Carolina had to be postponed, so I've been terribly bogged down with school work and difficult topics I've been made to practically learn on my own.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The most difficult part of this entire process is having a partner who is an essential worker. Everyday he risks his health nearly 2 hours away to keep the gas lines working properly. I worry for him everyday.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Shazad Hamid

APRIL 21, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

As we continue to social distance, it has affected everything from hanging with friends to even going to the grocery store. As a graduate student, I loved to go to the KSU rec center and take advantage of the gym equipment and all the activities available to students there. It has been hard to exercise with the gym closed. Instead, I try to hike and go for runs outside on trails or parks which remain open. I'm fortunate enough to have a job that allows me to work from home and I have also been attending my classes online which honestly has been very good and less stressful because of the lack of commute involved. I usually have to rush from my office in Atlanta to Kennesaw to make it to class on time. This has been a humbling experience as we have to stay inside and it becomes difficult to spend time with friends and family. It's hard to stay inside for too long without social interaction which is why FaceTime is nice but it's not the same as the real thing. I miss going out with friends and family but I know to keep them safe it's best to stay home for now. I try to read, watch Netflix, and I'm even learning to cook meals I've never made before. The time has allowed for some introspection and to be thankful that things are not as bad as they seem.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

It's difficult to avoid seeing friends and also it becomes uncomfortable just doing basic things like going to the store and going outside to the park because at the same time you want to be safe and wear a mask but it can be very demotivating and scary.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Sean Lu

APRIL 21, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I left my job before the fall 2019 semester to start the MSAS graduate program and to be a stay at Dad for my then six month old daughter. After a rough start we got in a good routine, my wife would come home from work and I'd go to class three nights a week. This semester started very similarly, with classes two nights a week and one online. After Covid-19 took effect and we went digital I found it very hard to find time with a family to get stuff done at home. I was staying up later after my family went to sleep, usually until 1am reading and doing work. I use to be able to go to a coffee shop on weekends to get stuff done but that's not possible any more. With the once a week graduate classes we'd usually have time after class to do homework so I'd usually complete it before coming home each week.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Finding time to get work done.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Heather

APRIL 21, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

The shift to remote learning was the worst part. None of my classes can set students up for success through online instruction. My husband had no hours to provide income for us to survive so we did instacart delivering groceries. My mom caught Covid-19 and we helped her through it then had to be self quarantined for a week to make sure we didn't have it. My teachers assumed I had nothing going on besides classes while all of this was happening and assigned more work to the point i almost couldn't handle it.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Trying to develop teaching skills without being able to get comfortable teaching in front of a class.

KSU AFFILIATION

Faculty

Andrew Jones

APRIL 21, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

As a member of faculty (Limited Term Assistant Professor of History in the Department of History and Philosophy), my day-to-day life has changed quite significantly. Rather than teaching four face-to-face classes on Monday/Wednesday/Friday, I've been recording lectures and shifting to online primary source discussions using the KSU digital platform, D2L.

During the pandemic, so far, my colleagues and department leadership have remained in good contact via email and weekly virtual check-ins using Microsoft Teams. I've felt supported and encouraged by KSU, insomuch as the institution is represented by my department.

My son (3) has had to return home from day-care, so day-to-day teaching responsibilities have become more difficult to arrange. My wife and I have had to plan strategically in order to finding quiet time to record lectures in our small house with two young children. This has certainly increased my stress levels, yet I'm well aware that - in comparison to many others in Georgia, the U.S., and the world - it is only a minor inconvenience.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Working from home has certainly been the most difficult change. I miss my concerted and undistracted time to work and I also miss seeing and interacting with my students.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Nicholas McRae

APRIL 21, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

The pandemic had affected my job status, although I'm primarily an all online student at KSU, I formerly was a part of the night owl crew. It made it difficult as I now do delivery service and makes me worried about being infected by the virus itself.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

I haven't had to make major adjustments in school, but it is stressful because I have to check on my family in New York and at home while still attending makes it worrisome.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student and
Student Staff

Reece Vogel

APRIL 21, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I struggle to keep depression at bay under normal circumstances, and the only way I can effectively do so is by interacting with others at work and school. People energize me, even when I feel as though I can't possibly have the energy to deal with day-to-day life. COVID-19 put my social life -- which is greatly important to my mental health -- on hold. Motivation to do even basic tasks has become exhausting, but I can manage with the help of my close friends and boyfriend who support me from over the phone.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Although I can now handle the basic tasks of preparing meals, sleeping regularly, and organizing a daily work schedule, I am not fond of how KSU as an institution has been expecting students and staff to continue with work as though nothing is wrong. Few of my professors extended any assignment deadlines when we switched to online classes, and the one that did only extended a major research paper by two days. Other universities in Georgia have given students up to two weeks to recover from sudden lack of housing, unemployment, and mental toll due to the pandemic. KSU, however, expects that everyone continue as normal. Such a mindset undermines the emotional exhaustion that COVID-19 has put us all through, professors,

Reece Vogel

staff, and students alike. I also work for the university as a student assistant for cultural awareness programming, and I can feel the toll that these unreasonable expectations have taken on my boss and coworkers to do virtual programming of the same caliber as in-person programming. I can cope with the social, monetary, and health crises, but KSU piling on schoolwork expectations as if we have nothing else on our minds is frustrating to say the least.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Chelsea Sharpe

APRIL 21, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I am a senior here at ksu. I have a three year old daughter, her life has changed completely with school being closed. As of mother, you have to explain to your kids the best way possible that things are going to get better. My job laid me off, I haven't received unemployment yet and things have been very difficult. Managing school work, while taking care of my daughter as well as trying not to stress about finances. I hope this pandemic passes soon and we can go back to our regular lives. I am blessed to say I am alive, healthy, and my daughter is at home safe with me. Thanks

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Managing school work , and taking care of my daughter. loss of a job and my daughters school closing down.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student and Staff

Ashley Hale

APRIL 21, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

It all started when my perfectly healthy boyfriend randomly caught a really bad illness. We took him to the clinic and they diagnosed him with pneumonia and bronchitis, but they sent us to urgent care for screening. This was in mid-February. A week after his diagnosis the first cases of COVID-19 had been announced in Georgia. It took my boyfriend about a two weeks to fully recover. Friends, family, and even ourselves joked about how he had to have had corona. As more time goes on, we have made strong connections between his illness and COVID-19 which made us almost certain that he did indeed have it. As I was taking care of him, I was very concerned. He could not stand up without being winded and his fever was running at 103 degrees most days. Even he said that he felt like he was fading out a couple times. He eventually recovered and is fine now. He only had contact with me the entire time. I began to feel a flu coming on a couple days after he began to feel better. I felt like my head was going to explode and I had a continuous dry cough, but only for a few days. It was nothing compared to what my boyfriend had. I attributed that to the excessive amount of zinc and vitamin-c I was taking while taking care of him or the fact that it could have truly just been poorly timed random pneumonia.

The next week on Thursday, KSU announced its initial two week closure. Since I worked for the school I tried to get information from my boss to no avail. Monday came around and KSU announced their closure for the semester. All I heard from my boss was that she was working from home and our programs were canceled so I was non-essential. That was the last thing I have heard from my boss. As a senior, I could no longer remain a student assistant past the end of the semester since I was graduating. So I was and still am furloughed until the end of my contract. I've applied to a little over 70 jobs now. I've received one call back which turned in to two phone interviews and one video call group interview. I am still waiting to hear back on that one. Other than that, finding a job seems useless as there aren't positions available. I had to make the tough call to my apartment's manager saying I am unemployed because of COVID-19 and can no longer renew my lease. I also made the choice of buying cat food and litter instead of food for myself because I rather be hungry than have to give my cats away. It is looking like I will have to rehome them if I don't find a job by the end of this lease in May as cats can't live in my car. I have slept in my car before due to a previously toxic relationship, so living in my car again shouldn't be too bad.

The last interesting experience related to COVID-19 I'd like to share would be Easter. I am not a particularly religious person but my boyfriend's family is Catholic. Something that has been affecting them is the closure of the church services. As a few of his family members have discussed with me, it is very upsetting missing mass and the Eucharist when you have never missed it before in your life. Thankfully their church has been streaming their services online, but its not the same due to several intricacies and requirements of the faith and worship, especially during lent. For Easter, his immediately family (parents, brother and his wife, and his sister) and I gathered at his parents house for lunch and to watch the service together. Service was an interesting experience; it

Ashley Hale

was streaming on the living room TV and we sang along and prayed as if we were there. His grandparents normally attend this Easter celebration, but were instructed to stay home as they are older and susceptible. During lunch, we video called them and ate lunch “together”. Then we all opened our laptops and played cards with the grandparents using a table top gaming simulator. There was quite a bit of yelling at the iPad with the video call to tell the grandparent’s who’s turn it was or to ask if they needed a particular card. Overall, there were a lot of technical difficulties but it was an interesting experience celebrating Easter quarantined style.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The most difficult challenge I have faced due to COVID-19 has been KSU forgetting about all their student assistants. My boss stopped speaking to me the day KSU announced they would be moving online. I can’t find a job because no one is hiring. So thanks to KSU’s terrible HR department I am now unemployed. Due to this unemployment I am now facing homelessness / sleeping in my car because I can no longer afford my lease and the apartment’s office is not offering help. I am most likely going to have to give up all my pets as they cannot stay in my car with me. And lastly, I can’t afford food and I am hypoglycemic, but at least I have health insurance. I tried selling most of my valuables for food but pawn shops are no longer considered essential. Thank you KSU for caring more about buying signs than assuring your student workers are taken care of. Good thing I’m too broke to sue.



Tracy W Davis

Photograph of fallen tree on house, April 13, 2020.

APRIL 21, 2020

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I'm glad to be part of the KSU community as a student. Online classes weren't an option for me as I am a classroom learner. When COVID-19 hit, online was the only option. Being online took me out of my comfort zone. I have a new perspective about online learning as my instructors help to make the transition smooth. I decide to quarantine with my elderly mother as she has a better internet connection company. That was the best choice I made. On April 13th, a huge tree fell on the part of her house. We safely made it out. During this time, I had no internet connections for class. A neighbor allowed me to use theirs, so I can continue meeting my class during class time. As different sets of people had to access the house; social distancing was in practice. My mom and I would go out the back to allow people to come in the front. Once they left, I sprayed the house with Lysol and wiped down door handles and light switches. It's a pain, but it could have been worse. Online classes have helped me focus on the good and not the bad.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Living in the house with my mother as an adult has been an adjustment. She's a night owl. I do like the fresh breakfast every morning.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Nicole Hill

APRIL 22, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously changed life as we know it. For me, my entire living situation changed. I lived on campus prior to the threat of corona virus and had to move off campus and move back home two hours away from Kennesaw because of its spread. I noticed significant personal growth in my relationships with other people and had good, true and constant friends. Unfortunately, being unable to be with the friends I care about has led to some regression of my personal growth. Even so, I don't risk going outside or visiting them because I have asthma, problems regulating my blood sugar, and endometriosis, which weakens my immune system. The combination of all those things not only makes me more susceptible to catching the virus, but also more likely to have severe complications as a result of it. I had a job on campus in the athletic department, and all my events were cancelled. Potentially the biggest event my team and I missed was the Kellogg's Celebrity Crunch Classic. Kennesaw State's convocation center was hosting the game and my team and I were going to be able to work with Shaquille O'Neal and another famous basketball player. COVID has brought a lot of disappointment, but it also changed my perspective on the government and the CDC. The CDC fails to deliver accurate information regarding the virus, and the government values money over

lives. Georgia had yet not hit our peak by April 22, 2020 and yet the Governor Kemp already made an executive decision to reopen some businesses by April 24. In addition to the disappointment in my government, I also became disappointed in other students. People continued to go out, party, and get drunk together despite the stay at home order. The incredibly flippant way some people treat the virus and it's consequences is infuriating. The biggest example I've seen of this has been from Greek Life. I am in a sorority, and I haven't seen any posts of people not social distancing from the people in it. However, unnamed fraternities and specific meme era of other sororities seemed to only care about keeping the party going. The most surprising thing about it, is the main person posting about it all has severe diabetes and requires an insulin pump. Diabetes is one of the conditions that is commonly known to make the effects of COVID-19 worse, and even fatal. This is especially difficult for me to see as she is a nursing major along with me. The lack of concern and selfish motives for going out during a pandemic also concerns me. I plan on going into the healthcare field, and watching how many people don't care and end up in the emergency rooms and indirectly being responsible for the death of healthcare workers terrifies me for my future in the industry.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The most difficult change has been my shift in perspective regarding the role of the CDC and the government in giving us accurate information. The government reacted too slowly, and prolonged the effects of corona virus. In addition, several Facebook posts have indicated the view that "freedom is more important than security". This mentality leaves me disappointed in the American people and the government for not immediately jumping into action when we saw the impact of the virus in Italy.

KSU AFFILIATION

Faculty

Mary Behrman

MAY 9, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Luckily, I have been teaching entirely online for the past year, so I did not need to alter my teaching too much due to the pandemic. None of my students contracted the disease during the semester, thankfully, but a number of them had parents working in critical positions such as nursing and several of them having friends or family members, particularly grandparents in nursing homes, suffering from the virus. I considered it important to acknowledge the effect that this crisis had on my students' lives and, consequently, created extra-credit assignments connecting the course topics to the pandemic, which are attached. Language's effect on identity serves as the theme for my English 1102 courses, and these students analyzed the plethora of terms related to the pandemic. For my early British literature course (English 2120), students chose one of the works we had read and analyzed it in light this crisis.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

As far as teaching, I think the most difficult change for me has been the suspension of the celebratory moments that usually serve as the highlight of the academic year. For example, the English department normally hosts an annual Emerging Writers contest, which culminates in a ceremony for the finalists, who invite their parents and the professor

for whom they wrote their paper. The ceremony usually occurs in April, right before finals, and I always love meeting my students and their families and watching their excitement as they accept their awards and read selections of their papers. This year, of course, the ceremony was suspended. The department also hosts a creative-writing contest, but, after many students submitted their essays, we had to suspend the contest due to a lack of funds. Finally, I find it profoundly sad that this year's graduating class will not be able to have a traditional graduation.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Leonardo Barranco

MAY 29, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

COVID-19 completely changed my day to day life at Kennesaw. Before the virus happened I was an on-campus resident walking to class everyday. After, I had to go home which is one hour away from. The sad part is that I had finally started making friends and hanging out with new people and now I'm just locked in my house not being able to do anything with anyone. The only part of social distancing that was hard is how boring it is. After going from living on-campus, hanging out with friends all the time and going out, and then changing to being locked inside a house with just your family, it changes a persons mental health.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The most difficult change was the school portion. I had to change the way I studied, my notes, even my schedule. At first it was difficult but once I made a new schedule and figured out what I had to do to be successful, it became much easier! To be successful with this new way of learning I had to make sure I sat down and and took good notes about everything my teacher had to say. I also had to email my teachers in order to communicate with them and that was sometimes difficult. In conclusion, all my teachers were very open minded and did the best they could to help me succeed and pass there class.

Ulrike Ingram

JUNE 1, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I have been sewing face masks for local hospitals and health care workers since March. There is a very active facebook and nextdoor group where we exchange sewing tips and supplies such as fabric, thread and elastic. I have learned a lot about sewing masks in the last couple of months and donated about 150 masks so far.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Managing time and space with all family members working/learning from home.



Photograph of masks sewn by Uli Ingram. April 17, 2020.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Natalie Faustine

JUNE 2, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Before the pandemic I had 2 jobs and was a full time student, so there was rarely a day where I don't have to leave the house. This quickly changed. As soon as everything escalated I was furloughed from my retail job, classes moved online, & my tutoring job with KSU moved online. Luckily I live in an off campus apartment so I did not have to move, but I have spent basically every day in my apartment unless I have to go to the grocery store or see my mom. I think KSU did a good job with the transition to online classes, as we were more prepared than other schools. I was supposed to study abroad in Spain for my Spanish minor this summer, but it was cancelled. I have lost 3 family members to COVID-19 within 2 months, which is really difficult. Despite everything, I'm thankful to be financially stable and still have the ability to continue my education with KSU.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

I have lost 3 family members to COVID-19 and 1 family member to an illness unrelated to COVID-19 since quarantine started. It's been a weird experience, as I would usually travel to my home state in order to attend mass & funeral services with my family; but due to the current circumstances I have had to sit at home and mourn alone. I attended a funeral on zoom, which was honestly the weirdest experience of my life.



Elizabeth Brumley

Photograph of adult and child holding hands and floor marker reminding people to practice social distancing. April 17, 2020.

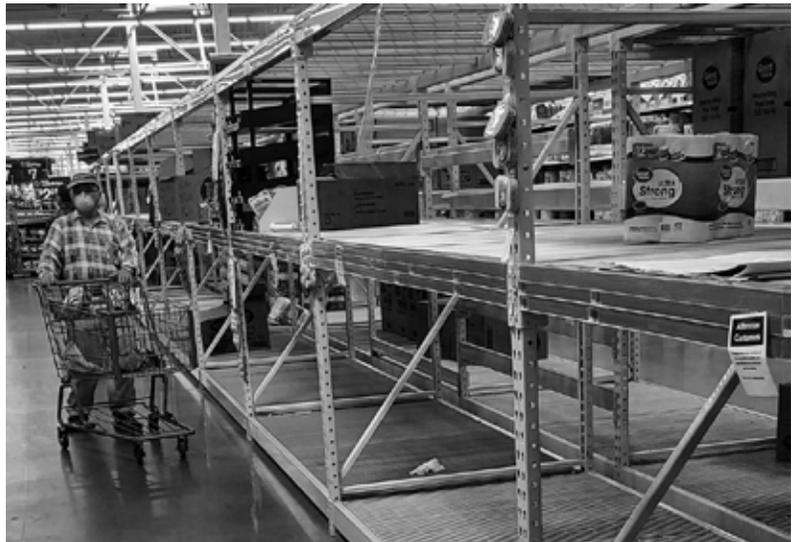
JUNE 3, 2020

KSU AFFILIATION

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Student

As a single mom returning to college in a way the shift to remote learning was a blessing because it gave me more time with my son than I have had in a long time. I also learned to be more organized on my own with my schoolwork because I didn't have a daily class schedule to adhere to. I had to organize all my project due dates and schedule my time every day to split between my son's online school and mine, and giving him the attention he deserves. As an art student the shut down made life more difficult because I had to rework projects because I lacked the resources I had at school, including direct interaction with professors. I was also supposed to go to NCUR and had to deal with the



Photograph of empty shelves at Wal-Mart. April 17, 2020.

Elizabeth Brumley

heartbreaking decision to cancel the event in Montana. My day to day life has changed alot as well as I chose to stay at my family home during the shut down for the assistance with my son while I was doing my own schoolwork and that meant alot more activities that I normally wouldn't do as my family also was locked into a move at the begining of the shut down which meant trips to homedepot and Walmart more often than my normal and I experienced the 6 foot distance in lines and the other people that had to make their



Photograph of masked customers practicing social distancing in line at Wal-Mart. April 17, 2020.



Photograph of people wearing masks at a Kroger. April 17, 2020.

necessary trips out and about. The couple of times I returned and went through campus it looked nearly like a ghost town. Community wise I have probably interacted more with fellow students in online chat groups/discussions than i would have in person in class. The freedom of lack of time constraints for class time for discussion and not having to speak out loud in front of others made it easier to participate and I felt a strong sense of community among my peers all trying to get through this together.



Photograph showing masked woman carrying food from a restaurant. April 11, 2017.



Photograph of customers in line practicing social distancing outside a Home Depot. April 5, 2020.

Note: All photographs by Elizabeth Brumley were taken in the areas of Braselton and Buford, Georgia.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Brian Cochran

JUNE 21, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I think my story is a bit different than most. It is a positive story, strangely enough. Let me start off by talking about myself a little bit, otherwise it will be difficult to understand why this impacted me in a way that wasn't really that bad. It's a horrible thing, to have so many people die from a disease like this, but not all of us were affected in the same way. I'm 29 years old, and I'm working towards my Bachelor's Degree in English with a Minor in Professional Writing, so that I can have a better life at some point. I am currently scheduled to graduate in the fall, and I am a part-time student due to my job. Since I work full-time, 36 to 40 plus hours a week as a manager at a movie theatre, I found that part-time schooling was the best course for me.

When I first learned of COVID-19, I think I dismissed it just like everyone else. At this point, I am kind of used to hearing about strange diseases from overseas that never end up affecting me. I started taking it seriously as soon as I learned about what was happening in Italy and about how many people were dying every day. Shortly after that (or maybe before, I can't remember), we received instructions at work for how to keep the theatre clean. I didn't have much to do at the time, since there weren't any big movies coming out, so I got one or more of my employees together each day and just assigned them to cleaning touch-points with sanitizing fluid. They all

begrudgingly started cleaning, just like they normally do, not taking it very seriously, just like most of them treat their jobs. You may sense some bitterness. I am getting a degree for a reason, I am tired of doing other people's jobs for them.

And that's what I did, because I didn't want to be the one sorry manager who was responsible for an outbreak in a place that had way more potential to have one than most other places. Attendance shot down, and almost nobody was showing up for movies. I remember each day I worked, we would receive word to cancel our pre-opens for movies that were coming soon and to take down the posters. They kept getting delayed every day, to the point that we had no new movies coming out. By my last day before we closed, we didn't have any "coming soon" posters to put up. For that last week, I would take some gloves, a couple microfiber towels, and the darn spray bottles that leaked onto my hand every time I sprayed, and I would spend however much of my shift possible spraying doorknobs and kiosks and such. It got pretty boring, and I'm glad that a select few employees started taking it seriously at that point.

After about a week or two of that, we finally had some more news about what we were doing to prevent it from affecting the industry. I will never forget how I felt after that phone call. I was at my parent's house, and we were eating dinner and talking about COVID-19. I remember they were all asking me what the theatre was doing, and if we were going to close down. Being just a grunt manager who does hiring and a few other things, I told them the truth. I had no idea. They asked me about school as well. Let me shift subjects for a moment. I believe the day before, I had received word from my professor that she had no idea what was going to happen. Everybody else in my class was kind of grilling the professor, and asking her why KSU was still open. I was so exhausted during that class, that I barely remember most of what happened. I had two in-person classes at the time. Honestly, I prefer online

Brian Cochran

courses. It takes me about an hour to an hour and a half just to get to campus, so I avoid it if I can.

I work until about 1 to 2 AM in the morning, five days a week. It is hard to wake up in time for class, and when I get there I am usually a zombie. Mixed in with my heavily introverted nature, it resulted in a cocktail of strange delirium and a desperate attempt to stay focused that made me feel pretty on edge. I think most of my classmates sensed this. Sorry guys. It was me, not you.

I was actually at work when I received word that KSU had been shut down. Some of my employees, who were students themselves from GSU, told me that their campus was shut down. I remember being shocked. Nothing like that had ever happened in my lifetime. Whenever big institutions like that encounter hardship, they usually have found a way to work around it, but not this time. I pulled out my phone immediately and checked my KSU e-mail. Sure enough, campus was shifting to online. I felt a tremendous amount of relief when I read this, followed by guilt. Should I feel happy that I don't have to go to campus anymore because of a deadly disease? Probably not, but I did. But there would be no more waking up to an alarm clock that I wanted to destroy. If it wasn't my phone, I probably would have by now.

It was the next day that I was at home with my parents, and I received a call from the general manager. I picked it up and walked outside so I could converse without distractions. I remember the lighting outside, the smell of the air, everything. The sun had just set, and the light was still lingering. The temperature was mild, and it smelled like pollen. He told me, probably too bluntly, that the movie theatre was shutting down and I was being laid off, along with everyone else. I would eventually be able to come back, but he had no idea when. I was shocked. Movie theatres never close, not even for Christmas and Thanksgiving. I felt sort of bad for my boss in that moment. He had to call 50 plus employees to tell them

that they were all losing their jobs, and had to give them instructions on how to file for unemployment. Poor guy. He must have felt terrible, I would have. I felt relief, mixed with a sense of worry about the future. “Uncertainty” was a word that got thrown around a lot, and for good reason. Nobody knew what was going on. The plan was to wait and see what the plan should be. I was worried, but also relieved.

You see, I was close to breaking. It just isn't easy to work the job that I do, let alone be a student with three classes at the same time. The late hours, the weekends, and the lack of healthy sleep was starting to wear me down. It is hard to have a social life with a schedule like that. Six years of working that job, and the days started both to seem longer and to blend together at the same time. I can't tell you how many times I have thought about quitting that job. I would even occasionally open up the “Voluntary Resignation Form” from the theatre's online database, just to remind myself that my time would come. I don't know how I ended up there as an introvert with my personality type. I mean, what was I thinking? Don't get me wrong, I'm good at the job, but it's just not my style. I don't regret getting that job, as it is one of the best decisions I have ever made and I have learned so much from it, but I felt such relief when I received that phone-call.

I learned of these two things within the same two-day period. My life came to a screeching halt. I was a well-oiled machine, and I had subconsciously developed a system of motivating myself to get through each day. It was like I was a freight train that had de-railed, and the cars behind it were crumpling in on the engine from sheer momentum. I had no idea what to do with myself. I went from working around 60 hours a week between all my responsibilities, to absolutely nothing. I must confess, I did not sleep that night, not at all. I couldn't, my body was literally shaking at times. From pacing back and forth, going for a run in the nearby park, to creating my Handshake account, I just had to find something to do with all my energy. This feeling lasted for a week or so.

Brian Cochran

To be honest, with the exception of those weeks, I handled it all pretty well. I was able to get an internship in April for the summer semester, I've lost 35 pounds, and used this time as reflection on how I was letting my reactive and emotional brain control my life. Learning how to regulate how I feel, and taking responsibility for it has been of great use to me. I'm not all the way there yet, but I will get there. I have gone for runs in the morning in the park near me. It is peaceful. I go home and do my work for my internship, which is entirely remote, and my class work as well. I have grown as a person and started taking care of my health, and started learning different ways to save money. For the first time in years, I am able to reflect on my life in a way that I could not before, and I am better for it. This has been a good experience for me, but I realize it isn't like that for everyone. I can still hear my upstairs neighbors screaming at each other on some nights. Maybe they are just new neighbors and they do that all the time, I'm not sure. Like I said, I'm an introvert, so the quarantine hasn't been especially taxing for me. While I do miss being around people sometimes, I mostly don't. It's just how I am. I like people, but I don't have the need for constant connection that most other people have. For once in my life, I am glad I am an introvert.

The internship has been a pretty positive experience. I had to do a few things in order to get the internship like create a Handshake account, update my resume, write a cover letter, and take a photo of myself in a suit. I also had to make a LinkedIn profile, and put together a portfolio. I applied for a few dozen places, and got a response from a small business out of Richmond, Virginia. The work was mainly boring contract and proposal writing. Boring sounded like a great change of pace, so I accepted the job. If you are actually reading this, please remember that there is no shame in taking work that you don't care about, so long as you work hard and stay positive while you are there. You won't be there forever. The internship gave me some encouragement, and, most importantly, something to do. It is just another stepping stone

in my path to a better future, and I couldn't be happier with my decision to start working there. My boss is cool, and the work is reasonable. Life is good.

That being said, I don't think I would have been nearly as well off if I didn't have my gaming buddies that I know through the internet. More days than not, I would connect to Discord and play Rocket League and Warzone with them. That was how I connected with others. Besides, I live in an apartment with my brother, so it isn't like I am alone. Going out to the grocery store was kind of strange, at first. I remember going to pick up some soda before all this happened, and wondering why it was so packed with people. There are always awkward moments when you get to close to somebody to get an item from the shelf they are blocking and they step away and apologize.

For weeks, the toilet paper was all gone. I don't understand why that is always the first to go. Luckily, and I use that word loosely, my mom was one of these types who stocked up on toilet paper and masks, for some reason, before anyone knew it was going to be bad. She didn't go crazy and buy more than she needed, but she was prepared. Props to her for thinking ahead of the rest of us, I guess. I am kind of ready to go back to work these days, it feels like a new challenge. I will approach it with a different mindset, and maybe I won't push myself too hard.

I'm sure they will ask me to require people to wear masks upon my return, but I'm not doing that. Before you judge me, understand this: many people will just refuse. Apparently, I'm supposed to kick them out if they refuse. I will literally have a riot on my hands if I even try, especially in Alpharetta. What am I supposed to do if they don't wear masks, tackle them and drag them out the front door? It doesn't matter what I do, it will be a lose-lose scenario for me. If I force people to wear masks, I will get yelled at, cursed out, and I'll probably end up having to call the police and security more than a

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few times. This isn't my first rodeo, it's not like I haven't been a manager in this field for like 5 years. I've kicked people out many times, but I don't have time to do it all day like I don't have an entire building to run. If I don't kick people out, I'm sure I'll just get complaints from some eyebrow-raising citizen who pretends to be concerned about COVID-19, and pretends that they aren't just yelling at me because they are awful people. Nope. Not fair. But that way is better than the security and safety issues that come with doing things the other way. So I'll stand there and get yelled at, give an Oscar-winning performance of an empathetic manager and nod my head. I'll live and, guess what, so will they.

Starting to understand why I went back to finish school? Either way, it's just a job, and a job that I am good at. It will be fine. Soon, I will return to work at the theatre, and I will take my final class in the fall. From that, I will get a job that will give me a more balanced lifestyle and a better chance at achieving my life goals. Things will eventually return to normal, I will be able to finally turn in that "Voluntary Resignation From" after I get a new job, and this COVID-19 thing will just seem like some weird fever dream.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The most difficult part about it was finding things to do. The first couple of weeks were kind of hard, because I was having trouble finding an internship, as well as adjusting my mental state to the new situation. After that, it was smooth sailing. I have to say, I am a bit of a strange case when it comes to this pandemic. When it comes to difficult changes, there were a few to be sure, but most of the changes were positive for me. I think more people should admit that this thing caused a positive shift to happen for them. I think that would be a good thing. I know people who work in worse jobs than I do, who are working more hours than I do, and their jobs constantly put them in life-threatening situations. However, they cannot

take time off. When we would talk, I tried not to bring up COVID-19 around them because I knew they were struggling to keep it together. All I could do was crack jokes and treat them like friends and human beings, because nobody else would.

I am probably among the people who suffered the least in this pandemic. I feel bad for my extroverted friends, as I am sure they are probably going to be slightly crazy after returning to work, and probably a little elated. I had an employee who once described our workplace as a “melting pot of extroverts.” I thought that was funny, and accurate. I really am the odd man out over there, except for maybe a few people. Part of me looks forward to seeing all of those people again.



Kandace James

Photograph of Kandace James in mask with "I'm a Georgia voter" sticker. June 3, 2020.

JUNE 24, 2020

KSU AFFILIATION

Student and Staff

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Navigating in a post-COVID nation is honestly daunting. I am a student at KSU as well as a staff member at KSU, so I am challenged with dealing with both sides of the spectrum. The first month or so of COVID was especially hard because, while I was struggling to adjust to having classes remotely, I still had to come into work every day. The library needed to stay open for the students who had nowhere else to go and had to stay on campus and needed access to a computer. The worst part was, most of the faculty were able to work from home, only the staff had to stay. I felt like I was put out to the dogs. It was scary because no one knew what the virus was or what it could do. News about it was updating and changing daily it seemed. I wore a mask but, two of my coworkers already fell ill to the virus and I didn't want to be the next. Safety came first for me, so I used my sick leave, so I didn't have to come in. Finally, a couple of months in, we were able to work remotely, which was a relief.

Even though I felt great about being able to work from home, now I had to figure out just how to work from home. Sometimes when you must motivate yourself to get up and work, especially when your bed is your desk, the motivation isn't there. Personally, I felt like shutting down from the world. Luckily, even though my energy was low, and I didn't want to communicate as much, technology was a helpful

tool. My coworkers and I have all our meetings through Microsoft hangout or collaborate ultra.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

Right before COVID hit, my therapist told me, “Your energy is your energy, and you are allowed to hold onto it, don’t let anyone or anything deplete your energy.” When I think about COVID, I think about the energy that was lost and gained, and then I question, was it ever lost and/or gained, or was it just transferred?

The biggest shift in me that I noticed is my drive has completely dropped. I feel like I have no desire. This pandemic coupled with the exposure of police brutality has shined a light on what makes me tick, what makes me inspired and it has simultaneously taken that inspiration away.

In thinking about my energy and how I feel like I’ve lost some, I wonder if it’s not lost but just recharging, or misplaced, or in hibernation. I could say the same for the state of this world right now. I’m not quite sure. What I am sure of is, this will make the history books, and one day I will recall this very moment with tears in my eyes or a chuckle in my throat or both.



Photograph of Kandace James and other protesters at Black Lives Matter march near Central Park in downtown Atlanta, May 31, 2020. Photograph by Treasure Johnson.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Tiffany Davis

JULY 6, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many parts of my life. My social life was impacted during this time of social distancing. Also, my life as a graduate student in the Master's in Professional Writing program at Kennesaw State University has experienced a significant shift. After the university went to remote learning at the end of March, I have been working on schoolwork from home. Luckily, the end of my Spring Semester was not greatly impacted by this change; All of the projects that I was working on were already supposed to be submitted digitally, so there was not a significant shift for their submissions at the end of the semester. Even having classes via Collaborate Ultra was not a huge change in my life. I am used to working in digital spaces and most of my assignments were already due online. Even though the transition was not too hard on me, it was sad not to see some of the classmates I had grown close to during the course of the semester. Virtual interactions can never truly compare with face-to-face interactions.

The most significant change due to the pandemic happened this Summer. I got an internship with the Kennesaw Journal of Undergraduate Research (KJUR). I am the editorial assistant to the Director of Undergraduate Research, Dr. Amy Buddie; however, because of the COVID-19 pandemic that is sweeping the world, I am her first-ever virtual intern. This shift in the

traditional internship format with KJUR has changed some aspects of my internship with Dr. Buddie and has forced me to learn how to work and communicate effectively from home.

One of the biggest shifts in my summer internship at KJUR is the lack of people that I get to communicate with on a daily basis. Dr. Buddie and I communicate via Microsoft Teams on the days of my internship, and I have been able to have a great working relationship with her. Still, I do not have the same level of interaction with other people in comparison to the previous KJUR interns that met on campus. I have had to meet other members of the faculty and staff through Microsoft Teams meetings, and while I still get to have interactions with them, there is a lack of daily interactions that I am missing while working from home. I do not get to see people pass by Dr. Buddie's office. There are no casual drop-ins by other members of the faculty. The reality of a virtual internship is that I am at home and I only really have communication with my direct supervisor, Dr. Buddie.

It is strange having a virtual internship, but the constant use of the video chat feature on a digital platform like Microsoft Teams has helped to make my internship as normal as possible. So far, Dr. Buddie and I have been able to communicate effectively and have accomplished a lot of work throughout the summer semester. To be perfectly honest, I sometimes wish I could work face-to-face for my internship. Sometimes I feel there is a disconnect with not being able to see my supervisor in person or other people at KSU. It gets a little lonely being at home day in and day out, but Dr. Buddie has been able to make my internship meaningful regardless of the pandemic.

A typical day in my virtual internship has me logging onto Microsoft Teams at nine in the morning. Dr. Buddie and I exchange pleasantries and talk about how the rest of our previous day or weekend went. Then we make a list of goals that need to be accomplished that day. I am usually finding reviewers for KJUR manuscripts, emailing faculty or student-

Tiffany Davis

authors, copy-editing manuscripts, or working on creating posts for KJUR's social media pages. Occasionally there will be meeting with other people, like former interns or faculty that work closely with the academic journal. With all the work that we have to do, the time goes by relatively quickly, and I log about three hours of work every day from Monday to Friday, with a total of ten to twelve hours per week. Even when working from home, I am able to have a fulfilling and exciting experience as an intern. I am helping to create an academic publication. The work I do with Dr. Buddie allows students from the university to become published authors. I feel privileged to help fellow students with their journey toward publication.

Still, there are challenges from being quarantined. One of the issues of doing my internship at home and taking a summer course online is keeping organized. I did not want to find myself constantly mixing my personal space with my workspace. I have had to learn to set boundaries for myself and set designated hours for my internship. With the challenges of working from home, I have had to make sure that I set clear daily goals for myself in order to keep on track of my internship work and my school assignments.

Another struggle with working from home is the amount of time I spend staring at my computer screen. If I was on campus, I would still have looked at a computer screen for a prolonged amount of time. But by being at home, I feel that I have to spend even more time looking at blue-light when I have my video calls with Dr. Buddie. Blue-light is the light emitted from electronic devices. Many people find they get headaches or eyestrain from prolonged exposure to blue-light. Personally, I am prone to getting migraines when looking at any device that emits blue light. I have invested in a good pair of blue-light blocking glasses, and that has helped to ease some of the eyestrain. Still, there is an amount of fatigue that I still experience on a daily basis due to the number of hours I spend staring at my computer. My back gets achy from sitting at my desk all day. My eyes hurt from

looking at my computer screen and editing manuscripts. The days sometimes feel longer since my workspace is integrated into my home.

It does feel strange to be confined to working from home. The adjustment of not seeing other people for such a prolonged amount of time has a toll on any person. I usually only go out to get groceries or other daily necessities. With some of the stricter shelter-in-place rules lifted, I have been able to venture out a little more. However, there is still a fear of Coronavirus in Atlanta.

There are times when I am sitting and working at my home desk wish that I was allowed to work on the university campus. The mental and emotional strain of not seeing other people in person is very real and prevalent during this time. Human beings need interaction with other human beings. We are social creatures by nature. I am fortunate that I live with my three pets and my boyfriend to keep me sane. I also consider myself lucky that I am able to communicate effectively with my internship supervisor through the use of video conference calls. I know that there are plenty of people who do not have the same level of outside communication that I currently have. The strain on those affected by COVID-19 is immense. Fortunately, while the pandemic has impacted the way I conduct my internship with KJUR, I am still able to have conversations with others, which has been an amazing experience during these trying times. Even though I am forced to be at home during the outbreak, there are still benefits to the quarantine.

One of the benefits of not having to go to campus for my internship is that I no longer have to do my typical commute to work. I moved to Buckhead early 2019, and after going back to graduate school at Kennesaw State University, my typical drive to campus ranged between thirty-five minutes to over an hour, depending on traffic. It is great to be able to roll out of bed and log onto my computer right at nine. I do not have the pressure of dealing with traffic or the long drive, which has been

Tiffany Davis

a blessing. It is also great being able to spend more time with my pets and my boyfriend. We have taken the opportunity of being at home to watch more movies together, cook more, and enjoy each other's company.

Overall, I am dealing with the pandemic in the best way I know how. I am keeping busy and trying to fill my days with meaningful work, while also making sure that I take time for self-care. It is hard not to become discouraged when looking at the fluctuations in social climate due to the pandemic. However, my internship, school, pets, and loved ones have helped make these past few months meaningful and worthwhile. I do not know what the future holds, but I believe that I will be stronger person and employee candidate because of the trials I have experienced during the quarantine.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

The biggest challenge of working from home is learning how to maintain a work-life balance. I live with another person and three animals. I am the proud owner of two cats, Maou and Pretzel. I also have a dog, Penny, who at a year-and-a-half old still behaves like a puppy. Finding a way to balance time between working and taking care of my pets is my biggest struggle. In particular, dog gets very hyper when I am doing my internship work. Since I am working from home, she thinks that I can play with her at any time. This behavior is challenging for me since I have work to do for both my internship and summer course. I cannot just drop everything I am doing and take her out to play. I am lucky that it is just Penny who is so active. My two cats tend to sleep through my schoolwork.

My pets can also sense the changes in my normal routine. While my boyfriend and I are typically homebodies, before the pandemic we still went out on occasion. Now both my boyfriend and I are constantly at home. During the first few weeks of quarantine, the change in routine put stress on one of my cats, Maou, he became so anxious by the change in

the daily routine that he developed a block in his bladder. Luckily, I noticed Maou's strange behavior and was able to rush him to the vet before he needed surgery. My animals have noticed the stress that being at home constantly has put on myself and my significant other. Going to the veterinarian during the quarantine has been extremely hard on my animals and myself.

Learning how to juggle both work and my personal life has been the most challenging part about being at home for an extended amount of time. I have had to reorganize my workspace as a result of the pandemic. Before COVID-19, I did not have a desk at home and would just work at the kitchen counter on my laptop. After the pandemic hit, I realized that I severely needed to upgrade my work environment to become a more efficient remote worker and student. I ordered a new desk, an office chair, and a computer monitor. I then turned the second bedroom in my apartment into a designated office space. While these supplies were not necessarily cheap, I found that I desperately needed the structure of an office space. I required a designated working environment, or else I felt like I was mixing my personal and work life too much.

Overall, juggling three pets, a relationship, school, and my internship has been extremely challenging on me during these past few months. Still, I think that I have learned how to be a more organized person, a better pet-owner, and a better girlfriend. Being quarantined has put a severe limit on the amount of time I see other people, but I am learning to cope with the drawbacks and explore the possibilities of remote learning and work. In the future, I think that this experience will help me adapt in unfamiliar environments and it has also given me the experience of being able to work effectively from home.

KSU AFFILIATION

Student

Ronald B Baldwin

JULY 9, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

On Thursday evening, 12 March 2020, I facilitated an in-class discussion of a classmate's short story in the graduate course, Advanced Fiction Writing. While in class, an email was distributed to the Kennesaw State University (KSU) community from President Pamela Whitten, announcing the suspension of on-campus instruction and the move to remotely delivered classes, which would commence later the next week. I learned about this decision after a break that evening when our instructor shared the announcement with the class. This class session would be my last time to-date on campus due to the spread of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) across Georgia.

As a backstory, I chose the Professional Writing program at KSU for both the convenience of commuting to campus and for the opportunity to participate in on-campus classes. In my previous graduate studies, I found that participating in classroom discussions provided me with a much more in-depth learning experience than on-line or remote learning which previously felt more like self-study rather than an academic experience. While the necessity of moving to remote classes was understandable in slowing the spread of COVID-19, it was far less than what I prefer in graduate studies. In March, this decision seemed (probably naively) to me to be for the short-term. Yet, now I do not know if any of my few

remaining courses might again be on-campus. The thought of no longer experiencing the give-and-take of classroom discussions was disappointing when it first occurred to me a few weeks ago, as well as now as I recall it.

Several weeks before President Whitten's announcement, faculty and students were very aware of the spread of COVID-19. The instructors that I had in the Spring 2020 semester encouraged students to do things that would promote our safety, including missing class sessions if necessary. Additionally, the university already had provided hand sanitizer stands at multiple locations in the English building, and posters were on display throughout the building to encourage caution about the spread of illnesses and viruses in particular.

Yet, this may have been both too little and too late for me and others. Starting in early February, several classmates and I were ill with what we thought was a series of typical colds or upper respiratory infections. As a non-traditionally aged student, I attributed my illness possibly to KSU classmates, or more likely to my frequent exposure to my pre-school aged, grandchildren. Several of them (there are six in total) had been periodically sick through most of February and into early March. By mid-March, shortly after converting to remote classes, I grew concerned that I may have COVID-19, but how would I know? Testing was not available for the public except when required in hospitals. More importantly, what would it matter if I could determine that I had COVID-19? All that I could do was to manage the symptoms with over the counter medications or go to an emergency room if I were to experience difficulties breathing. Through the last two weeks of March and the first week of April, I stayed up most of those nights coughing and wishing for sleep. The thought that nothing more than standard cough and cold medicines was all that was available to me was more than a little disconcerting. Without consulting my calendar or searching my laptop for

Ronald B Baldwin

documents that I submitted during this period, I am unable to recall if I had to conjure up very many short stories or critiques of stories written by classmates. I think that I did, and I wrote them in the fog of ongoing sickness.

By mid-April, my illness subsided, but I was far less than fully recovered, experiencing mental and physical fatigue, sleepiness, and general lethargy. I do recall my last two major projects due for the end of the semester as there were times when I was working on them that I would lay my head over on the guest bed adjacent to my desk simply to rest a few moments before continuing to work on them. It should be no surprise when I say that those two work products were somewhat embarrassing to me when I reread them recently.

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

As the pandemic continues unabated, protests organized by chapters of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) organization occurred across the United States starting in late May as a result of the killing of Mr. George Floyd by officers of the Minneapolis (Minnesota) Police Department. This call to action by BLM through means of peaceful protests triggered a wide range of social conflict by the police as well as various loosely affiliated others, including some violent counter-protestors. In addition to the social unrest, political discourse seemed to me to devolve dramatically. The combination of the pandemic and widespread social unrest leaves me feeling as if I am continually watching a disaster in the making.

With the pandemic and the protests actively vying for my attention, my current course, an internship with Green Card Voices (GCV), began. In this internship, I am providing copyediting services for a literary project sharing immigrant stories of nearly thirty students that currently reside in and around the vicinity of Buffalo and Rochester, New York. The stories of these mostly teenaged students chronicle their prior difficult life experiences, which are often in stark

contrast to their recent challenges of adapting to life in the United States (US).

Most of these students previously lived for many years with their families in various refugee camps around the world before migrating with family members to the US. In their former lives, they lived for years in tents or what should have been temporary housing. Many had a lifetime of having limited access to clean water and often went hungry. These students are now excited about many aspects of life in the US. They mention in their stories the surprising availability of both food and shelter in the US.

Alongside their excitement, they also express concern about living in neighborhoods having high rates of crime. They sometimes experience bullying, which they attribute to their limited English or lack of understanding of local norms. Also, they often speak of passive and active racism or classism experienced in their schools and neighborhoods. As a consequence, while the narratives of their lives resonate with hopefulness where previously they had very little hope, their lives are not currently without significant challenges.

Copyediting their narratives, with the added task of maintaining an authenticity related to their voices, is a professional challenge that I have enjoyed. Additionally, this internship with GCV has provided me with an opportunity where I think I make a positive contribution to both the students and this organization. In contrast, my impact on the COVID-19 pandemic is primarily about staying healthy while my wife and I continue to adhere to social distancing guidance. Likewise, my impact on changing the course of racism and the injustices experienced by Black Americans seems infinitesimally small. In contrast, the opportunity afforded to me to positively contribute to the stories of a school bus-equivalent group of immigrant students seems like a real way of helping others for which I gain significant experience in copyediting, course credit, and a lot of personal satisfaction.

Ronald B Baldwin

Like others, I have often used an allusion derived from Lewis Carroll's novel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, specifically about going down the rabbit hole. Most often, I have done so in the context of leaving the world that I think of as my reality to enter into an imaginary or unreal place that is usually a place of confusion and chaos. However, as I read about and experience the spread of COVID-19, and when I hear the squabbling that occurs in the US about apparent social injustices, diving into the rabbit hole of helping a group of immigrant students brings me to a reality that is both personally refreshing and professionally rewarding. For a short while each week, I can leave the chaos documented so well in the news and dive into the real lives of real students having needs where I can assist.

KSU AFFILIATION

Grad Student and
Teacher Assistant

Donna Cochran

AUGUST 3, 2020

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

In 2017, I moved in with my daughter to help her with her six-year-old-son. In November of 2019, she and her husband decided to sell their house in order to purchase something which would fit their lifestyle better. Fortunately for them, the house went under contract the first weekend it was on the market, that meant we had to move out of the house in the week between Christmas and New Year's; that meant there was no time to watch the news; that meant I did not hear much about a new flu that was in Wan Hu, China; the virus named as Covid-19.

After New Year's, when the house was sold and we had moved out, I was staying in an Air B&B close to campus. I was then able to start watching the news in the mornings again. This was when I discovered that this virus had begun to spread throughout China, and the country was slowly closing down as a result. As the days went by, news was coming from other parts of Asia and Europe where the virus had spread - and those countries were closing as well.

In mid-February, I spent about a month with my oldest daughter and my favorite ladies, her daughters. At the ages of seventeen and eighteen, they are super busy with school, friends, and activities so I don't get to spend as much time as I would like with them. So, I took advantage

Donna Cochran

of the time I now had with them, taking them shopping and back and forth to work. I was able to enjoy moments that had all but disappeared since they became busy teenagers. My schoolwork was becoming more demanding and I found myself spending countless hours in classes and doing homework while preparing to become a graduate teaching assistant in the Fall 2020 semester at KSU. As I became busier, the news about this strange new virus became more dire. People were hospitalized, people were dying, countries were closing, economies were suffering. Still, the United States had not been affected, and we were hoping it would not be.

Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. On Friday, March 13, my daughter closed on her new house and we started moving in that weekend. We also found out that it was the last day of on campus classes for probably the rest of the semester. Fortunately, Kennesaw State was prepared for this occurrence so those of us in graduate programs had a basically seamless transition from on campus to online. I feel that while I missed the face-to-face interactions with, and feedback from my classmates and instructors, I did get the full learning experience for the month we were completely virtual finishing the semester.

Other Georgia schools did not fare as well. Three of my grandchildren who were in high school really didn't have to finish their courses for the end of the year. They more or less were promoted to the next grade without finishing the classes. My eight-year-old grandson did have online classes, but they were mainly a joke. For example, he might have a short math assignment, read for twenty minutes and then play a game for language skills. His cousin who was also in the second grade in Florida, had a much different experience. Not only did she have her full class list of math, language, science, and social studies, but she also had music and keyboard lessons. No wonder Georgia is at the bottom of the list nationally when it comes to the quality of our schools.

Not only was campus closed for the rest of the spring semester, but also summer semester as well and because of low enrollment during the summer most students have not been affected by this closing, but a few of us are taking classes now. I am taking three classes, and while most of my work has not been affected by the campus closing, I do feel that my internship has and will suffer to a small extent.

My professor, Dr. Lara Smith-Sitton, is an expert at adapting her courses to fit the needs of her students. She has done this for the lucky students who have enrolled in her internship course. My internship experience is consisting of working on the editorial team for the English Department's publication *The Broadside*. While she and I can do this remotely, and do it well through email and texts, it would be extremely helpful with one or two items to be able to sit down with Dr. Smith-Sitton in person to arrange and rearrange the format.

Currently, it is still up in the air as to whether we will be back on campus in the fall. I know that it is selfish, but I honestly hope we are. I will be a Teacher of Record for Composition 1101 and would feel more comfortable teaching my first semester face to face. In that setting, I will have a better opportunity to get to know my students better and interact with them easier. I just think it will be completely out of my comfort zone to teach my first class strictly online. It would just be so nice to have more experience with D2L before I begin using it as my only teaching tool.

I understand the need for everyone to feel safe, and if it is determined that we will be online for this semester again, then that is what will happen. This year has already been unlike any other I have experienced. All of us have handled this "new normal" with grace and dignity and there is no reason to believe that will not be true moving forward.

Donna Cochran

MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE OR ADJUSTMENT

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