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University of Maine Community Pieces_Quarantine Entries

University of Maine Marketing and Communications

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Sunday 3/22/2020 Day 6 of Quarantine:

It's been a crazy week. Last Wednesday, classes were cancelled, last Friday was my (and many others) last day of senior year ending with an impromptu "Coronamentment". Friday was also the day I found out that I had lost my job due to the COVID-19 situation and that my main source of income was gone. I found myself with no way to pay my rent, a situation shared by MANY other college students. Last Monday, I moved back home to practice Social Distancing.

The thing about social distancing is that you don't necessarily do it to protect yourself. You do it to slow and impede the spread of the virus so that those who suffer from COVID-19 related complications can get the hospital care they need. For all I know, I could have it now and just have mild or no symptoms which is why individuals with healthy immune systems need to STAY HOME. I want to be a doctor one day and the thought of harming others rather than helping them makes social distancing the obvious decision.

I decided when I came back home, I would have my first real Spring Break - get away from social media as well as email, take the time to really think about my next steps, and spend as much time as possible with family. It's been hard being away from my friends, especially from those that have come to feel like family, but I am so incredibly grateful to have a family to come home to. I acknowledge that not everyone has that opportunity. I'll be leaving for DC at the end of May and for the past few weeks I had been struggling with the thought of leaving my family - so now I am thankful to spend my last few weeks with them.

It's been pretty great to see people make the best of a terrible situation. People are taking the time to learn new things, develop existing hobbies, and those that are practicing social distancing are selflessly acknowledging and protecting those that cannot protect themselves. For the most part, we've seen the University, the State, and really the nation come together to work towards a common goal - something I haven't witnessed ever in my life. For me, this break has given me time to spend time with family, improve at guitar, work on painting, and study for the MCAT.

I think a lot of us are really struggling with how we can help those in need without compromising their safety. One of my friends started an effort to help with childcare - but we all quickly realized the risks of that well intended effort. As college students, most of us only have time to give; we don't have financial resources. Right now, it feels like we can't really help people with just our time. I think we are all looking for ways to help - but we aren't sure how to yet.

Questions/Thoughts to consider:

How did it feel seeing the news each day of the virus concerns raising, to the point that classes were canceled?

How important was the loss, or at least postponement, of your commencement experience?

What did the Corona-mencement event mean to you?

How are you, your family and friends maintaining connections in this time?

How have you adapted both your life and academics in this new paradigm?

What challenges/obstacles has this created?

What are your success stories? Where have things fallen apart?

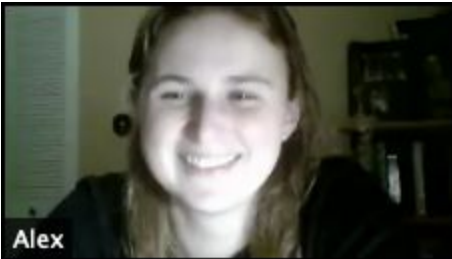
Where do you see this all heading? Even when things get back to "normal" how do you anticipate this changing things more permanently?

Monday 3/23/2020 Day 7 of Quarantine:

We had our first All Maine Women Virtual meeting!

It's pretty cool how that everyone's days clearly got better by getting a chance to talk to each other. Our meetings have been held Monday at 7pm all year, and this week was no exception. We had a meeting agenda and went through everyone's weekly reports, attempting to plan out the rest of the semester as if we weren't all separated by hundreds of miles. The smiling faces of each gives me hope that things will get better!

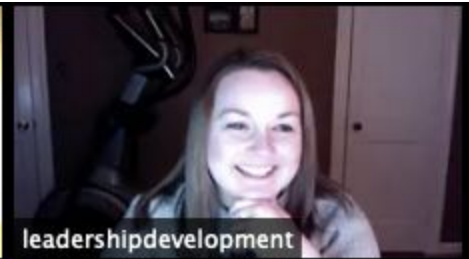




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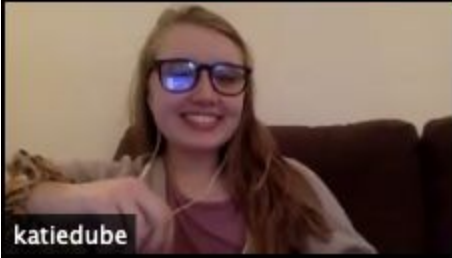
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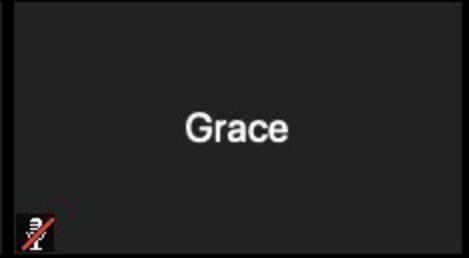
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Grace Smith



Taylor Cray



Grace

Thursday 3/26/2020 Day 10 of Quarantine

Today was my first official day of virtual classes! Only one of my classes, Immunology, is being held synchronously while the rest will be held asynchronously. For this class, the structure has pretty much stayed the same. Pre-quarantine, the professor lectured for half of the class and then the other half, we broke up into smaller groups and worked through questions, researched various topics, and prepared presentations. All this is pretty much staying the same as our professor has managed to figure out a way to create “break rooms” where each of us is randomly assigned to work with 3 or 4 other students. In some ways, this made the class feel “normal” again, although being ready at 9:30 after having an off kilter sleep schedule for almost two weeks wasn’t the easiest endeavor.

I think a lot of us students are concerned that our classes workload has increased now that everything is online and the lack of structure is going to negatively affect our grades. I definitely fall into this group of concerned students, but today I was reminded that the University of Maine professors have our back and truly want the best for us. Multiple professors reiterated that, if we were concerned about the workload, our grade, accessing the lectures, internet problems, or even more personal problems, to not hesitate to reach out. I could truly hear the sincerity in their offers. Even from miles and miles away, I was reminded of why Umaine feels like home.

Today I was encouraged by my little brother. If 6 year old Sammy can Zoom, then all of us college students can figure it out too!



Sunday 3/27/2020: Day 11 of Quarantine

Today, my best friends and I took an impromptu trip to Lamoine State Park. We had a feeling that soon this would not be a safe thing to do, so we wanted to get some fresh air while we still could. I was reminded of how important it is to be surrounded by the things and people we love during these times. Although there are many activities that are no longer possible, this just gives us more time for the other things we love to do and perhaps have not had enough time to do.



Monday 3/30/2020 Day 14 of Quarantine:

The past few days haven't been the easiest. I think it's really starting to hit that our senior year is over. We got an email today officially announcing that the 2020 May Umaine Commencement has been moved online. It's pretty funny though, immediately after this happened, outrage fueled a petition to instead have an in-person commencement later in the year. It's been 27 hours since the petition was made and there are already over 2300 signatures.

https://www.change.org/p/umaine-administration-in-person-commencement-for-umaine-s-class-of-2020?utm_content=cl_sharecopy_21227567_en-US%3Av8&recruiter=938181897&recruited_by_id=8af51a00-36da-11e9-a9c-d9b1c79ac43a&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=psf_combo_share_initial&utm_term=share_petition

The good news is that people haven't given up, they are still fighting for what they want.

Thursday 4/2/20 Day 17 of Quarantine:

I'm not going to lie: this week has been incredibly difficult. It's really starting to set in that college is essentially over, way before I was ready for it. I 100% understand that this is the best course of action, but it's still hard to accept. It's been difficult this week to wake up in the mornings. Of course, I have school to do via online classes, but that's never really why I loved Umaine. I loved academics, but the classroom, the professors, the peers, and the extracurriculars were an integral part of that love.

There is a glimmer of hope in all this. Over the past week, the student body and parents of the aforementioned put their voice out there, letting the Umaine faculty know just how important an in-person graduation ceremony was to them. In just a few short days, 3000 signatures were gathered. I'm so honored to be a part of a graduating class that speaks their mind, wants change for the better, and is willing to band together to get what they want. I can't wait to see in 20 years what this graduating class accomplishes. What's nearly just as amazing to me is that the Umaine faculty listened. As of now, we will tentatively be having some sort of in-person commencement celebrations in the Fall. I think there is still a lot of planning and discussion going into what exactly that means, but I am grateful for my peers and the Umaine faculty.

Saturday 4/4/2020 Day 19 of Quarantine

Today, as in at 4 in the morning, I rediscovered my love of TED talks. I haven't been able to get into a normal sleep schedule, my mind is working a little too fast at night, so I ended up spending most of the night listening to stories about the psychological effect of single stories on our perception of individuals, the current coronavirus situation, answering spam mail, and many other random topics that not only serve as a distraction from our current reality, but allow me to see the world through others eyes.

One TED talk I listened to was incredibly eerie. It was recorded in 2015, but if you hadn't told me that, I would have thought that it was from the past few weeks. It's discouraging to think about this pandemic could have been better prepared for. Perhaps, after this experience we'll realize the importance of taking care of our people and protecting them, regardless of their economic situation.

https://www.ted.com/talks/bill_gates_the_next_outbreak_we_re_not_ready?language=en