

Transcript of Oral History Interview with Annie Schaller

Interviewee: Annie Schaller

Interviewer: Trisha Howes

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Abstract:

Annie, a university student in Boston, shares her perspective about how the COVID-19 pandemic was handled both when it began to take hold in March and now, as a student who returned to campus with hybrid classes. She also discusses how it affected her living situations, her experience with the Canadian response to COVID-19, and compares her situation to that of her brother's, who also attends university.

Trisha Howes 00:03

So this interview is for the purpose of the COVID-19 archive project. I am Trisha Howes I will be interviewing, Anna or Annie Schaller, who is a second-year environmental engineer student at Northeastern, living in Boston currently. She's originally from Canada, although her parents now live in New Jersey, which is where she also attended high school. For the majority of the pandemic, she was living at home with her parents, brother and dog. Although she did travel to Canada for the summer, and during her free time, Anna runs track. Anna, do you have any Do you consent to being recorded for this project?

Annie Schaller 00:50

Yeah. I consent.

Trisha Howes 00:53

Um, so just a few questions for you, Annie. When this all started, what was your living situation? And did it change rapidly? How did you deal with that?

Annie Schaller 01:07

Yeah, I was living on campus. I was a first year so it was in a dorm. And the, because I was on the track team. We didn't go home for spring break. We were kind of we were here the whole way doing practicing and things. And then we got back, we everyone else came back to campus. And we started hearing with Coronavirus, everything, and there was rumors that we're going to get kicked off. And I was like, it's not gonna happen. There's no way they can move all these kids in such a short amount of time. But eventually, as we all know, that did happen. And we got word that we had to vacate our rooms and take all belongings with us. I believe on a Saturday or Sunday, and we had to do this by Tuesday at 5pm.

And that was obviously I'm sorry, you continue?

Trisha Howes 02:05

Yeah, go ahead. Sorry.

Annie Schaller 02:07

That was obviously very jarring. And I mean, I was a late night of packing for sure. I think it kind of all happened so fast that I didn't really get an opportunity to reflect on it and think about what had happened until I got home and, and sort of sat down and digested it all. But definitely very jarring. very shocking to the system, the mind emotions, all the things.

Trisha Howes 02:37

And can I assume that your parents picked you up from Northeastern?

Annie Schaller 02:41

Yes, my mother had to take the day off work. Suddenly, obviously, and she drove up really early, picked me up, drove back down the same day.

Trisha Howes 02:54

And thank you for sharing your perspective on how you felt about the sudden change in everything. How did your parents feel about Northeastern's response to COVID-19? And the kind of abruptness of it?

Annie Schaller 03:11

Yeah, um, I think we were all sort of in in a fear of shock and just sort of like dealing and living through the moment as best we could. But looking back on it, I think Northeastern took swift action to keep us safe, which I appreciate it. I don't think I necessarily appreciated that in the moment as much as I did in the month after. And then I think they also more, like many, many other people frustrated with the lack of notice. And the destruction in that manner. We were very fortunate in that we did with a drive away. It wasn't a situation where we had to find a way to fly across the world and friends to we're in much tougher than then we were but I think it was more just a minor, if you can say that inconvenience to us. And they and I both for appreciated that aspect. And we're grateful for that.

Trisha Howes 04:17

Now, Annie, you told me that you have a brother, how old is your brother?

Annie Schaller 04:21

He is a he's a fourth year this year in university who's two years older than me.

Trisha Howes 04:28

Okay, how would you say that? Excuse me, sorry. How would you say that Northeastern's, kind of we're going to skip ahead here, fall plan for dealing with COVID-19 compares to your brother's university if you don't mind me asking.

Annie Schaller 04:47

Yeah, no, of course. Um, I definitely am way more competent Northeastern's plan the testing regimen is the best of all I've heard of my friends or my brother. He is schooled tests, I believe,

once or twice a week, and they have the same sort of wellness coating that we have. But the one difference is they put in a kind of a bizarre rule where you have to have, if you're living off campus, you have to have only two people per bathrooms. So if you have a house of four people, there has to be two bathrooms. And so that made it so that a lot of people had to say they were quote, unquote, living at home, and not go on campus or anything, which also means that they are not getting tested. So the big difference between the two schools is that there's a large population of people at his school not getting tested, whereas everyone has the option here to get tested.

So that made me really confident and also the sort of hybrid classes made me really happy to

Trisha Howes 06:00

Oh, well, that's good to hear that. I hope your brother does okay. Now being a living in the United States, but also going to Canada for the summer. How did you feel about the Canadian response to COVID-19? As opposed to the response from the US?

Annie Schaller 06:25

Yeah, I think it's, it's very interesting, because I'm coming from a state like New Jersey, where our governor was very active and proactive in his regulations. And in his response to go into Canada and Ontario, where we were, where the same sort of proactiveness but less people wearing masks for sure. It's on it felt like the disease coronavirus, the pandemic hit a little closer to home just because we spent the heart of the like, the big outbreak and everything when people were many, many people were dying a day in New York City, we spent that literally 12 miles outside of New York City. So it was it was much more real, I think, when we were there, and probably to everyone in our neighborhood and in our area. And then when we went to Canada, it was less. Still obviously a thing and happening, but it was less jarring for people in Canada, I think. So less people wearing masks, more of a of a afterthought than a fore thought I would say. And then returning back here, you kind of have that same sort of, like, Oh, this is really a big deal coming back. And this is hit people really hard. And, and that's really important to remember, I honestly feel like I wish some of that. That like shocking this have made its way not in terms of the the casualties and victims. But in terms of the cautiousness of the people here had made its way to Canada. Because right now their cases are on the rise. And they've had to scale back the numbers of gatherings and things so I it's very, it's very different looking at the responses, and and how people react to them.

Trisha Howes 08:22

Yeah, definitely. Um, and then the final question for you, um, as a runner track is what I presumed to be a low contact sport. So obviously, certain sports have been canceled for this semester. Do you feel like anything in track has really changed? Have you noticed any changes in your day to day like, runs and that kind of stuff with your team?

Annie Schaller 08:51

Um, yeah, I think I mean, our seasons obviously canceled. That's, that was a big bummer. But, um, we've had to start practices way later. So we haven't we don't have organized practices yet. I think that'll start next week. So that's the week of September 20. For context, I don't know when this is going to be listen to. And we are way more cautious about who we run with. And try not

to make the social bubble too big. And then also obviously, just wearing a mask while you run. Which is a sort of bigger adjustment than one might think. Because that's obviously not the most comfortable thing but necessary. So I think in terms of day to day life, we tend to run at the same time of the day that we did last year, or the year before or whatever. But it's more just a who's coming and how are we going to stage like the groups and are we gonna leave 15 minutes after the first group leaves and things like that. And then as you Move into practices. I think that'll be more up to the coaches, which is nice to have it off our plates a bit. But we'll have to be obviously still cautious.

Trisha Howes 10:10

Okay, um, Annie this interview has now concluded just for context, could you please state the date and time of this interview

Annie Schaller 10:19

is Friday, September 18 2020. And it is 10:09 in the morning.

Trisha Howes 10:27

Awesome. Thank you so much for participating in this. Best wishes.

Annie Schaller 10:33

Thank you