

Transcript of Interview with Olivia Valenti by Caroline Greco

Interviewee: Olivia Valenti

Interviewer: Caroline Greco

Date: 12/11/2021

Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Abstract: In this interview, Olivia Valenti talks about her experience through the COVID pandemic as a college student. She also discusses past pandemics and how they relate to the COVID pandemic.

Caroline Greco 00:00

Hi, my name is Carolyn Greco, and today I'm here with Olivia Valenti to talk about the COVID-19 experience. Do you consent to being interviewed?

Olivia Valenti 00:08

Yes

Caroline Greco 00:09

Please state the date and time.

Olivia Valenti 00:11

It is currently Saturday, December 11. And it is 9:27am.

Caroline Greco 00:16

All right, perfect. First of all start off with what are your thoughts on the first semester of college during the pandemic?

Olivia Valenti 00:24

I think it was a really interesting first semester. From the start, it didn't really feel like COVID was kind of a real concern on campus. I mean, everybody was wearing masks, and you had to be vaccinated to come on campus. And obviously, there's weekly testing, but I think those are really the only actual reality checks that came into play in a really weird way. Because everybody was still going out on weekends, you were going into like games and stuff. And like, nobody really was concerned about, like, if I'm gonna get COVID or not. But I mean, it was kind of nice, because you still had the somewhat online options, and professors were still like administering tests online. So I think in a way, like we kind of got almost the best of both worlds where we got the benefits of online schooling while still having in person classes and getting to go out. So that was really nice.

Caroline Greco 01:14

Yeah, definitely. And you mentioned before that you actually had COVID, I was just I was just curious how getting COVID has changed your perspective.

Olivia Valenti 01:29

I'm getting COVID just kind of, I guess, altered my perspective on COVID. Because of the fact that like, I think for a very long time, I was like, oh, like, obviously not the COVID Not really COVID is very real, and it is something that people are getting, but I think for a really long time, especially like also where I lived prior, you had this sort of like, invincibility you felt and I was like, oh, it's never gonna be me. Like, I'm never [laughter] gonna get it. It's not that bad. Like, people just need to get over it, like, move on. But getting it was probably like one of the worst experiences, it was it really like kind of put into perspective, and I was also asymptomatic. So for me to have such a poor experience with my time, like in isolation and everything, even though I didn't know sometimes I can't really imagine what it was like for those people who, like, were actually ill, and were in hospitals. So I think it's definitely changed and maybe sympathize more of what was happening. But at the same time, it's changed my perspective on vaccinations, because I still agree we should get them. But at the same time, if I'm somebody who was vaccinated twice using Pfizer, which is what I had, why was I still able to get sick because you're being marketed as like, Oh, you have like a point like this chance that it's not supposed to be agreed enough value that you actually get the disease. But here we are. I ended up getting it. So I think it's kind of I don't know, it's a confusing, like, piece of information.

Olivia Valenti 02:54

Definitely. Yeah, it definitely is. I'm sure it's very frustrating as well. And that being quarantined with no symptoms, but

Caroline Greco 03:02

It almost made it so much worse. You'd rather Exactly yeah,

Caroline Greco 03:05

No, I totally know what you mean. So, back to like, what we've been learning in class, like, how does learning about past pandemics shape your view on the current pandemic?

Olivia Valenti 03:19

I think one of the most standout things that I learned from past pandemics is about like the mask resistance. Because obviously, we saw a lot of people, countering mask mandates and being in opposition and not wanting to use them saying it was like a violation of rights and all these other statements. And you're kind of like, oh, this is we're like we're off to me is offering something to help you. But you're refusing it. And you kind of like, why would you do that? But then we were looking back on past pandemics. We saw the video of this huge mask riot, like years ago, and people reacted the exact same thing. That's something that could benefit them. And we saw it when people refuse to wear the masks in the past. Obviously, the disease came back until they wear the masks again, but in like you're seeing an app and now in real time, like right now currently, we're in the middle of another spike. And if people don't keep wearing masks and like resisted again, it's just gonna be the same loop.

Caroline Greco 04:16

Yeah, no, it really is crazy how like, history repeats itself. But going off of that, how does this pandemic you feel compared to like past pandemics?

Olivia Valenti 04:30

I think that this pandemic is really mild in comparison to the past pandemics we've done, I think, I mean, obviously, it's still a pandemic, and what's happening is extremely unfortunate there are people losing their lives. But if you think about on the grand scheme of things, this is very mild as opposed like the Ebola pandemic, or like measles and smallpox, like there was a lot or even the Black Death, for example. There's so many other extremes where things were so much worse and you had such a higher mortality rate on a global level that We have to almost be fortunate that this is the pandemic we got. But yeah, that being said, like comparing like the two and like looking back and like how those run their course, I think this is also something that kind of like no matter how badly we want to prevent it in real time, like we can come up with all the vaccinations we'd like and stuff. But I think it's ultimately just one of those things that has to almost just run its course, as we've seen, like has to happen with the other ones like they introduced vaccinations, but ultimately, it was just like, after like, a couple of years, it disappeared. And I think that's just kind of like the reality that we have to live in and see that they're very similar in that aspect.

Caroline Greco 05:40

Totally. All right. Well, thank you for speaking with me.

Olivia Valenti 05:45

Of course.

Caroline Greco 05:46

Yeah.