

Transcript of Interview with Jorge Martinez by Claudia Sanchez

Interviewee: Jorge Martinez

Interviewer: Claudia Sanchez

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Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Transcriber: Lily Crigler

Abstract: Student Jorge Martinez relates how his experience as a St. Mary's University student living on campus for the first time in Fall 2020 amid the pandemic. Jorge was able to contact the office of student retention and Student Life to support the challenges he was facing during the pandemic.

Claudia Sanchez 00:01

Okay, so can you please start by stating your name, your classification, and major?

Jorge Martinez 00:05

Yes. My name is Jorge Martinez. I am a senior, and I'm majoring in mathematics.

Claudia Sanchez 00:10

So how long have you lived on campus and when was your first semester?

Jorge Martinez 00:15

So I started living on campus in the spring of 2021, and I started attending St. Mary's in the fall of 2018.

Claudia Sanchez 00:23

What were your expectations when you first came to live on campus?

Jorge Martinez 00:28

Coming back there, living on campus, it was right around COVID was a huge, huge thing. So something I was really hoping, looking forward to was, you know, safety protocols, making sure that they were mandating at least masks within buildings, making sure that I was as safe as possible and hoping they would take care of any, you know, outbreaks within the university.

Claudia Sanchez 00:50

And how did you feel about it being your first time living on campus?

Jorge Martinez 00:54

I started living on campus because I needed an escape from home. But I had a pretty, pretty bad experience living, you know, living at home, taking classes online. And so I just figured, being in an area with my peers where people my own age felt like that would be best for me. And sort of got that when living on campus, but you know, still living I guess in my dorm because not many options were available as, as it was before COVID. But I still felt like it was the right move for me.

Claudia Sanchez 01:23

Were you concerned about COVID?

Jorge Martinez 01:25

Not necessarily. Um, I got back into it as soon as I could. I think for me, my biggest issue was like working during this pandemic. I work at a middle school. And a lot of the students that I work with are not qualified to get the vaccination and so there was a lot of like struggle with teachers and students, you know, wearing face masks and all that and so fortunately, it wasn't really an issue that spring because we were meeting through Zoom, and I, what I didn't want to do was either get my students sick, my coworkers sick or bring anything around because I'm going from place to place.

Claudia Sanchez 01:57

On your first semester living on campus, were most of your classes online or in person?

Jorge Martinez 02:02

I had one class in person and the rest were online. And that class being rehearsal class for the production that we did that semester. And so everything else was online.

Claudia Sanchez 02:13

I see. What services did you take advantage of while living on campus?

Jorge Martinez 02:18

I did contact Student Life and I believe also the counselors because I was going through something and that was the reason why I started living on campus and so they were nice. They reached out so I was glad to use those services as well living on campus.

Claudia Sanchez 02:35

Do you believe that it was easier to use those services because you were living on campus?

Jorge Martinez 02:42

I don't think so because, you know, we met through Zoom. So I felt like even if I was at home, it'd be just as easy because it's an email away. And I didn't have to like, go to a facility.

Claudia Sanchez 02:53

Are you aware of what services there are for you as a student?

Jorge Martinez 02:56

Yes.

Claudia Sanchez 02:58

And what student facilities did you get in contact with? Are there any student facilities that you wish you had come in contact with that you didn't?

Jorge Martinez 03:08

I think of anything maybe financial aid, especially with the concern of my GPA, especially how I did academically during the online semester, or semesters. Just making sure that you know, I would be able to bounce back up or, you know, keep my scholarship, especially after those poor performances. And just making sure that there was an open communication between the two of us, but besides that, I don't think so.

Claudia Sanchez 03:33

Um, were you in contact with the office of student retention, or did they try contacting you?

Jorge Martinez 03:37

Yes, they did. It was, I think, near the end of both the fall semester of 2020. Or they contacted me because I think one of my professors had reached out to them to reach out to me, concerned with my performances in class because they noticed that my grades started to decline after a certain point.

Claudia Sanchez 03:59

Did you find that your interactions with them were beneficial to you as a student?

Jorge Martinez 04:03

I think so because they had, I would open up to them and they were able to recommend me to get counseling. And you know, they want, they want us to succeed and just ensure that we're doing our best. And so it was very helpful and ensuring to know that, you know, I wasn't alone and was able to get the help that I needed.

Claudia Sanchez 04:21

What was the most difficult part of living on campus?

Jorge Martinez 04:25

I would say finding a, a work environment that isn't my dorm, or the commons. I think, I used to before COVID, I was able I was able to go to the commons pretty freely and not be very self conscious, or I would just go to Richter. But because of COVID-19 and the restrictions, I didn't feel very comfortable going to the commons, especially because you know, people have their face mask off and just very, like socially like err moment for me. And so it was just a very difficult to find a space where I could, you know, destress and also work at the same time because I find my, my room to be a non work area for school because that's where I want to destress and that's an area where I don't want to bring extra work to, so I think that was my biggest challenge.

Claudia Sanchez 05:12

And what was the most beneficial part of living on campus?

Jorge Martinez 05:16

Honestly, the food being with a, you know, go to the cafeteria whenever I wanted to get those meals. Seeing people my own age, that was honestly the best thing for me because living at home, I had my parents and my sister and that was pretty much it, didn't have an excuse to leave the house too much. So it's kind of just cooped up in my room for most of fall of 2020 and just being able to you know, have a friend or two to go out and get food with was just super, super nice.

Claudia Sanchez 05:40

What was your experience like from last semester to this semester? Is there any differences?

Jorge Martinez 05:47

Oh, definitely. I have an area where I can work at. I feel like, I feel like I'm a little bit more free. Um, I definitely think this semester was a little bit better in terms of just being able to go to a classroom, whereas just I had to log into Zoom last semester so, but at the same time it just still feels a little weird 'cause I think it's still we're coming back from that online semester through Zoom. So it's still a little funky. I don't think it's like where we were two years ago prior to COVID-19. But I still think it's like a step forward, at least.

Claudia Sanchez 06:22

Um, did you utilize any student support services this semester?

Jorge Martinez 06:26

Um, I just think it was Student Life. And it was just to inform them on my situation currently with family, which I won't go into detail, but I think that's pretty much it this semester.

Claudia Sanchez 06:37

How would you rate their experience with you?

Jorge Martinez 06:41

Again, you know, it just feels like good just now everything's an email away. I think everything going online, it made everyone adapt to an online format, being able to just respond to an email immediately has made communication a lot more smoother, hopefully, and faster because of that. So I just felt like it was easier to send the email than go to the facility itself, because why would I? Because I could just send an email now.

Claudia Sanchez 07:07

Would you recommend for students to live on campus?

Jorge Martinez 07:11

Depending on your situation, obviously, it's a very big investment financially. I think that's the case with any university that you attend. But if you do want to get some social interaction in your life, I would recommend living on campus. Even in this pandemic, I feel like being able to see people my own age consistently really helped me out. I get my social interaction from seeing people in person. And that's something that I really did lose during the online semester. I just lost all social interaction. And right when I came back, I kind of forgot how to talk to people for a minute because I was like, oh, yeah, how do I do this again, and so I definitely would recommend if someone is interested. And now granted, if you live by campus, and you can have a 10 minute drive to campus, then you know you don't have to live on campus, but there are other perks that you know, you can wake up pretty late and have a five minute walk towards your classes. So living on campus definitely does have its benefits. So, but you have to also lay out that the cost of it, so I would recommend living on campus.

Claudia Sanchez 08:16

Overall, how would you summarize your experience living on campus?

Jorge Martinez 08:23

It is very liberating being on my own, you know, moving away from my parents. And just knowing that, you know, it's on me now, and I can basically do whatever I want without someone yelling at me and waking up on my own. So I do enjoy it. I just wish you know it wasn't during a pandemic semester so that we would have access to everything. Like for example, I'm living in Chaminade, and we don't have access to the kitchen right now because of the pandemic which kind of sucks, but you know, it is what it is. So it would be nice to have access to everything that I could have had. But again, you can't control everything that you do so that's the only like exception, I would say.

Claudia Sanchez 09:03

Have you been concerned about the like, COVID-19 pandemic this semester compared to last semester?

Jorge Martinez 09:09

I would say I was a little worried about another lockdown occurring, especially because I was noticing numbers were increasing before the semester began during the summer. And so I was a little worried of another lockdown mid semester, and I think I wouldn't be able to handle another online semester. So that was my biggest concern was another lockdown. But in terms of like getting COVID itself, I feel like I am pretty precautious when it comes to my interactions with some exceptions. And I try to limit my exposure

to other people so I wasn't concerned catching it. I was just concerned with other people's actions causing a lockdown.

Claudia Sanchez 09:48

What advice would you give to incoming students that this semester this was our first time coming back to campus and they are trying to live on campus during pandemic? What advice would you have for them, if any?

Jorge Martinez 10:03

So these students are coming back from an online semester. Just trying to find that social group again because I don't know for me, I'm very introverted. It's very hard for me to reach out to people. And so try to find those old friends that used to talk to you because, you know, it's gonna be really, really hard to find those faces again, or at least in my eyes, it has been and respecting the, the protocols that St. Mary's has established for COVID to ensure that we're all safe or as safe as it can be. You know, that means like wearing masks indoors or unless you're eating and you know, respecting other people's spaces because I feel like you can sit down next to somebody, but they may not be comfortable with that and they may not tell you something until you leave or whatever. So just respect other people's spaces and find friends. I think that's the biggest thing is just finding people to talk to.

Claudia Sanchez 10:52

Thank you so much; that concludes our interview.

Jorge Martinez 10:55

Of course. Is there anything else- [audio stops]