

- Corryn McPherson
- 0:00
- Would you like to remain anonymous?
- Umar Coates
- 0:01
- No, ma'am.
- Corryn McPherson
- 0:02
- Can I have your first and last name?
- Umar Coates
- 0:04
- Umar Coates
- Corryn McPherson
- 0:05
- Male or female?
- Umar Coates
- 0:06
- Male.
- Corryn McPherson
- 0:07
- Ethnicity?
- Umar Coates

- 0:08
- Black. Age 22.
  - 0:12
  - Corryn McPherson
  - 0:13
- What year are you?
- Umar Coates
  - 0:14
- Sophomore.
  - Corryn Mcpherson
  - 0:15
- And where do you go to school?
- Umar Coates
  - 0:17
- University of Buffalo.
  - Corryn McPherson
  - 0:19
- How old were you in the PanDOMic started.
- Umar Coates
  - 0:24
- 20.
  - Corryn McPherson

- 0:25
  
- And what year were you?
- Umar Coates
  
- 0:28
  
- Sophomore.
  
- Corryn McPherson
- 0:29
  
- Okay. Can you explain to me was it like attending the University of Buffalo during the Pandemic?
- Umar Coates
  
- 0:37
  
- It was a big adjustment at first. I feel like when I had initially got dismissed to go home for a lot of the professors, even the students, they had to make a big adjustment. So it wasn't only auto was making an adjustment and I had to understand and respect that. However, I feel like the University, they did do their best in trying to allow students to understand their course material, that they can only be displayed virtually. However, at the same time, the students that did not receive the grades that they may have once thought that they received because of the pandemic are now liable to deal with the consequences of them not really having in person one on one type study sessions with their professors.
  
- Corryn McPherson
- 1:30
  
- What was it like learning in the Pandemic? You could talk about Zoom and stuff like that.
- Umar Coates
  
- 1:35

- Now from me to you. Now for 2020 semester, I took an academic withdrawal. I had gotten sent home in spring of 2020 due to the Pandemic. But to further the Pandemic, I didn't come back out here because I feel like that's one thing a University could have did better was allow housing to students that did come back for the Pandemic at a discounted rate because paying for room and board for virtual courses wasn't really something that a lot of students really had the financial means for. So as opposed to students having to pay room and board alongside tuition, something needed to be cut in half. I don't know by who. I don't know when they were going to cut it in half, but I do believe that students needed to receive a break in some sort of financial way.

- Corryn McPherson
- 2:33

- What was your mental health like during the Pandemic attending school, even though you did end up going home?
- Umar Coates

- 2:39

- Now, in the beginning of the last question that you asked me, I did say that I said that I have received the academic withdrawal. The reason why I have received the academic withdrawal is because, like you said, my mental health wasn't intact the way it should have been. I was going through losses in my family. I had deaths in my family. I had a lot that I had going on at the time, and I was also working to try to provide for my family on top of all of that. So as far as mental health is concerned, to be quite honest with you, school wasn't a priority. Taking care of my family and making sure that my loved ones were safe and healthy was a big concern to me, getting a degree at the time.

- Corryn McPherson
- 3:22

- Did you and your family get COVID? And what was it like for your family during the pandemic?
- Umar Coates

- 3:28
- Okay, so me, myself personally, I've never had COLVID, my mom never had Colbert, my dad never had Colette, but my sister had COVID, and my brother died from Colbert. My older brother had died from Culvert. So, I mean, all in all and we wasn't a family that receives unemployment or Social Security assistance and none of that. So we had to keep working and we had to keep being able to put food on the table for one another because even though there were government assistance programs, my family and I are just not the type of family to take from the government, if that makes sense.
- Corryn McPherson
- 4:17
- The pandemic affects you financially. I know you did say you worked. Was it a good enough income? Did your family get out of work?
- Umar Coates
- 4:27
- Okay, so as far as the finances are concerned, at the time, I believe I was probably I had just turned 20 years old on April 14, so the pay rate for the job that I was working was decent. Like I said, I wasn't providing for my family wholeheartedly, but I was definitely making sure that I could help them out where help is needed. So whether it was coned, electric, water, food, whatever I can help with around the house is what I helped with. And my parents, my mom works for the school district and my dad, he's a truck driver and my sister is a social worker. So, I mean, all in all, for the most part, my sister, my mom is on salary and my dad, I don't want to say he freelances, but he kind of wants a business of his own, so he does what he has to do over the road. So as far as the financial aspect of things is concerned, I would say through the Grace of God, me and my family was able to make amends and make ends meet with what we had. So I would say that it wasn't really on our own strength that we was able to maintain jobs and stay healthy through the entire pandemic. That was just a blessing from God. That wasn't something that we did on our own.
- Corryn McPherson

- 5:48
- Next question is compare UB to how it first was during the pandemic and how it is now. What's the difference?
  - 5:55
- Umar Coates
  - 5:57
- I feel like as a University, their goal, of course, is to make everything go back to normal. However, the sickness is still around. There are still students that are contracting it. There are still humans that are attracting I just want to limit it to students, but there's a lot of people that are still contracting the disease and the virus, however you want to put it. But I feel like the school is putting his best foot forward and attempting to make everybody feel comfortable again. Because believe it or not, I would believe that no child is going to want to wear masks throughout the entire day. Nobody's going to want to put a mask on for six, seven, 8 hours of the day when they handle in their business. But I do believe that from then to now because I can only speak about the times that I have been here. I came back in spring 2021, and I lived in Hadley, but I was the only individual in that whole apartment complex. So as far as how the school handled it, they did their best. Everything was sanitized. They made students feel comfortable. To a certain extent. Yeah.
  - Corryn McPherson
  - 7:20
- So what is some of the things you think you could have done better?
  - Corryn McPherson
  - 7:24
- You could talk about mass vaccinations, social distancing.
- Umar Coates

- 7:28
- Okay. I can't really say too much about the social distance and the math and everything else because when it comes to social distancing, I am a socially distant person. So I'm not really around a whole lot of people for me to be like, oh, well, this person didn't have a masculine he's coughing and he's coughing and he's sneezing. And as far as the pandemic goes, the University itself handled business. How they could have handled business and the best of the abilities. I'm not sure how many other universities have had the same amount of rules that we've had or the same amount of guidelines that we've had to follow. But I feel like every University across the country, I can't speak for other universities other than the one that I attend. But for this one, I do believe that administration did the best that they could.
- Corryn McPherson
- 8:31
- What's some of the positive things that you beat it?
- Umar Coates
- 8:37
- That's a good question, because as far as the student is concerned, to be completely honest on this interview, I really believe that there was no positive in any of this, just like any other University. I'm not going to say, let me be forming with you guys. I'm not going to say that this University truthfully cares about its students, just like any University in this country. This is a business, and as African American students, we're contributing to their business. So the best thing that I can say that you did was really accept these black students into the University so that we could change and shift shaft the culture a little bit and make the University a little bit better. As far as this pandemic is concerned, like I said, they did what they could do. But for the most part, we also did what we could do with students. We still have to go to class. We start to review lecture notes. We still have to go to study sessions. We start to speak to Tas. So for the most part, as a matter of fact, that's something that you did that I felt like was a little bit good, in a sense, was allowed students to have access to certain tutoring. I feel like virtual tutoring is going to help just as much as virtual classes will, because all you can really do is speak to somebody to a screen and hope that by the end of that session you understand what it is, exactly what they're trying to talk about. However, this University is

really a business. Like I said before, there's really no pros to going to College other than paying for College and graduating College. I came here so I can graduate. I wasn't looking for no pros, no cons, none of that. I knew that I had a plan. I knew I had a vision. I know how to go to execute in order for me to take care of my family in the near future. So not for nothing. This University really hasn't given me anything. And I'm not even saying I want to take anything from this University. But at the end of the day, this University hasn't made me a better individual. This University hasn't made me a better black man. And quite frankly, this University, being in the city of Amherst, can't help me be a better black man. I'm the only person that could help me be a better black man. And the other black men that do go to the school are the only ones that can help each other become better black men. So truthfully, I'm just here so I can get the University my money and they can give me my degree.

- Speaker C
- 11:40
  
- Okay.
  
- Corryn McPherson
- 11:41
  
- So how do you view after the pandemic? How do you view.
  
- Speaker C
- 11:43
  
- Like you being a negative or positive late.
- Umar Coates
  
- 11:49
  
- After the pandemic, I would view you be in. I wouldn't give it a positive or negative because like I said in my previous statement, I'm simply here so that I can graduate. So as far as the administration and the faculty and staff goes, there are a couple of professors here that do a very good job at making students feel welcome. But there is a very select few professors that really do make students feel welcome. For the most part, it's a good University. It's a diverse University, but the diversity is limited. I could say the diversity is definitely limited. It would be



nice seeing a couple of other students that look like me and some engineering classes that I'm taking. Now, as far as that's concerned, there's not enough black men or women, for that matter, in the engineering field. So without further Ado, I feel like this University, they could definitely as opposed to I'm looking at what they did wrong and what they did right, they should take a look in the mirror and reflect on how they can make their University better. Because at the end of the day, yes, a business. But it's not always about numbers. It's about parents actually sending their children to a University where they feel as if they can grow and where they feel as if they're surrounded by a community of individuals that are helping them grow as well. A secure University. Not to say that UB isn't safe but at the same time as many College students do, we all have lapses in our mental health we do have a couple of mental health options that we could pursue if things do go left but at the end of the day as University I do believe that this is strictly about the money and if it's about the money now, it's always going to be about the money. There's nothing that's going to change unless they don't get paid enough money and then they go out to start selling the books and their professors and everything at wholesale. We need lower prices on everything. The gas prices is high, everything is hard. So look if everything is hard that means that something got to be low and I'd rather be my tuition and some gas prices. With that being said, without further Ado I do appreciate Corinne for giving me this opportunity to answer the questions on the interview.

- Corryn McPherson
  - 14:45
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- Thank you.

14:47