

Transcript of Interview with Alice by Daniel Yerxa

Interviewee: Alice

Interviewer: Daniel Yerxa

Date: 09/19/2020

Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Abstract: This is an interview of a college freshman detailing the effects COVID-19 has had on both the end of their senior of high school and the start of college. It focuses on education and more generally the response of national, local and educational institutions to COVID-19.

Daniel Yerxa 0:01

Hi, Alice. It's great to be talking to you today about your experience with COVID-19. I just want to ask you a few questions. It will only take around six minutes or so. Do you give consent to be interviewed?

Alice 0:11

Yes, I do.

Daniel Yerxa 0:13

If you could state the date and time, and we can get started.

Alice 0:15

Okay. It is September 19th. It is 1:11pm.

Daniel Yerxa 0:21

Great. All right. So when did you first hear about COVID-19?

Alice 0:28

I first heard about COVID-19 in late February because I had just gotten back from a vacation. My mom was very nervous.

Daniel Yerxa 0:38

So when you first heard about it, were you very concerned about it?

Alice 0:41

Not really. I live in Connecticut, so I was on the opposite side of the coast, where at first sprung up in America.

Daniel Yerxa 0:48

Okay. Um, when did you first realize how this would kind of be a major problem?

Alice 0:57

I think it was early March, my mom was freaking out saying that everybody in our town was going to get it. And we had a lot of teachers at school who were very nervous and talking about closing for a while.

Daniel Yerxa 1:10

Okay, so when did things first start shutting down? And like, what- how did you feel about it?

Alice 1:16

I think it was mid-March, I was honestly really excited. I had been burnt out of school. It was second semester, so the idea of just getting to stay inside and relax was really nice.

Daniel Yerxa 1:29

So initially, it just felt nice, but was there ever a point where it started shifting from like, this is a nice break to man, this might actually be a real problem?

Alice 1:44

Yes. I think I started to get worried more for like my older family members and myself, really. I worked through the whole pandemic, at a restaurant; we were doing, like, carry out and stuff. And so since I think I was always working through it, and I still kind of had a daily schedule, it never felt like it was too crazy, I guess.

Daniel Yerxa 2:04

Okay. How, how have you felt about the national response?

Alice 2:09

I think it was incredibly poor and embarrassing. I think that the response, even now, is still bad. People still don't have the access that they need. And I think that there should have been a lot more testing early on. I think it should have been taken seriously, and the media should have been more monitored.

Daniel Yerxa 2:30

So clearly, don't- you haven't loved the national response, but how have you felt about the local response?

Alice 2:40

It was fine. I think it could have been stricter, but we did do a good job at containing things. Connecticut was one of the first to show numbers going down, and we followed in the steps of New York. So we had a great example of what to learn from.

Daniel Yerxa 2:59

Great. Um, so what areas of your life would you say have been most affected by the pandemic?

Alice 3:08

Probably just education, you know, I was going to be abroad at this time, or in a dorm, which would have been a much different environment than what I'm experiencing right now in the hotel, not necessarily in a bad way, just much different. And I got to miss out on a lot of senior fun, end of the year things. So...

Daniel Yerxa 3:29

Do you feel like the pandemic has negatively affected your education? Or do you feel like you don't- do you feel like a disadvantage now that you're in college, and you missed out on part of your senior year?

Alice 3:43

Oh, no, I think that was good. I think I would have not have been so eager to learn because I was at home for six months, not really putting my mind too much except for reading here and there. I was excited to learn. However, I do think learning online puts me at a disadvantage.

Daniel Yerxa 3:59

So how have you felt about coming to college this semester, especially after seeing several schools having already closed shortly after opening?

Alice 4:10

So initially, I thought it was kind of absurd, but I wanted to get out of town; I wanted to do something different. So I came, but I thought that schools really shouldn't be opening. I thought, because there's no vaccine, and nothing's really changed, we closed schools a few months ago, there's no reason they should be open now. But now that I'm here, I feel much differently. And I think that we should be here, at least at Northeastern because, um, our cases are very low. And all the protocols are being taken very seriously. And I feel like a lot of students that I see, at least when I'm out, are abiding by all the rules, which makes me feel confident in staying.

Daniel Yerxa 4:48

So does that mean you feel like Northeastern, in particular, their response to COVID-19 has been good, or do you think it's been a little too strict or not strict enough?

Alice 4:58

I think in this case, you can't really say anything is, that's not true. We can say things are too strict. But I do think that their response has been appropriate. I think that where it is strict, it should be because it's people's lives. It's not just random polls just to harass students. So I think that the students being sent home was a little bit extreme in some cases, but in general, I think it's been really, really good.

Daniel Yerxa 5:24

Are you worried about how COVID has affected your college experience? Has it made it worse than you expected? Or has it changed much?

Alice 5:34

I think, a social perspective, it's made it worse than it would have been otherwise. But I think in other ways, it also has been really beneficial. Because the people you do meet, you kind of, I feel like, spend more time with them, since you can't go out and be in huge groups of people. I've also had a lot of time to explore Boston, which I never thought I would have the opportunity to do, and being outside is definitely something that they push on you a lot in the hotel since you're not really supposed to be in big groups inside. So it's been really great going out to see Boston, and I definitely don't take that for granted.

Daniel Yerxa 6:11

Great. Um, those are all the questions I have for you. Thank you.

Alice 6:14

Thank you.