

Transcript of Interview with Jared Walpurgis by Katarzyna Kumor

Interviewee: Jared Walpurgis

Interviewer: Katarzyna Kumor

Date: 09/19/2020

Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Abstract: Despite this assignment being for University students, most American's do not know the realities that students now face during the pandemic; even myself, who is working full-time from my childhood home while taking this course. I can skip Northeastern's Covid-19 updates and I am completely ignorant of the protocols that on-campus students have to remember everyday, and the consequences that they face if they do not. I didn't know that NEU had tents set up for outdoor gathering or studying, or that roommate quotas in on-campus housing has remained the same despite social distancing protocols. I hope this interview shows a glimpse of university life and the students sentiment towards university decisions, such as NEU's very public and controversial suspension of 11 freshman without a refund, as it is not the norm for all of us.

That's why it was a pleasure in getting this insight from Jared, a third year Asian studies major. We learned the most before the recording, by simply getting to know how the coronavirus has impacted our location, surroundings, and day-to-day life. This introduction went well, because it set us up for asking more targeted questions with a storyline during the interview. I especially appreciated Jared's conversational tone, as it felt more like a re-do of our first conversation than a formal one. I liked being the interviewee for this reason, as it took the pressure off having to keep a natural discussion going. Our interviews went over the time limit, mostly because we were both invested in answering each question thoroughly and thoughtfully, and we realized it would have been very difficult to gain the insight that we had without doing so. However, maybe with some more practice we could have been more succinct.

Katarzyna Kumor 00:01

Hi, I'm Kasia. So I am currently in the house that I grew up in, in New Jersey. I'm a fifth year business major at Northeastern University interviewing Jared. Jared, could you introduce yourself?

Jared Walpurgis 00:17

Hello, I'm Jared Walpurgis. I'm a third year Asian Studies major also at Northeastern University. I'm living on campus this semester. It's currently 6pm on the 19th of September, and I give my consent to be interviewed for this Northeastern interview.

Katarzyna Kumor 00:37

Great, you beat me to it for my next two questions.

Jared Walpurgis 00:38

Yep.

Katarzyna Kumor 00:42

And this question, this interview should last anywhere between five to eight minutes. Does that work for you?

Jared Walpurgis 00:47

Yep. Sounds good.

Katarzyna Kumor 00:50

Awesome. So where were you when you first heard about the Coronavirus?

Jared Walpurgis 00:55

I was beginning my second semester of my second year; it was around probably early to mid-January. And I don't actually remember where I first heard about it. It was like making its way in the public discourse at that point in the US, but no one was really taking it seriously, myself included. Um, and then it just very quickly escalated. From there, like, coming—at the beginning of March, my family went on a trip to Disney World that we had planned, like a year, year and a half before, um, during my spring break. And no one really bothered to mention it like there were no, like Disney World themselves did not have any sort of, like signs or regulations about it at that point. And when we got back, the, Northeastern was like, beginning to start talking about it like, Boston blew up from having one case to having like 200 within a couple days. And then we were all kicked out about—classes were moved online, two days, two to three days after coming back from spring break. And then from there, we were kicked out with 72 hours' notice two days later. So, that was that was the end of in person that semester.

Katarzyna Kumor 02:19

Right, where did you go after everyone was kicked off campus?

Jared Walpurgis 02:25

So, I went back to my childhood home up in Troy, New York. It's right by Albany and lived there for the next six months until the start of this semester, where I moved back to Boston.

Katarzyna Kumor 02:41

Gotcha. How did you spend those six months back at home?

Jared Walpurgis 02:45

Um, very, very boringly. Um, so the first month was a bit of a mess, because we still had to finish the last semester, but it was all online and no one knew what they were doing. So that was pretty stressful. And then after that source of stress just ended, it just became this monotonous day to day doing almost the exact same thing every day. So, by the, by the last month by August, I was just looking forward to

the start of school. So, something different would happen, so I can leave and go back to a not boring suburban town and go to a real city.

Katarzyna Kumor 03:25

Right, is that why you're on campus at the moment?

Jared Walpurgis 03:28

Yep. That was one of the key motivating factors to not taking the semester purely remotely and being somewhat local.

Katarzyna Kumor 03:37

Gotcha. And Northeastern has this hybrid course setup going on, is that something you're partaking in?

Jared Walpurgis 03:47

The option is available, but none of my professors are coming to campus, they all said they were going to teach remotely. So rather than go to a classroom and sit on Zoom, I'm just staying in my apartment and taking classes remotely.

Katarzyna Kumor 04:05

Do you think they're being just as effective in being able to teach students online as it would be in person?

Jared Walpurgis 04:12

With the types of classes, I'm taking, I think it's being somewhat similar. Um, I, I know from certain friends that, like labs for STEM courses are more annoying, because, like, all those have to be in person, they're group activities. So, they're definitely limited more than just discussions, which can pretty easily translate online, especially with the way all of my homework is, which is literally just posting discussions and responding to each other. Um, which is a bit of a mess with scheduling. But it's because every single class is the same I then like kind of lose track what's due when for my respective classes, but it's, it's been kind of fine with my, my coursework, but I don't think all of my STEM friends are entirely translating as easily.

Katarzyna Kumor 05:17

Okay, and what is the setup for you like, right now in taking these classes, are you just doing it at your desk, basically, on a daily basis in your apartment on campus?

Jared Walpurgis 05:33

Pretty much I've been at the kitchen table for the last couple weeks, because wired internet on Northeastern was just-, in Northeastern was just completely down for the, since that—

Katarzyna Kumor 5:46

Is it the closest to the router in the kitchen?

Jared Walpurgis 5:50

Ah, it was just like, my desk is entirely covered with my desktop. So, I migrated out to the kitchen to set up my laptop, because my desktop does not have a Wi-Fi card. So, without wired internet, I, this became kind of a, kind of useless. So, I moved.

Katarzyna Kumor 06:08

Right. Who, who else is with you in that apartment?

Jared Walpurgis 06:11

Three other friends from the last year and a half. We're all, we're all taking our classes completely remotely. Except actually wait, one of my one of my roommates is taking one class in person because the professor is actually going. So, he's taking advantage of that. Because it is a, it is a language course, so, in person, like having the professor just there is definitely a lot easier.

Katarzyna Kumor 06:39

Gotcha. What is it, does it get annoying by having to do all this online with two or three other roommates and basically the same room as you?

Jared Walpurgis 06:50

They're, so, we live in a two, two single one double. Um, so the two kids in the two singles, they're fine. While audio, like, while the walls are pretty thin, so sound like carries pretty, pretty, easily here. The only problem that like scheduling that comes up is my, my actual roommate in the double because I live in the double, um, he has class at the same time as one of mine. So that's when it gets a bit like we, we, both mute so that we don't interrupt each other's respective classes. So, at first it was like the very first day like, that was a bit... I think I didn't, I wasn't muting for that because my professor was like, everybody unmuted, we're gonna have a fun class. And then he spoke. And I was just like, Oh, yikes, I have to. I know our situation. But from that point, it was fine. It was just the first instance that was a problem.

Katarzyna Kumor 07:51

And given that you're living on campus with more precautions from Northeastern, what kind of things do you have to keep in mind nowadays, that you didn't even have to worry about six months before?

Jared Walpurgis 08:05

Um, I guess like coordinating, spending time with people is more complicated. Because Northeastern is doing no visitors and you can't really like loiter anywhere. Like, at least in buildings. So, this first month where the weather is still okay. It's been a lot of meetup on this quad. Or, let's, let's like get food and get

a bunch of lawn chairs, and that kind of thing. So, seeing people a lot less. Also, I'm part of the e-board on a club. So we've been doing a full transition online, which is kind of annoying, because we have to figure out what like, how we're going to plan new meetings and what we're actually going to do during the meetings, but I think we've been setting up a okay, online community. I'm the head moderator of it, so, it's been a bit, I've been spending a lot of time tinkering with our, our server that we're using.

Katarzyna Kumor 09:07

And did you hear about Northeastern kicking off 11 freshmen a couple of days or even weeks ago now, because they were at a party?

Jared Walpurgis 09:20

Yeah, that made the rounds. A lot of people were, it's been kind of like, with upperclassmen has been kind of like, oh man, classic freshmen. But the news itself, I've been seeing so many news articles, I think every single news outlet that would appear in my feed had its own article on it. So, it kind of got a bit repetitive at that point. But the like, you, kind of yeah, you have to feel bad for them. Like in some regard, like sure they're being dumb, and they got, they were like being dumb enough to get caught too. But they're seniors right out of high school, and they're like, alright, we're in college now. And like, they now have to, I guess live with that, that they're very, that their freshman year they got removed from their school. So, they have to like, go find another one, they have to go through the whole application process again. They're now like in this weird limbo between being a high school student and college student. Like, that sounds pretty rough.

Katarzyna Kumor 10:23

Right. Well, I wanted to get more of an idea of what the almost the culture and atmosphere is like at Northeastern. I think you provided that. So, thank you for your time today.

Jared Walpurgis 10:35

All right, thanks. It's been, it's been a pleasure to do this.

Katarzyna Kumor 10:40

I appreciate it. And scene.