

## The Immorality of Being Happy in a Pandemic

As a student who goes to a very tight knit Catholic College, nothing has split the community on campus quite like this. The issue comes with balancing the benefits of an in person education with maintaining a healthy social life compounded by inconsistent rule enforcement. From my perspective, there is a scale for how seriously people follow the COVID protocols, on one end there are people who religiously follow every rule, and on the other, people who go at great lengths to break them and think nothing of going to a packed club. The student body sits everywhere in between these two poles. The difference in opinion causes the people who follow the rules to resent the people who break the rules. They see it as reckless and selfish that some students hold their interests in a higher regard than the well being of their classmates. The people who break the school's quarantine were tired of never leaving their dorm and argue that college is meant to be fun and if you have to bend the rules to see friends that's acceptable. I've seen these disagreements split dorm rooms, best friends, sports teams and classmates. Without a common area to communicate our differences we are only left to passively aggressively hate through social media. Very often people's views on following the "Community Care Covenant" depends on how convenient it is to them. It is very easy to condemn off campus parties when it is a Thursday night with no plans to go out and a lot of homework to do. It becomes just as easy to mock the frivolity of the rules when your friends are going out and leave you with the option of being lonely or finding enjoyment. I have been both amused and exasperated to see some of my acquaintances with strong liberal views condemn Trump and anti-maskers on all platforms for refusing to accept the sound science of social distancing and covering one's mouth. Then not even an hour later they will post from the same account a picture of them at a two-hundred person house party, drink in hand, and not a mask in sight. As if them

claiming their intentions are pure makes their actions irrelevant. I have seen this every weekend and am dumbfounded with the lack of self awareness some people show. In the name of honesty I will admit that I feel this contradiction personally. I scroll through my phone and get jealous and annoyed by posts of my college peers in large groups, without masks, clustered together. Unfortunately, even though I agree with all the social distancing precautions things change when I have the opportunity for fun. One year into having almost every single conversation being with the same eight people, I long for the college experience. As much as I dislike going against rules that I personally agree with there is no end in sight to this pandemic. Besides, I rationalize, my friends and I are all healthy and would not purposefully endanger elders. So despite people like me self-righteously shaking our fists and quarantine breakers, I do feel strong temptations to do so. For example, I had not seen my girlfriend in weeks and the new relationship we had started was dying due to long distance. Do I break protocol by taking her on a date and spending time with her? Yes, I did. When friends I had not seen since first semester freshman year asked me my second semester sophomore year to join them for drinks. Do I follow the rules and stay in my dorm watching television, or do I go into junior year with more than two friends? There is a huge culture of hypocrisy at all levels, whether it be the students or the school itself. The school, sadly, is not innocent of responsibility for some of these divisions. The school refuses to allow men and women to visit each other in their dorms, but as the saying goes “out of sight out of mind” as the athletic teams and others have off-campus parties just a mile away the school would have to be fools not to notice. My friends and I are not allowed to play basketball in the gym. But if we are out of the public eye in a secluded part of campus, fifty people can play pick up sports. Sure the campus police will not break up bonfires in the woods and won’t bat an eye when several packed cars leave campus at the same time but four people can not eat lunch together.

Most people seem to be concerned about covering their own behinds rather than any sort of actual safety.

To conclude, this is not an easy time for anybody. There have been plenty of tough decisions to make and things are not so black and white as campus rules would like to believe.

Having fun is hard work in COVID America. The social pressures at this school continue to weigh heavily on those who do their best to do the 'right thing'. Like I said earlier, there is a large scale of where people's beliefs over COVID policy lands, but I think I can speak for college students everywhere when I say, I cannot wait for this to return to normal.