

The year 2020 will be remembered differently by every person, but the one similarity will be the Covid-19 pandemic. The biggest impact Covid-19 has had on my life was my decision of where to go to college. I was originally planning on going away to school; however, that all changed when I realized I might not be able to come home from school to see my family due to Covid-19 restrictions. Covid-19 was the reason I decided to stay close to home and commute to Springfield College instead of going away to school. My life was completely redirected from the pandemic.

I never could have imagined starting college the way I did. Instead of having large student gatherings, we had quarantines and were separated from our friends. Instead of supporting our student athletes in person, we had to watch over zoom. Instead of getting to know all your professors, we had masks where we did not even know what our professors and other students really looked like. Instead of just having normal academic tests each week in our classes, we also had weekly Covid-19 tests. This pandemic completely turned peoples lives upside down.

Even though my first year of college may have been quite different than I imagined with all the Covid-19 restrictions, I also gained a large sense of gratitude from this pandemic. I am fortunate enough to say that I have not lost a loved one from Covid-19; however, I know for most of the population that is not the case. I was still fortunate enough to be with my family and to quarantine with them so even when we were socially distancing, we were still together. So many people did not have this luxury of being with their family and have been separated from them for over a year. This pandemic has really taught me to never take anything for granted because you never know how fast everything can change.

Covid-19 also influenced the courses I took at Springfield College. Before this pandemic I did not know much about world diseases; however, after living through Covid-19, I became really interested in taking an honors colloquium course all about world diseases including Covid-19. Learning about past infectious diseases as well as the one I was currently living through, completely changed my perspective of virus outbreaks. I have realized that we may never get back to “normal” or the way it was before Covid-19, but that is okay. Even though this pandemic has been filled with hardships I think there is a lot of opportunity that has come out of it as well and that is learning from Covid-19 to better prepare for the future.

The biggest takeaway I have from the honors colloquium on world diseases is that we need to be ready and prepared for a future pandemic. We were warned by scientists that Covid-19 was going to happen years before it did, but we did not plan well for this virus and that is why we have experienced such a severe pandemic with long-lasting effects. If I could only take one thing away from this course it would be that we are going to have future pandemics that may not be in our control, but what we can control is how we learn from each pandemic and grow as a country to be more prepared for each future virus outbreak. Covid-19 has been devastating and so much has been lost from this pandemic, but we can also gain a lot from this pandemic such as the lessons about how to stop future outbreaks, so we do not have to experience this loss again.