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Leading the way: the lesson COVID-19 leaves behind

Needless to say, COVID-19 has made a significant impact on every aspect of life, both here in the United States, and around the world. With this in mind, simply analyzing the effects that COVID has inflicted on the academic system seems, simply put, reductive: it's quite obvious that life as an incoming freshman student on a college campus looks quite different this year. This is not to say that the analysis of COVID-19's impact on academia would be fruitless. Instead, it is with the context of the future, and reflection on the hardships one endures in a trying time like the world currently faces, that meaningful lessons can be extrapolated. And, in doing so, one in particular stands out as being worthy of contemplation: adaptability.

As aforementioned, the effects that COVID-19 has made on our academic system are obvious; but that is not to say that the *solutions* to those problems were at first glance comparatively. Considering how rampantly COVID-19 has been able to spread in large-scale communities, being able to return to a college campus, which in some cases house hundreds of thousands of students, seemed impossible (and unfortunately in many instances, this turned out to be the reality of the situation). However, for many collegiate institutions, such as Springfield College, determination and circumstance allowed for a glimmer of hope of returning to campus for the fall semester. And, with determination and an unwavering commitment to fostering a community of individuals who would lead us back to the way things were, we adapted. Zoom meetings, a rigorous amount of COVID screening and quarantining for individuals who were sick, and a collective effort to create an environment that has been able to balance social distancing with community building and engagement, has enabled that dream to come to a reality. We're here: we've adapted to change, and that adaptability will be a crucial step in restoring communities and bringing forth social change. And the class of 2024 will lead the way.