

Project Title: Documenting the CSUSB COVID-19 Experience

Interview Summary

Interviewees:

Alissa Hennings

Interviewer:

Nikki Penilla

Interview Date:

October 17th, 2020

Location:

Zoom Interview

Riverside and San Bernardino County

Interview Summary completed by:

Nikki Penilla, 2020

Topic:

Life as a student in 2020

Keywords:

- COVID-19, internet, school, trends, social media, politics

Comments:

Interview starts at 2:25

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
MP4	24:33	

Related Materials:

N/A

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Nikki P: What do you remember about the day in March when our college shut down due to the pandemic?

Alissa H.: So I was no part of CSUSB at the time I am actually a transfer student.

Nikki P: Oh wow.

Alissa H.: Yeah it was a much more difficult process.

Nikki P.: Wow I can imagine. So did you transfer from a community?

Alissa H.: Yes I transferred from Crafton Hills College.

Nikki P.: Wow okay, that's crazy, I am a transfer student as well and I can't imagine not imagine going into it without an orientation. Our orientation day made me familiar with the campus and stuff.

Alissa H: So orientation was actually super difficult, it was a three hour meeting with a powerpoint and everything, it was horrendous and none of my questions were actually answered during that process they just said email someone after. I emailed someone after and got an automated response back.

Nikki P.: Oh thats not fun at all.

Alissa H.: Yeah so I had to make a bunch of appointments to meet with a conselors in person and then I was able to get the help I needed.

Nikki P.: Well at least they were able to help you.

Alissa H.: Yes

Nikki P.: So how are you staying connected to the campus during this time?

Alissa H.: Um pretty much emails, Zoom meetings and the GroupMe app.

Nikki P.: Yeah

Alissa H.: GroupMe you can communicate with your class. Thats pretty much the primary way.

Nikki P.: Yeah, I'm just curious how is communicating with conselors like over Zoom?

Alissa H.: Yes! So I had to schedule a meeting with one of the conselors there was an issue with my transfer, so you have to select your degree equivalence, I have an associated in Health Science, and when I transfered there was no equivalent.

Nikki P.: Oh no!

Alissa H.: Yeah and they didn't let me go into the nursing program because I transferred as undeclared and that was the only process that would let me into the school and it was just a mess, so now my major is changed I have to do Biology now.

Nikki P.: Oh wow so you had a full 360 situation there.

Alissa H.: Yes its a very good thing I am open to my options cause i know life happens things change.

Nikki P.: Yeah wow so, what role has technology played during the pandemic and have you had to acquire any new skills to effectively use unfamiliar technologies? What does your new workspace look like?

Alissa H.: Oh definitely! I can use Zoom now, before this I didn't even use Facetimeing!

Nikki P.: Really??

Alissa H.: I had no camera experience once so ever and I have learned how to connect audio, I had to help my grandparents make meetings for their little group meetings with their elders and things, so I gained some skills. My work space is a mess! I have to have folders for everything, so much ink and paper to print things out cause I am one of those people who have to have something to hold on too for studying and stuff.

Nikki P.: Yeah that's how I am too, I know for me I had to play around cause I found myself when I'm in my room trying to do my work, it's not gonna happen. Like I'll end up falling asleep or scrolling on my phone, so I had to go downstairs in my kitchen cause if not I'm not gonna get any work done.

Alissa H.: Yeah so I have to work in my living room for me in my room I will put the task off until last second.

Nikki P.: Yeah that's a big thing I found during this whole thing, procrastinating is up there. What has it been like learning, teaching, or working virtually? How is that going for you?

Alissa H.: It has had some challenges, Im taking um a Spanish class for the first time, very difficult

Nikki P.: Oh yeah I can imagine!

Alissa H.: Yes cause I mean just pronunciation of certain words sometime the calls disconnects or the audio will lower and your can't hear syllables and she asks your to pronounce some of the words and you're not sure.

Nikki P.: Yeah for me it has been a struggle just cause I've always read, but I need to see and not all of my professors offer Zoom sessions with powerpoints and those are the classes I am struggling with

Alissa H.: Yeah so some of my professors are like I'm gonna be understanding we don't have to have Zoom meetings, but they'll upload lecture documents basically and they're like oh we have a test next week and I am not sure and they have videos and these documents and I need to hear it, see it and have repetition to fully understand

Nikki P.: Yeah most definitely that's how I am too and even some of my professors say oh it's not mandatory to come to Zoom and it's like what do you mean it' not mandatory. And one of my classes its no more than ten minute check in.

Alissa H.: Well I guess a ten minute is better than none so you can get clarification. I have a couple professors where their responses do not make sense and do not answer the question once so ever.

Nikki P.: Yeah and then I end up reaching out to other classmates and I often hear from one person if that. I had a professor ask me to reach out asking classmate instead of him answering my question and I want their response and you know sometimes thats all we want and you know i can only imagine how hard it is on them having to transfer all this information

Alissa H.: Oh yeah and even if you weren't prepared for online I have two older professors and they struggle, but they're making it through with help from their grandkids that are helping them out.

Nikki P.: My sister is a high school teacher and I don't know how it is in your area, but the high school, middle school and elementary school teachers teach Zoom on campus and she's been helping the older teachers navigate their Zoom sessions

Alissa H.: I have three younger brothers purely online one in middle school, one in high school and one at Craften now and they all do Google meetings and little projects basically. Teaching them technology is hard.

Nikki P.: Yeah it is, how has the closure of residence halls, campus services, or buildings affected you?

Alissa H.: It has definitely saved me gas money that's for sure! It is about a 40 minute drive, but when we do go back to campus I will be lost.

Nikki P.: Yeah you know it is a generally small campus some people say its big, but I think coming from RCC is a really big community campus, its relatively small.

Alissa H.: Yeah my friend goes to RCC and I've been there a couple times and I'm like how do you manage around this campus!

Nikki P.: Yeah, but I saved a lot of gas, last quarter I was going Monday through Thursday and it was a drag driving from Corona, so I'm kind of happy I don't have to make that drive, but I do want to go back.

Alissa H.: Yeah I prefer in class more than online, I will happily drive now to my classes so I get the learning experience I need.

Nikki P.: Yeah me too! How do you handle the stress we've all been experiencing?

Alissa H.: Really just trying new things, finding new hobbies I've been putting together a lot of puzzles, I've been trying new teas and I tried to make Boba from scratch, it was a tedious process, but it was interesting and fun!

Nikki P.: Yeah I haven't really been focusing on it just going day by day that has been helping me a lot. How has the quarantine, isolation, and social distancing affected your life and relationships with family and friends?

Alissa H.: Umm so this one is a longer answer, so I have this cousin, my grandfather and my friend have severe medical conditions so my cousin had a heart transplant last year and went through cancer and she's only twelve and we do not want to have her go to the hospital again so we are my family we are very close we live in the same city so we do see each other, but we have been very careful and when I am in public I am careful with what I am touching who I am around and if I interact I have to ask who they've been around with anyone with symptoms, wearing a mask, social distancing. It is a difficult time but I think it helps because it brings more awareness to the spread of germs

Nikki P.: Yeah I work retail and after every customer at the registers we have to wipe down and everything they touch and came in contact with we have to wipe it down before the next customer and me and one of our customers were talking the other day and he was saying that its crazy how self aware we are now because if I think about it in January how many people actually touched the counter I am at and when was the last time it was wiped down you know like how we used to touch everything and then touch our face and being unaware of the amount of germs that are being spread

Alissa H.: Yeah and washing your hands more, my hands are super dry because I now have to wash my hands after everything I touch because hand sanitizers do not kill all germs

Nikki P.: Yeah and lately the hand sanitizers have been smelling a little funky, we got in a shipment of some it and it just smells weird

Alissa H.: Yeah I think they are watering it down more or using cheaper and lower quality ingredients with mass shipments, but because of my friend and grandfather we have to be really careful .

Nikki P.: Yeah it is important to be cautious, can you tell me about how you're feeling given the uncertainty of these times.

Alissa H.: I am living the anti-social dream! I am not much of a people person and now i can avoid people solely off of covid and you can order pick up from a lot more places and I really like that.

Nikki P.: Yeah I felt like before this whole shut down I was so overwhelmed with work and school, I was about to quit my job and I felt during that three month process of nothing except grocery stores were open, I felt like staying home was so rejuvenating

Alissa H.: Yeah see I like that part of being alone with that time to reflect

Nikki P.: Yeah and my siblings were home too and I felt like we used that time to rebuild our bonds with our parents and we were able to get in more family time and it was nice because I felt like we never saw each other even though we live in the same house

Alissa H.: Yeah same with my family we were out doing our own things the first couple weeks were hard cause we all wanted to kill each other being enclosed in the same place but eventually we bonded a lot more and we watch

movies together and learning to play video games, I now play Call Of Duty, which I could not say before the pandemic.

Nikki P.: Oh thats funny. What do you recall about the political climate during this time and what new layer did it add during your experience of COVID?

Alissa H.: Well I believe everything happens for a reason and in their own time, I think that COVID has really shifted things in perspective and everyone is stuck at home and forced to listen to all the protests and police brutalities that were happening and I think it all happens for a reason and i think these things were overdue, but they came at a good time because everyone was forced to pay attention and be more educated because you had time to sit down and really think about these things happening

Nikki P.: Yeah I feel for some people it was an eye opener and like you said it is a time for people to get educated and some people will always be stuck in their way of thinking, but there was light in the darkness that is now. Is there anything else you wanted to add about your experience?

Alissa H.: Nothing specific but taking these precautions makings me happy knowing we aren't spreading to people that are vulnerable to COVID and that's the most important thing cause the anti- maskers, just wear the mask there's so many vulnerable people we have to protect, it is more of a courteous thing

Nikki P.: Yeah I feel like if we were too tell people wearing a mask protects you instead of the other way we would have a different situation

Alissa H.: Yeah but the second you have to help someone else it is an issue

Nikki P.: Yeah or a violation of their civil rights or whatever they say

Alissa H.: Yeah I feel as individuals we are self centered cause a lot of cultures and countries they do wear masks to be courteous or pick up trash after each other and less littering, just basically be courteous

Nikki P.: Something else I wanted to add was there anything during the height of the pandemic in the grocery stores that you were shocked you couldn't find?

Alissa H.: Oh I mean flour. Baking was the thing during quarantine.

Nikki P.: Yeah and we have always had a vegetable garden in our backyard and we had to turn our soil so we went to Home Depot and Lowes and it was jammed packed with people with soil and seeds and people planting stuff and I was like oh my gosh we have been doing this for ten years and it was crazy no soil.

Alissa H.: and our grocery stores we live in a small town and we had empty shelves they took everything down to the Kraft mac and cheese

Nikki P.: I went down to my local Stator Bros. and all the tomato sauce was gone and I was thinking each week a random item was sold out!

Alissa H.: Yeah I remember brownies were sold out and I was like okay people want brownies during quarantine and I remember popcorn as well being nonexistent.

Nikki P.: Another thing, did you fall into any of the trends that were going around? Did you download TikTok?

Alissa H.: No I'm not much of a social media, just Instagram, but I did do the whipped coffee trend, it was disgusting! So bitter!

Nikki P.: My sister would show me TikTocs of people cutting their hair, dying it, whipped coffee and there is this YouTuber Chloe.. Something she had a two week summer shred challenge and people would post themselves doing it, there was a new thing every week.

Alissa H.: Yeah there has been a lot of new trends with people having to past time, it's been real nice.

Nikki P.: Did you have anything you wanted to add?

Alissa H.: Other than I love that I am not coughed on or sneezed on that is pretty much it.

Nikki P.: Alright well thank you for letting me interview you and sharing your experience

Alissa H.: No problems

Nikki P.: Thank you, stay safe!

Alissa H.: So I'm just glad I get to help out and this is my way of connecting with the campus alittle bit, volunteering

Nikki P.: Alright, thank you!

----End of Interview----