

Project Title: Documenting the CSUSB COVID-19 Experience

This is a interview with a student at csusb about their experience with the covid-19 pandemic while in attendance at the school.

Interviewees:

Claudia, Figueroa

Interviewer:

Preston, Peterson

Interview Date:

October 13, 2020

Location:

Virtual zoom call, San Bernardino, CA.

Interview Summary completed by:

Preston, Peterson, 2020

Topic:

Covid-19, School, work, politics, home life, virtual, difficulties, health, mental health

Keywords:

- Covid-19, CSUSB, Zoom, Anxiety, Depression, President Trump, Politics, Therapy, Stress, Work stress, Home stress, Physical health, Mental health, death, pandemic, 2020, school, work, technology, computer trouble, wifi crashes

Comments:

The thoughts of the interviewee do not reflect the thoughts or opinions of the interviewer.

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Zoom Meeting	0:01	Introduction and time and date given
	0:30	Start of interview questions
	26:25	End of interview

Related Materials:

Short description of related interviews/material if available

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Preston: “Okay This is an interview with Claudia in csusb about her experience with covid 19 as a student at csusb. Today is October. I believe the 13th at 5:30. Okay to start, what do you remember about the day in March when csusb announced their response to go virtual due to the pandemic.”?

Claudia: “Yes I actually work on campus; I was the assistant to the event coordinator at the student union I remember things moving fairly quickly. At first it was “okay don’t worry we should be fine”, to “hey you know every time you or you assistants were in the office try to sanitize as best you can” to “we are cancelling events” to “okay guys go home we are closing the student union” to getting the email saying finals are going to be all online, and I thought hopefully I will be back in fall to now we are just saying virtual classes it went from not necessarily being a big deal to moving very quickly to just shutting everything down it was kind of surreal.

Preston: Yeah, it was very quick it was very quick.... Lets see. Are you still working with the campus from home?

Claudia: No.

Preston: no, because there is no events?

Claudia: No events. So, it went from being very accommodating, so we were getting paid up until I believe the end of June, around there, like the last week of June. And then from there we got furloughed hopefully being able to go back in spring but obviously we can’t go back in spring.

Preston: Right.

Claudia: It has been stressful because a lot of us were graduating, well I am for one graduating in the spring quarter, so I don’t have a job from now until after graduation. It’s a big ol thing. So no unfortunately I don’t im not working right now with csusb they were very accommodating at first but I also understand they cant exactly pay me for the entire time it is closed. So right now I’m just hoping for the best.

Preston: So you’re in a unique situation where you’re a student and you were working here this whole experience has really diverted attention from that and kind of made that difficult how are you handling the stress that this is causing?

Claudia: Lots of therapy I am not even kidding. It’s been. At first, I think I got really depressed and I didn’t know just how depressed I got, I tried to you know just to the best I can with my courses and stuff like that, with spring and then I was like okay just get through summer vacation, and then in summer vacation I had a couple classes. But I think it hit me kind of hard, where I didn’t notice I was depressed when I actually was really depressed, because I have preexisting medical conditions. So at first we weren’t exactly sure what was going on with covid and how it affected people or at first they were saying you had to be a certain age range to get it

and children weren't getting and people in their 20s weren't getting it and stuff like that, but I had a stroke like two years ago when I was 23 so I have nerve damage and a weakened immune system do to it. So I actually stayed in my bedroom for like for I wanna say from march till the beginning of maybe like may just in case because my parents were still working.

Preston: Oh Okay

Claudia: So they were still leaving the house and coming home and I was the only one here and they were worried because they don't want to get me sick and it would be this big ol thing. So, yeah I'd say it has been a lot and then that's when I kind of realized I was in a rut and started seeing my therapist I have therapy started seeing my therapist and started taking my medications, my friends started coming over but they would sit on the other side of the room with me. It would still be nice you know. At first it was really hard now I think I'm just used to it. Like I go to the grocery store I got cleared so I can go to the grocery store I can go out and do stuff and take regular precautions like other people. It's weird because I remember when I could go do stuff without wearing a mask now it feels weird to me because I am so used to wearing my mask it feels weird I feel used to it yeah. School wise it has been stressful because I feel like I am not getting the same education that I was so used to getting before hand and it's kind of like this like keeping track of due dates on your own and almost sort of having to teach yourself at the same time because you cant sit their and be like oh hey I have a question or I don't understand this, you have to send an email and then keeping track of all the emails that are coming in it can get stressful so it's been on an ongoing battle but I'm getting a little better.

Preston: That's good. Yeah it is just crazy this whole thing has just added so much more to life you know, just so much more responsibility and tasks just more things to worry about.

Claudia: like I'm only a level four adult I can't handle this

Preston: You kind of already answered this but maybe we can go into it a little more. How has the quarantine isolation and social distancing affected your life and relationship with your family and friends?

Claudia: Okay so my mom, I was used to, it sucked, like I said I had to be quarantined for a while just because I wasn't sure how it would affect me or anything like that, that was hard because I was getting a little stir crazy, my sleep pattern changed I was sleeping all day and get out of bed at night, And I'd be fully energized and fully awake, so that kind of sucked. With my parents it didn't really change much because they would go out and still come home like the regular thing, the only difference was I was doing school form home, which was interesting it is interesting. There was actually a period where my mom had to be quarantined for two weeks. Oh my God, that was like the worst two weeks ever. Not that I have anything against my mom, but she is not used to staying home or not doing anything or being quarantined, she's like a very like dedicated worker, so she wants to do stuff, so the two weeks she was here we were constantly at each others throats over everything. Because we were both stressed out. With my friends it really hasn't affected anything with my friends we all have a group chat so we are still able to talk, we started adapting zoom into our lives, so we have like board game nights over zoom and stuff like that, or we'll talk on the phone. Ssometimes they will come over, one of my best friends comes over and we'll watch a movie or something. It just basically just reverted us back from being young adults to being like just fifteen sixteen year olds we couldn't do anything except figure out what we can do. Definitely put a lot of stress on like my family because we are not used to being home together all the time, and they are used to their certain lifestyle and I am used to my certain lifestyle so when we are forced not to be able to live that

lifestyle or like together too much you tend to like fight you know? So there is a period of that, but once they start going back to work we were fine I was like, cool.

Preston: What has it been like learning virtually, you know through, has it been hard to adapt? Has it been easy?

Claudia: I want to say it hasn't been hard to adapt but that would be partially lying, I had online classes before you know where I've been forced you know sometimes you have to take a course and they only offer it online you're kind of like it is what it is just try to keep track of it as much as you can, but I also have the balance of being able to take classes in person to kind of offset that like just staying home and constantly being on the computer but like I said before, I feel like I am not getting the same quality of education I know the first fall semester or was it spring?, it was spring when they started the first online, I know a lot of teachers were also stressed out because it started out with like first we are gonna do the first two weeks online and from there we are gonna go back to school, and then these professors had to basically like bum rush and try to get something done online, then it went from two weeks to like the entire semester. There were a lot of professors that, well I had one particular professor who, he was older you know, it was his first time teaching an online course but he got so overwhelmed with it as well he just stopped caring. So I would send him, I wouldn't understand something and we all have group chat that he set up for the course, so we wouldn't understand something and we'd try and discuss it over the group chat and everybody would be confused and three different people sent him emails, he was so rude because you could just tell he was so over it. I remember too we had to like take one of our finals or our midterms and it was like fifty questions and he only gave us like twenty seven minutes because he didn't want us cheating and I understand that but you got to be flexible with us and he was like you know what I have never taught an online course, and he basically ranted in an email saying it is what it is deal with it and I was like okay. So definitely professors feel the pressure, its hard because some professors shut down like we do and I understand that at the same it is hard keeping track of everything you need to do online and sometimes some of the information that you get, some professors don't meet over zoom it's just like here's the work figure it out kind of thing and you send them emails and they don't respond to like three or four days and then the next day the assignment is due. It's been a lot of trial and error from campus and students, just been a lot of self-teaching almost. I remember that one class that I told you about with the professor who completely shut down, I don't think I learned anything honestly like I can honestly tell you I learned nothing in that course except how to figure out how to pass.

Preston: Have you ever had the internet go out while you were taking a test? Any Wifi troubles?

Claudia: I was doing my final and I was taking the test, and in the middle of it my screen just froze and then it reloaded and it gave me this like error message and I was like oh my god no don't do this, So then I had to hit refresh and it turned in my test and I only had eight questions out of like fifty seven so then I had to sit there and email my professor, and then like sit down on the floor and like connect the ethernet cable straight into my lap top and stuff like that, it is worse when you use zoom, a lot of my professors will use zoom in class and require you to participate so sometimes you're in zoom, and you're in the middle of talking and zoom goes out because you internet goes out or like we've been having these blackouts due to the heat, so it will go out and I can't log back in and I email my professors and their like I get it but at the same time we can't really do much because they don't know if it really went out or if like I just wanted (couldn't understand well enough to transcribe)

Preston: Has it been hard finding like a space to do the zoom meetings?

Claudia: Right now I literally ran in screaming I have a zoom meeting at five thirty can you please retreat yourself from the living room, take the bird with you because I have a bird, take the bird with you because he's not gonna stop yelling and I have a zoom meeting at five thirty so please get out. Especially because I live in a smaller apartment I have a desk in my bedroom where I sit there and can do my work, but the internet doesn't reach all the way there. Because it's all the way in the back. Sometimes I'll do it on the kitchen table. And it's fine which is usually where I have just a blank white wall I'm sure you have probably seen it when we have our class meetings. The internet is really strong here in the living room and my parents are constantly in the living room, so it has been adjusting for them too. And it's been really hard for them to adjust sometimes I will just come in and say I have a zoom meeting you guys need to get out or I'll be sitting at the kitchen table and I will be in the middle of a presentation presenting sometimes, or like talking or doing something and my dad will ask me something and I'm like I'm in a meeting. So yeah it has been hard, but you kind of just got to work with what you got.

Preston: Right. I was having difficulties because I am not very tech savvy and I never even had a laptop so I had to go out and get one for this and I have been having difficulties having to figure out how this works, have you been having trouble like that? Or has it been seamless for you.

Claudia: I'm very tech savvy, but I have been blessed because I worked for the campus. So with us doing reservations and doing events you're basically handling every single event from something as small as a club and faculty meetings to bigger events like ... fest or like the big study abroad expos or the anime expo and stuff we have on campus. So since I am the assistant coordinator I do a lot of like the reservations but I have been cross trained and I learned a lot of the AV tech stuff.

Preston: oh okay

Claudia: Because they'll come in and they'll set up but they'll leave and sometimes they'll leave or there is nothing there and people need help with something usually the AV tech just sit there the whole event. But sometimes some last-minute guest last minutes says oh I didn't put on my reservation that I wanted something like zoom or something. Or I wanted like zoom or like a conference call or something and those we threw scheduling so they taught me how to do it. So when they are like oh yeah we are gonna start doing our meetings over zoom, I was literally like I know how to do this, because I learned how to do it at work. So I have been very fortunate with that. I kind of already knew how to log in and how to set up appointments and set up meeting and stuff like that because when I set it up at work I have to test it with my own login to make sure everything is working and how to test microphones and how to test the camera and stuff like that. But there are some things in zoom I don't know how to do. So I remember in the curation class that you and I are taking and the professor was asking oh do you guys know how to raise your hand and I was like no. I don't know how to do that or like you know how to host you're the host or something like that. I was like I don't know how to do that either. It has been a lot of trial and error I am also president of the club on campus it's like a non, what's it called dang, a non school recognized club we haven't gotten like recognition yet because like we were supposed to do that this quarter but everything shut down and we can't exactly put in our paper work. We have also had a lot of like online too that require breakout sessions. So that was something where it was like oh yeah let's just do that the day of and like no no I don't know how to do this can you like do this the day before so I can figure it out. So there have been certain things that have been difficult with it. So yeah I feel you.

Preston: Yeah, it's all new but I guess everything about this is, it's all learning. What do you recall about the political climate during this time, and what new layer did it add for your experience with covid

Claudia: That's a very interesting question, especially in twenty twenty, given who our president is at the time, it's been stressful it has made me angry. I really don't know how to answer this it's so overwhelming is the word I am trying to find it's been so overwhelming because, it went from a health thing where it was very obvious what we need to do, because you and I are both history majors, and we study things and we know the patterns. I remember studying.... Epidemiology last quarter, and I actually did it on plagues. So it's like you know the pattern and you know what needs to be done. Medically when they were announcing we were going to quarantine we are doing this we are doing that we are shutting stuff down. Yeah it sucked but the same time I was like yeah I get it. And then it went from just being like medically to it turning into something politically and it shouldn't have to be political to begin with. Basically our president killed like two hundred thousand people like you know, it went from oh no to like we won't do this because it goes against freedom of speech or against our rights, and I'm like people are trying not to die dude like do you understand what is going on like this isn't something that should be politicized like it's completely something different like but given our president. But yeah that made me angry and when numbers kept rising and people kept dying it made me more upset and it stressed me more out, because the more this happens the less likely it is that I will be able to go back to school and get back to normal. And obviously now it's a big thing that we are in the middle of the debates, that was a fun presidential debate by the way. And that's like one of the main questions that was being asked like okay what are you going to do for the pandemic and do you think wearing a mask should be necessary like why are you asking these questions. For one yes and number two it should have been done to begin with we shouldn't hold peoples lives as political clout you get what I mean. So it's been stressful, I did kind of laugh though because you know our president got covid and he's been a big mediator on trying to turn this pandemic political for onepolitical to saying it is not a big deal and kind of downplaying the seriousness of it, to getting sick which I thought was the best karma in the world you know. It has added a lot of stress unnecessary stress where I am just like listen to doctors please you are a politician what do you have how do you have any knowledge about what medical workers and epidemiologists think like you have no knowledge of that to be able to put your two cents in and say that someone has gone to school with it and is highly trained in this is wrong. It's been a trip. I feel like twenty twenty actually hasn't happened. I actually looked at the calendar and was like oh mu God it is October already.

Preston: Can you believe that?

Claudia: It's October already we have been in quarantine since march.

Preston: crazy. So we are on the last question here then I kind of have an extra thing I wanna do really quick. Is there anything you would like to share about your covid-19 experience that we haven't covered?

Claudia: I think this is the closest we are gonna get to retirement as college students given the economic standpoint we had to begin with this is going to be the closest thing we have to retirement it really is. I don't want to say that Covid has had it's good qualities because obviously it hasn't at all. But I started doing things that I didn't have time for beforehand, like I used to paint a lot so I started painting again you know and stuff like that, it was hell to find art supplies you know little things like that I've been doing more for myself have been helpful. Having conversations with my dad that I never really got to have before because we have been

so busy my parents work through the day and I go to school through the day and I work so by the time I come home they are asleep already because I don't get out of classes until ten so they are already asleep already and the next morning we kind of just rinse and repeat. So it will be a quick hey I'm home how are you and then go to my room and sleep. I think that is all in all, oh another thing I guess I wanted to share is like, apparently when you like live with your parents there is like that lack of like understanding, especially when you have older parents and they are like why are you so stressed out, why are you so tired if your at home all day and they don't understand that even though school is at home it's still the exact same amount of work that we normally juggle throughout the day so my parents will come home and my mom will be like, why are you tired what did you do all day and I'll be like oh I was doing homework and she'll be like all day, and I'm like yes all day. So that's another thing that has been a little stressful is that parents necessarily don't understand. Especially first generation, like I'm first gen, I am the only one to go to college and graduate high school. So it has been a trip for them to like see me at the computer all day doing work, and I remember at one point my mom was like are you still sitting there and I was like yeah, yeah I am, It is the same amount of work that we get at college just at home. Yeah I guess that's it.

Preston: One last thing, because of the pandemic everyone is wearing masks right, and a lot of the masks I see are very like fashionable and they match peoples outfits, or their doing that, so I was wondering do you have like a specific mask that you wear or sought out to match anything or like.

Claudia: I don't know I am not gonna lie, I am very basic like I don't, I feel like that basic blue surgical mask just that solid for me and I have those and we will wash them or something, but I also have the reusable masks. None of them really match my outfits, but I am a big sailor moon fan, they ended up making, I don't know if you ever watched the anime but it's this like nineteen eighties anime, but my brothers call me Reenie which is like one of the characters like the little sister who is super annoying and my brothers call me that's my nickname. So there's a blanket that she has from the anime that like her... and it has little bunnies on it, and I saw that they made that into a mask and I was like I'll buy and I bought it and I wear it and I'm very happy about it I think that was the only one I actually actively sought out. But other than that, just like a basic surgical or like a black mask you can't really go wrong with it but there are moments where I am dressed a certain way and I'll be like I am not wearing the sailor moon mask today because it will offset my outfit, I am just gonna wear like the basic mask but yeah.

Preston: Okay well I think that is it, thank you so much for doing this I really appreciate it.

Claudia: No problem

Preston: I hope they get some use out of this, and I really appreciate you doing this it has been really fun

Interview Transcript

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Location:

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Length:

0:26:50

Media format:

Online zoom meeting

List of Acronyms:

C.F P.P

Interview Transcript completed by:

Preston, Peterson, 2020

Start of Interview:

00:32

End of Interview:

26:25