

Sheltering in Place: Student Essays from English 119 at SIU Carbondale



Aedan Wright

My anxious nature proved beneficial for once in my life, providing me about a week and a half head start on the collective panic. An unhealthy amount of social media content and multiple news tabs on my cellphone primed me for what I could only assume was about to come. I happily placed my desired brand of toilet tissue, Charmin ultra-soft, into my Sam's Club extra-large shopping cart. Little did I know what treasure I had just secured. My girlfriend and I discussed the possibilities of university students going home over spring break, only to bring back this new virus to the campus. I expressed my worries, wondering if my pre-existing conditions would place me in the dreaded high-risk category. I knew the rest of the semester was about to get weird. I never would have guessed that we would not come back to school at all.

Sadly, we live in an era of misinformation, fake news, alternative facts, and memes. While searching for pertinent COVID-19 information online, it was very apparent that many people were not taking this seriously. Coronavirus sounds like Corona beer, we get it, you guys like to drink. Meanwhile, Italy was developing into the new "hot spot" of devastation. I wondered why so many people were making light of what was surely about to become a very American situation. As a person who lived in Europe for three years, I am keenly aware of how American healthcare compares to that of other countries. With American healthcare being so inaccessible, and in many times tied to employment, I worried about just how hard some communities would be hit.

As time passed and the virus spread, we came into a new era of misinformation, the coronavirus task force press briefings. I, like many others, found myself at home for days on end. This gave me ample time to suffer through each daily briefing in full length. Every day, the administration beating their chests on how great they are. How great America is. Every claim they made,

contradicted by the professionals in the field. Doctors claiming, they have no PPE to protect themselves. Trump replies that they have everything, and they do not need that much. New York's governor expressing a need for ventilators. Trump retorts that he should have bought some three years ago when they were cheap, loser. Every day an administration claiming no responsibility for their shortcomings and demanding all the praise for made-up accomplishments. America does not need daily propaganda shows, we need what every other country seems to be doing better. Testing.

We the people have been treading a dangerous path for a while now. Our country elected the guy from *The Apprentice* into our highest office. Maybe we chose him because he was far from the established political norm. Maybe, because some perceived him to be a successful businessman. More likely, we chose him because we have frighteningly small attention spans and he tweets out something misspelled and inflammatory multiple times a day. Truth, knowledge, and science have been dragged through the mud by our current administration. Three key components to handling a pandemic. I hope we get through the rough times ahead with newfound insight and higher expectations. I hope we actively seek the truth; not whatever articles agree with our point of view. I hope that those who have will protect those who do not. Mostly, I hope we get through this with as little loss as possible.



Jillian Smith

Illinois's stay-at-home order preceded Tennessee's by nearly two weeks. The day Pritzker announced the state-wide quarantine, I just so happened to be making the three-hour drive from my home in Nashville back to Carbondale. Upon my arrival at the dorms, my boyfriend greeted me with this unpleasant news--which he and his parents were taking seriously. Now knowing that I would hardly be able to see my boyfriend or any of my friends, I began to consider the idea that coming back to the dorms was a mistake. 'But it can't be a mistake' I told myself, 'you were depressed at home. This will help you.' Alas, depression works in ways we never expect. The three days I ended up spending in Carbondale were characterized almost exclusively by sobs in every moment of solitude. I spoke on the phone with my boyfriend and texted close friends but they could not help me. That Saturday the 21st I realized I couldn't handle it: the pain was too

much. The next day, I called my mom, hardly able to speak, and told her I wasn't okay. One 45 minute conversation later, my mom and brother were preparing to drive to Carbondale and pick me up.

The following weeks consisted of a variety of ups-and-downs that, while mentally tiring, were manageable. I enjoyed regular FaceTime calls with my boyfriend and close friends and did a decent job keeping up with online school work. I hadn't been sleeping well and suffered from the isolated panic attack and, as I have deemed them, sad-attacks, that turned my insides empty and forced my feelings into neutrality. Although all of the above made it difficult for me to know what I was feeling at any given moment, once the week preceding Easter came around, I *knew* something was wrong between me and my boyfriend. While on a group call with a few friends, I texted one of them and told her 'I think [redacted] and I are having problems'. Holding back tears, I kept up pleasant conversation with my friends until the call ended. While texting another friend about my relationship concerns, she encouraged me not to worry, that my boyfriend and I would talk it out the next day. Allowing myself to believe my anxiety had gotten the best of me again, I went to sleep.

The following day was Good Friday. The day moved slowly, as I got a 92 on a test, had lunch with my parents, and then went for a walk. My boyfriend broke up with me on that walk. The weather was perfect. It was a four-minute phone call. The sky was cloudless. He said the wrong things. That sidewalk was a staple of my childhood. He stopped liking me.

After only an hour of being alone in my bedroom, processing my first ever break-up, I had prepared a short list of questions to ask my now ex-boyfriend over the phone. This call lasted fifteen minutes and did not make me feel any better. The perils of dating within one's friend group became apparent as I learned I was one of the last of my friends to find out he and I were going to break up. I also figured out during this call that I had no hard feelings toward my ex, he was a good first boyfriend and he was right to end it when he did. But I still felt awful; what had previously only been an abstract fear, an anxiety had been realized for the first time on that Good Friday. And it was my tipping point.

I write this now, exactly a week after being dumped, living in quarantine, unmotivated, unhappy, and entirely out of sorts, not having gone a single day without crying. I am taking my (prescription) sleeping medicine again, have taken the steps to get into therapy, and am trying to balance school with my mental health. This. Shit. Sucks.

Anonymous

It has been 28 days since the "Shelter In Place" order has been enacted in Illinois, and I hadn't left the house whatsoever until yesterday afternoon. I'd gone 27 days straight without seeing my friends, going to the store, or even taking a drive in my car. I'm an introvert and a natural home-body, so this feat was not a torturous one for me. That said, I do miss my friends a lot; I only have 2 of them, but they mean the absolute world to me, and I usually try to see them as often as I can. I left the house the other day to pick up some flea and tick medication as well as a tip from my job at the vet's office, and I was so excited that I even dressed up for the event. I wore a green dress with a black cardigan, and of course blue latex gloves and a white face mask to

match. I looked like a fancy, post-apocalyptic housewife of an asshole millionaire, and I wasn't mad about it. While I was there, I spoke a bit with my coworkers and boss (from a safe distance of course). When I exclaimed that I hadn't left the house since the quarantine started, they were shocked. Their reaction bewildered me; was it really that impressive? Well, it would be, if it were true.

Near the beginning of March, I matched with on a dating app with a very promising young man who went to SIU and was only a few years older than me. We had a few general, common interests, but when we began talking I could tell he was different than anyone I had ever met. He was genuine, kind, caring, and took actual interest in me. He acknowledged and liked me for who I truly was, and that terrified me.

I've had deep-rooted issues with love and relationships since I was a child, and until recently I was too petrified to ever consider being in one myself. I knew that if I ever desired a relationship, I would have to fight demons that I had suppressed and hidden for years. I was afraid to even text him back because I was worried for what would come ahead, but in my heart, I knew it was time. Our feelings for each other were clear, and things were progressing so quickly that my brain could barely comprehend it, and my feelings lagged behind like a scared dog on a leash. Eventually, with plenty of reassurance and convincing, my feelings caught up to me, and that's when I started to go crazy. I had repressed them for so long, I wasn't sure how I was supposed to face them.

Around this time, I was having dreams of swimming through the ocean and being tumbled around in the waves, but in the end, I always surfaced to the top. The ocean was my feelings that I was forced to navigate myself through. I began to feel emotions that I didn't even know existed or what to call them; sometimes I felt so giddy and energetic that I couldn't help but dance, and other times I would feel so somber and cold that I couldn't move from my hammock all day. I talked with him every night, and soon found our chats to be the highlight of my day. I decided it would be best to wait to meet until the quarantine was lifted, which was just barely manageable, but once I heard that it had been extended an entire month, I sobbed for the entire afternoon. I had put in so much time and effort into this relationship, but it felt like the universe was doing everything in its power to keep us apart. *Fuck it.* I had tried to do things the right way; I had tried to be responsible, and where had it gotten me? Sad and alone. It was time to take matters into my own hands.

Please keep in mind, it is, in fact, true that I never left the house to go in public until yesterday, but I had left the house long before that. Also, realize that he had done the same. The risk level of contracting the virus was low, but of course it was still a risk, yet it was one I was willing to take. The first time I snuck out, it was the middle of the day and he picked me up down the road from my house. I was slightly shy at first, something I had feared would happen, but I warmed up eventually. It was an odd experience seeing my boyfriend in person for the first time, but I loved every second of it. We almost ran into my mom on the drive home, so I thought that it might be best to meet at night instead from then on. As of now, I have successfully snuck out a total of five times, with absolutely no suspicion from my parents whatsoever. In their eyes, I've always been a good kid, and I am most of the time, but what they don't know is I'm also extremely sneaky. My biggest advantage is that I never underestimate anyone, and carefully calculate every risk. I try to treat every escape with as much care as if it were my very first.

Starting a relationship while under quarantine has been an invigorating, yet infuriating, situation for me. My parents are not typically strict with me, but I knew that under the circumstances, there would be no reasoning with them. I am, of course, prepared to get caught, and if I do, I will not regret a single second of it. I can only hope that they remain oblivious, and this will be nothing but a funny story I reveal to them years later.



Jacob Menzies

I lay in my bed. I sit in my chair. I sit on the couch. I sit at the table. I sit and I lay, with a little bit of walking and standing from time to time. I read in my room. I eat in the living room. I lift in the basement. I collect snacks in the kitchen. I rarely leave the house, and if I do, it's only to go hiking.

My activities are confined to my house, and my interactions are limited to my family. There is so much that I can do, and so much that I no longer can. How do I make use of this time? How do I not succumb to boredom? How do I avoid contracting this virus?

I wonder how the pandemic will change our society. Were we not already drifting towards practices of social distancing, in which there is less of a need to leave the house, even before the pandemic? I wonder what stories I will tell my children and grandchildren, if I have any to tell at all. I wonder how long this shelter in place will last, and how many will fall ill or die before it's over. I wonder how my family will fare in the event that any of us contract the virus. I wonder if we will be prepared for the next outbreak, with our travel from continent-to-continent in a matter of hours, our rising population, and our dense accumulation in cities. What will we do? What can we do? What *should* we do?

In truth, I only wonder these things in passing moments. In truth, I merely wake up and carry out my routines. I don't really think about the virus that often. It's an intriguing dilemma: for so many around the world, even within your own community, to undergo so much suffering, yet, you remain almost entirely unaffected. I feel a detachment from the crisis. It almost doesn't feel

real, because I'm not really a part of it, and I can't actually see it unfold. This is a good thing, but also a strange thing. It's a condition that could change at any time. Mostly, I miss being outdoors and seeing people. I miss wandering without the implications of danger each time another person passes.

However, just as they pass by, so will this pandemic. I don't know when, and I don't know how. I don't know if I will become a part of the struggle, or if I will remain a distant observer. All I can do, or hope to do, is stay at home and follow my routines. I can only distract myself with my hobbies and act as if little has changed. The future is uncertain, and my present is stagnant. I can only lay, sit, walk, stand, eat, read, lift, and collect snacks for now. If I have to, I will deal with the rest later.

Taylor Marcum

Hurriedly, I packed my duffle bag with a week's worth of necessities as I was anxious to see my family over spring break. The day was March 6th, 2020 and little did I know, this was the last time I would sleep in Steagall Hall or visit my newfound friends this semester. As a Southern Illinois University freshman, I had become accustomed to living four hours from home.

Life was structured and I enjoyed meeting new people and participating in campus activities. Then, the unthinkable happened, an unknown coronavirus was beginning to sweep across America. Sheer panic began to set in when I received the announcement from housing that I had to return within the next twenty-four hours to retrieve my belongings from my dorm room. This time frame was not feasible for my family; therefore, I find myself without required textbooks or a wardrobe fitting for the ever-changing Illinois climate. I dread having to finish spring semester online.

Five weeks later, "Shelter in Place" has become a household name. My hometown of Gibson City, population 3500, has become eerily quiet. The main street with dozens of small businesses such as clothing boutiques, furniture stores, and hair salons are desolate. County Market is a sea of facemasks. All of our restaurants and bars are also closed which really stinks for my Subway addiction. I worry that some of them may not be able to reopen. Elementary, Middle and High Schools have the appearance of a ghost town. As for my college education, I am consistently battling my lack of internet service. Often times, I have to drive from my country home into town and sit in the library parking lot using their Wi-Fi in order to complete my assignments. Classes are not nearly as relevant or enriching without the presence of my professors or fellow classmates. My family has been very supportive through this experience. Fortunately, my parents are essential workers therefore we are not as afflicted financially. My mother is a Registered nurse working on the frontlines of our rural hospital and my Father is a trucking dispatcher for an agricultural company that supplies food to Americans. Both are stressful occupations for them, but I hear no complaints.

Throughout this pandemic, I am amazed to watch my small community in Ford County, Illinois rally together in support of each other. The residents of our local nursing homes and assisted living have posted things they need on Facebook and people are delivering these items. Our schools and Gibson Hospital Food pantry continue to provide food for our citizens who are unable to work at this time. Windows are decorated with hearts and the words "We are all in this Together". Store fronts display the artwork of our GCMS students since the gala was cancelled. Hanging from porches are the uniforms of our athletes that

did not get their last track season or baseball tournament. Last night, our football field was lit up and a parade of honking cars drove around town in support of our 2020 seniors who will not walk across the stage to receive their diploma. As many of our lives have been turned upside down, we will continue to shelter in place to keep our people safe. It is not a choice. Optimistically, we will come out of this pandemic as more patient, compassionate, resilient and grateful citizens. Certainly, I have learned not to take anything or anyone for granted.



Sam Flessner

My time in quarantine hasn't been all that bad. As of now, I don't know anyone directly how has shown symptoms of COVID-19. My family is all home, as are my friends and extended family. After things started to get canceled and postponed, I realized just how lucky I was. I am on the swim team at SIU and we got our final meet of the season in a week before everything fell apart. Some of my teammates went to Cleveland for a national invitational meet the weekend the NBA postponed its season. At first, the meet was scheduled to carry on as usual but without spectators. This was changed within hours and was canceled because many other high profile events got canceled as well as several celebrities coming out and saying they have it. I think this hit lots of people hard because, before this, I feel that a lot of people saw the virus as a foreign problem. A virus that started in China and would never reach the United States. We were too good for that. Right?

At first, that's what I thought. I had heard about it in the news but never even thought about the possibility of it affecting my daily routine or even that of any American. The first thing that made me realize COVID-19 was closer to me than I thought was on March 11th when San Francisco announced that they would ban gatherings of over 1000 people. The Golden State Warriors of the NBA then announced that they would play their games in an arena without fans.

Later that day, in a game between the Utah Jazz and Oklahoma City Thunder, the game was set to tip-off when the players were told to leave the court. The game was postponed and spectators told to go home. This was in response to Rudy Gobert of the Utah Jazz testing positive for the virus. To make matters worse, at a press conference the day before Gobert mocked the virus after talking to reports. He got up from his chair, walked away, then turned around to touch all the microphones and the jogged out laughing. In the days later, schools began to extend spring break by a week to prepare for online classes for the foreseeable future.

At this point, my mom decided to lock down the house and not allow us to leave except to go to the store, etc. We would only be allowed to see our friends in person if we were outside and six feet apart. However, I would go on to break this rule. I decided to go back to school to move out. This was necessary because I hadn't brought any of my school notes home for spring break. I had agreed to pick up one of my friends from the airport after she landed from Canada. We would leave on Friday morning and stay for a few days to say goodbye to everyone. That is until Justin Trudeau closed the border. Because I didn't have to accommodate someone else, I decided to leave Saturday morning and come back Sunday morning. I did this to limit contact with the few friends who had decided to stay in Carbondale.

When I arrived in Carbondale, I began packing things that I wouldn't need for the rest of the year. Then I got a notification saying that JB Pritzker had issued a stay at home order and that anyone on campus wouldn't be allowed to leave. It would go into effect the next day at 5 pm. This shocked me since now the virus was now directly affecting me. I decided that I needed to leave first thing tomorrow morning and I started packing frantically. I stayed up late hanging out with my friends, reminiscing about our freshman year that felt like we still had so many memories to make.

The next morning I woke up early, finished packing, refilled my gas tank, and had one last meal in the dining hall. I said my final goodbyes and left Carbondale until the fall. The roads were almost empty and I made it home in record time. At home, I didn't unpack anything for 3 days, since I had heard that's how long the virus could last without a host. Every item I unpacked made me a little sadder and made the situation more real to me. All my international friends I had made were going back home until next year on dirt-cheap flights. My suitemate still hasn't been able to move out.

Since getting back from Carbondale, I've gotten into a schedule. 10-3: do school with two breaks for breakfast and lunch. 3-6: work out/chill. 6-7: dinner/family time. 7-12: chat with friends and binge Netflix. I have left the house to grocery shop with my mom. It's an eerie experience that I hope sticks with me for the rest of my life. Empty shelves, people wearing masks and gloves, and carts piled high with Clorox wipes and toilet paper. It was the most groceries we'd ever bought because we didn't want to go back anytime soon. We planned our meals and bought for them. Everything was wiped down thoroughly when we got home.

Overall, I have been lucky through this situation so far. I haven't been sick and I don't know anyone who has. I had the opportunity to finish my NCAA season and to move out of college.

These are all things I am very grateful for and do not take for granted. Hopefully, this is all over soon. Stay safe.

Mikaela Staub

This quarantine is so odd. I have never experienced anything like this in my life. It gives everything a weird feeling. Everything is just off. I think it feels like summertime. I guess it is because everyone is home. With the feeling of summertime, though, comes the feeling of wanting to do nothing. Which doesn't pair well with needing to do schoolwork. I feel bored, but at the same time so overwhelmed since I know I have so much to do.

I am also missing out on my second half of second semester as a freshman. I didn't really think it was a big deal at first, but then my mom showed me a picture of campus in the spring. It was so pretty. The trees were in bloom, there were petals all over the ground, and I am not there to experience it. I miss my friends and all the fun we have. I want to go back to school.

I am missing out on so much. I am in a sorority, and so many events have been canceled. It is sad. We missed our Founder's Day, Theta Xi, the Big Event, and Greek Week. There are even more events that were cancelled. Today was supposed to be our formal. I should be getting dressed up and getting ready with my friends, but instead, I am at home, feeling like I am doing endless amounts of schoolwork.

When I am at school, I don't just do work. I get to see my friends and get a break. It feels like all I do now is work. Who knows how long this will last? I don't want to lose my summer too. I don't want to lose next semester either. I just want to go back to living my life before all this virus came. I miss everything.



Justin Soltis

At 5:30 on March 20th, I received a phone call from my mom telling me that she was going to order me a train ticket at 7:00 to come back home before the “Stay Home” policy took effect. I packed everything up as fast as I could, prepared my room as if I was going back on break, and booked it to the train station. I made it with about 15 minutes to spare and was very tired during the ride home. I arrived at Union at 2:00 AM on March 21st.

I grew up with my little brother Michael for the entire second half of my life and my baby sisters for the last two years. Before college, living with them every day was fine as I didn’t spend much time with family because of school, track, and friends. Now, it’s a nightmare because I have nothing to pull me away from them. I have not left my house to go anywhere other than CVS since March 21st. The first week was pretty bad as everyone in my household was no longer going to work and we were stuck together. My brother, being the 10-year-old brat he is, would constantly bother me by running down the stairs and turning the lights off in my room while I was working, turn the T.V. off while I was watching it, and other annoying crap. My sisters are little angels but they require so much of my attention that it gets on my nerves, especially when I have something I need to finish.

In the following weeks up until the present, I have had to do a lot of babysitting. After the first week, my parents were able to start going back to work. When they both go, they take my siblings to my grandparents’ house and leave me alone, but when only one goes to work, I am stuck with all my siblings in the house all day. And when they are either both home or just one is, and they need to go to the store, they leave all the kids with me. Normally, I don’t mind. I could watch my little sisters perfectly fine all day, but when Michael is there, I can’t stand it.

I can’t wait for this pandemic to be over and to go back to work/school. Over spring break, I was able to ensure a summer job working at the Brookfield Zoo. This would mean that as soon as school was out, I’d come home and almost immediately start working. Then everything went to shit and I got stuck here. I look forward to next year when things get back to normal because my best friend and I were able to get sister rooms in the dorms and will be suitemates in the Fall. But until then, I’ll be here, stuck, and waiting.

Ameera Fowler

So for over one month now I have been sheltering at my parents’ house, in the middle of what is supposed to be the second semester of my freshman year of college. On March 6th, I was released for a short spring break, and decided to pack my bags and take a short trip home. I thought I would be returning to school that following weekend, but little did I know that Coronavirus had other plans for my life. A few days before the end of spring break, around the time I supposed to be returning back to school, I received an email from my school saying that they would be extending break and my first thought was “HELL YEAH!”, one more week of relaxation! However, things quickly escalated from an extended vacation to we are moving to online format, with the possibility of classes resuming to normal in person classes on April 26th.

At first, I knew I was happy because *duhh!* This meant a little more time at home, and a little more time without having to worry about an essay or homework assignment. My middle sister, who is a college senior, was coming home as well, and being that she's my bestie, I wasn't too

upset. As time progressed, and a few days passed, reality had finally begun to set in. I really didn't know how I felt about this situation, but I did know that I was upset! I was mad because 90% of my life was back in Carbondale, pissed because I had just gotten a new job that I liked and now I couldn't even return, and finally I was uncertain and left with a series of questions... What am I going to do for money? When am I going to be able to get my belongings back. What is going to happen next?

Honestly, those things were minor compared to the reason in which I was the maddest- I was doing so well with managing my business and priorities and now I couldn't get control over my anxiety. I felt myself being ripped from my perfect routine which kept me busy and focused. I felt myself slipping into the darkness of depression because I was entirely too overwhelmed. I was constantly having these anxiety attacks and not being able to focus on all these assignments that professors had given to me, and it was getting harder to get myself out of bed. I was all over the place, and I worried about how the rest of this semester would go. I was worried that being home would distract me, which it does, however I love being home. But, home feels like summer, and summer feels like complete freedom which is the opposite of being in school. I have nothing besides assignments and an abandoned dorm room that ties me to SIU. I am even more upset about the fact that I had plans with friends, and memories to make and now, all of those are on hold, with much uncertainty about the future.

Although it is an unfortunate event, I have come to find some peace within the situation and even though it's a struggle most days, especially trying to motivate myself, I try to do my best in managing and coping with everything that's happening. My mom who is a teacher, continues to work from home, and my oldest sister who is in medical school, has also decided to come back. As a family we are getting through this difficult time together, by being there for each other as much as we can but also giving ourselves the proper distance and isolation to keep from going crazy. Even though the lives we once knew came to a complete halt, we are trying to make the most of this situation so that we can have a better future.

Ps. I think schools should have just given everyone an A, or found a better solution to this mess, maybe just end grades where they stood on March 6th and if you aren't satisfied with that grade, have an option to make higher your grade percentage. They could have reduced the amount of work given to students considering most people did not sign up for online classes, and may not even know how to properly engage and successfully complete online classes. There are people who are at disadvantages, those who may not have the best home environment, or no home at all. There are people who lack the needed resources that they were getting from campus. We should have been focusing and emphasizing mental health and the emotional wellbeing of others instead of prioritizing class and academic success over wellness.



Robert Zengeler

I haven't left the house or my town in a month since I came home for spring break. Since the pandemic erupted, I was already in self-quarantine. In my room, I currently have boxes of Girls Scout shortbread cookies under my bed that my mom was about to deliver to my dorm. I have been watching tons of videos on YouTube and listening to various soundtracks on Spotify. I always make sure to wash my hands, even at times I touch my face countless times. Luckily enough, my room is right next to the bathroom which is like my personal bathroom. My family would poke fun at the fact that I've been spending most of the time in my room since I came back home. Well, the truth of the matter is, I haven't thought much about what to do on my own time to go outside and I can be introverted to meet up with some friends. On the other hand, I have been considering developing a workout plan since I become more self-cautious about what I eat and to connect with other people as I can because my self-quarantine is driving me insane.

My mom would always make sure we have enough food at her house. The cabinets, freezers, and fridges would contain the likes of chips, soda, pasta, and ice cream. Because we can't go out to restaurants, my mom and my sister took the advantage of cooking all kinds of foods and meals like homemade bagels, banana bread, and deep-dish pizzas. My mom was cautious about the portions so that she can avoid making a return trip to the store. There was one time when she cooked us a chicken dinner after she cut up a half portion of each breast for four people. With the meals that we had, they acknowledged that the food they made was better than the restaurants. To that, I say I would agree.

Although it might sound like our quarantine is going smoothly, there were some issues with our Wi-Fi network during our class times. Since we had to stay home, we had to work whatever we can with an internet connection that's been slow. There were times we got kicked out of our classes when one of us uses the Wi-Fi at the same time for our classes or break-time. Arguments have been tossed around between us that we were irresponsible for taking much of all the internet. I received some of the blame when I was watching YouTube videos during one of their class times. At times, one of us would go over to dad's house for a better connection so that we wouldn't cause a huge problem. However, we put together a schedule on each day of the week to

follow whenever we need the internet for class. My mom does her best not to interrupt our class times as she avoids watching Roku. I'm also attempting to limit my time of watching videos or anything media-related without creating a distraction for my siblings' class times.

Nick Pratte

Throughout the course of my life I have experienced several medical epidemics over the years Swine Flu, Bird Flu, Ebola, Zika among others. But none of them have had the effect on me or have affected me the way that the present Covid-19 Pandemic has affected me within the last few months.

Being a full-time student and balancing that along with carrying on a Full-Time career is a struggle within itself. It was finally starting to level out for me when the pandemic began slowly making its way into the US and quickly began spreading across the states. Thus, beginning the domino effect that has led to the present shelter in place protocols throughout the United States.

With myself being in the Public Safety field along with several members of my family being in the public safety and medical fields, there has always been that sense of awareness and alertness to the potential risks of exposure to certain elements within the field. These presents states have obviously heightened those risks and the alertness of Law Enforcement officers, Firefighters, Emergency Services and Medical professionals. Causing everyone to keep their heads on a swivel and remain alert and prepared for any situations or potential risks of exposure.

However, I believe that as a nation if we hold strong and stick together as friends and families across the nation. We will overcome this pandemic and come out on the other side stronger.

Kaylan Talley

During the quarantine I have spent more time sleeping than actually being productive. I feel so out of sorts without being in my normal daily routine. Now I end up staying up until 3am and sleeping until noon for absolutely no reason. I feel like I have no motivation to do anything, especially homework. There are many days I wake up and feel good and want to be productive but then I don't end up doing any of it. I end up going fishing or mudding with my guy friends and ending the night by a bonfire (which has been pretty much every night throughout the quarantine).

The hardest part definitely is not having my daily routine. Normally I wake up every weekday around 5:30 to work-out and that starts my day. I always follow that with a ton of water and then an iced latte from Dunkin'. Then I shower and make my meals for the day, and head to class or whatever errands I need to get done for the day. After that I normally go to work until 10pm and in bed or asleep by midnight. I have always operated on a normal routine being in sports since I was young, which usually followed a full day of school and on the weekends. I am a flexible person but I'm bored (as I know everyone is) and I wish I could go back to work more than anything.