

Today is Tuesday March 31, 2020. My name is Nicole Lee and I am a sophomore at Siena College. While I typically live on campus I am now back home until September. Well maybe even longer we really are not sure. I am currently living through a global pandemic. While I have learned so much about pandemics in my history classes throughout the years I never thought I would experience one. These days are weird and uncertain. There is really no other way to put it. I am now confined inside my house, taking classes online, washing my hands more times than I ever thought was possible, and the only place I go is to work. All of this is directly due to the COVID 19 outbreak.

As a biology major with two four hours labs each week, one for molecular genetics and the other for organic chemistry, I am experiencing a greater change than my fellow classmates. We have been out of school and online for two full weeks now and yet I still have not heard how my labs will be run. How does one put a hands on lab online? It simply just does not work. While the school is working on educational problems they are also dealing with financial issues. This is largely due to the fact that they have kids who have paid for both room and board and a meal plan that they are unable to use. While I am sure the school will figure out how to solve these issues I am sure the decisions will not be made fast. These times are unknown and no one alive today has ever dealt with such issues as the ones we are dealing with now.

Outside of doing schoolwork I work at a local deli / grocery store in my hometown. As we are a grocery store we are essential. Because we are essential I still work. I am just a minimum wage cashier yet I still am able to earn a paycheck during these times. This is a strange concept as there are many people right now who have college degrees and good long term jobs but lost them in a matter of days. How can a company pay people if they are not working? There is a lot of talk as to what is going to happen to our economy as a result of this. I am not a business or economics major but I am pretty sure that the future of the global economy does not look good. Luckily for me by the time I graduate college, which is likely six years from now (grad school), the economy may have recovered. The best part about working right now is that I am able to see what is really happening rather than what is on the news. While it all matches up with the news stories it is unbelievable what is happening. Toilet paper is being sold out. Paper towels are being sold out. Raw meat is being sold out. Flour is being sold out. People are panicking and stocking up. But what these people do not realize is that they are limiting the resources for everyone else. As the store I work at is local and small we have many senior citizens who shop at our store. It is these seniors that are unable to find toilet paper because there are adults stockpiling it and there is nothing more heartbreaking than seeing an elderly man or woman looking for essentials when they should be sheltered in their homes.

These days are weird and uncertain. What is to come no one knows. We are told this could take months to be over and then it could likely occur again right after. People's priorities are changing as these times change. I look forward to these days being over but with people refusing to self isolate these days may last far longer than expected. I look forward to the day in which I can shake someone's hand again and not be scared when the guy walking by me coughs or sneezes and I will not be scared. I look forward to the day that COVID 19 is over.